

<b>TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting 45 17 -18 June 2008</b>
<b>FUNDING Process for funding of TS research projects using AFMA Funds</b>	Agenda Item No. 3.1 <b>FOR DECISION</b>

## **RECOMMENDATION**

3.1.1 The TSSAC **DISCUSS** and **AGREE** to a process for evaluating and recommending research projects for funding utilising either AFMA Torres Strait Research funds or other funding sources.

## **BACKGROUND**

AFMA provides funding in its annual budget to fulfil research requirements for fisheries management in Torres Strait.

As per the Terms of Reference, the TSSAC can solicit and review research proposals in line with a strategic plan and recommend proposals for implementation to the AFMA Executive and other relevant funding organisations.

It is essential that a climate of ethical and fair dealing is established from the start of the evaluation process. An open and transparent process by which the TSSAC recommends funding of individual research projects to the AFMA Executive or other funding organisations will be necessary for an efficient research project.

## **DISCUSSION**

The TSSAC should discuss and agree to a procedure to evaluate research proposals submitted to the TSSAC for consideration for funding. This process should provide guidance to how the committee should assess and/rank competing research projects. In some cases, there may be disagreement among committee members on recommendation of research projects. In this case, a clear set of guidelines should be developed to allow for resolution.

A preferred template for submission of research proposals to the TSSAC should be considered. The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) proposal template may be a useful suggestion.

The TSSAC, as per the Terms of Reference, will procure, review and recommend prioritized Torres Fisheries research projects each year (or as needed).

The following three stage evaluation process for assessing research proposals is provided as a discussion point for developing a set of agreed evaluation guidelines.

### Stage 1 – Screening of proposals:

All proposals should be initially screened for:

- 1: Is the proposal in an approved format?
- 2: Is the research relevant to the TSSAC Research Plan?
- 3: Clarification may be sought where required.

### Stage 2 – Evaluation:

Each proposal will be evaluated/ranked based on:

- 1: relevance to key research priorities in the TSSAC Research Plan;
- 2: scientific rigour;
- 3: budget requested;
- 4: collaborations with other agencies, stakeholders or organisations;
- 5: level of consultation with stakeholders; and
- 6: ability to build capacity in Torres Strait communities

#### Stage 3 – Recommendations.

The TSSAC will recommend research projects for funding based on the evaluation conducted in stage 2 to either the AFMA Executive or other funding bodies. Where two competing research projects are ranked equally, the Chairperson may make a recommendation based on the information provided to the TSSAC in the best interests of Torres Strait Fisheries.

The following steps have been agreed on by the AFMA Executive for funding of research projects recommended by the TSSAC:

1. The AFMA TSSAC Executive Officer and/or the AFMA TSSAC member will liaise with the AFMA research section to prepare a joint memo that agrees or otherwise with the TSSAC recommendations, to the AFMA Executive (Managing Director and General Manager Fisheries) for approval.
2. Projects that are approved for funding by AFMA Executive should be presented to the PZJA Standing Committee at the next meeting for information only.
3. Project results should be communicated to the PZJA Standing Committee and PZJA as appropriate.

A method for monitoring progress of research projects should also be discussed and agreed upon by the TSSAC.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

<b>TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting 45 17 -18 June 2008</b>
<b>FUNDING External funding options</b>	Agenda Item No. 3.2 <b>FOR NOTING</b>

## **RECOMMENDATION**

3.2.1 The TSSAC **NOTES** the information provided on available external funding bodies.

## **BACKGROUND**

The TSSAC may opt to recommend a proposal to an external funding source other than the AFMA Torres Strait Research Budget. There are a number of external research funding bodies that may provide funding to research proposals that are relevant to Torres Strait fisheries. Potential funding bodies are listed in: Fitzgerald J and Kowalski (2006) *The FishBook II: A Guide to Australian Government Programs, Grants and Services for the Australian Seafood Industry*.

## **DISCUSSION**

Utilisation of other funding opportunities for Torres Strait Research where appropriate would maximise the benefits to be derived from the TSSAC. The shared knowledge of TSSAC members of external funding opportunities, bodies and agencies would be beneficial to developing efficient processes for funding of Torres Strait research projects. The committee should discuss how the TSSAC could link with other funding bodies (e.g. ComFRAB) to streamline the funding process for research projects.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.