



**Office of the Minister for Fisheries  
and Marine Resources**

**MEDIA STATEMENT**

29 August 2024

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL TUNA  
DOMESTICATION STRATEGY (NTDS) IS VITAL FOR PNG  
TO BECOME A MAJOR TUNA PROCESSING HUB IN THE  
ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

**PORT MORESBY:** Fisheries and Marine Resources Minister Hon. Jelta Wong announced today that the National Tuna Domestication Strategy (NTDS) will be launched in the first quarter of 2025. Over the coming months, the NTDS will be presented to stakeholders before it is finalized and officially endorsed for implementation.

Minister Wong said: "The NTDS reflects the Marape-Rosso led Government's commitment to developing a robust tuna industry. This strategy provides an overarching framework of actions that the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) together with other line government departments and agencies will take to enhance policy and investment environment together with addressing inefficiencies of the tuna fishing and processing industry. The end goal is to boost the value retention of tuna catches within PNG's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Archipelagic Waters (AW)."

“The NTDS is developed under the Fisheries Strategic Plan 2021-2030 (FSP) to support the National Government's aim of making PNG a major regional tuna hub in the Asia-Pacific region. This initiative seeks to boost PNG’s role in regional tuna fishing and processing industries, aligning with the East New Britain Initiative (ENBi) which was endorsed by the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and Pacific Islands Forum Leaders.”

Wong emphasized: “The NTDS is an action-oriented document designed to guide the NFA in achieving our domestication agenda’s ultimate goal: retaining a greater percentage of the value of tuna fisheries within the PNG economy and ensuring increased participation by our people throughout the tuna value chain.”

Minister Wong outlined that the domestication strategy is grounded in three core principles:

- i) PNG's fisheries waters and the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) are to be maintained as some of the world's most well-managed and sustainable tuna fisheries.
- ii) PNG-based tuna fishing fleets and processing companies are essential to achieving PNG’s objective of boosting tuna landings for value-added processing.
- iii) Existing limitations in government policies and inefficiencies in the tuna supply chain hinder processing plant productivity, which in turn affects employment opportunities, business growth, and economies of scale.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the NFA are adopting a proactive and measured approach to achieve their objectives by outlining six strategic outcomes, each with specific actions:

- **Streamlined Fisheries Regulatory and Policy Framework:** Create a fair investment environment by clearly defining the benefits and obligations for tuna fishing and processing companies.
- **Enhanced Tuna Value Chain Productivity:** Address supply chain constraints, reduce production costs, and achieve economies of scale to enhance productivity.
- **Access for PNG-Flagged Vessels:** Establish arrangements to enable PNG-flagged vessels to access fishing waters outside PNG.
- **Global Market Access:** Secure duty-free and quota-free access to alternative and emerging global markets for PNG-processed tuna products.
- **Sectoral State-Owned Enterprise (SOE):** Establish and operate an SOE to address inefficiencies within the tuna industry.
- **SME Participation in By-Catch Utilization:** Increase the involvement of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in utilizing by-catches from tuna fishing fleets.

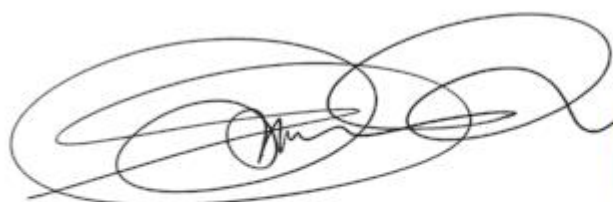
“This strategy recognises the pivotal role of the PNG’s tuna industry and acknowledges the current challenges they face and outlines a comprehensive approach to improving the competitiveness of PNG’s tuna industry. The goal is to position PNG as a leading hub for tuna fishing and processing, and harnessing our comparative advantages to realise our industry’s full potential,” said Minister Wong.

“As part of the transitional arrangements towards implementing the NTDS, all tuna processors and their associated fishing fleets are operating under Memoranda of Agreements (MoA) signed with the NFA in July this year, highlighted Minister Wong.

“The MOA allows PNG-flagged vessels and locally-based foreign vessels to secure and pay for vessel-days under the Start Fish VDS package, which aims to increase the landing and processing of tuna catches. Additionally, the Marape-Rosso Government’s approval of a competitive VDS fee structure and the provision of a rebate scheme for tuna processed in PNG are all directed towards advancing PNG’s tuna domestication agenda.”

“He, however, re-emphasized that ‘we cannot achieve this without addressing supply chain constraints and ensuring that all stakeholders, including line government departments and agencies, work together under the guidance of the NTDS.’”

Mr. Wong stated that “establishing this domestication strategy would allow for focused investment in fishing and processing, helping to retain a greater portion of the resource value within the country.” He added that he “looked forward to presenting the policy document to National Executive Council before the end of the year and for its launching by the Prime Minister in January 2025.”



**HON. JELTA WONG, MP**  
Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources