

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

SIXTEENTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 13-17 August 1984)

PROPOSAL

REGIONAL FISHERIES TRAINING PROJECT

Paper presented by the Secretariat

BACKGROUND

1. The national development strategies of most Pacific Island countries place high priority on the development and continued growth of the fisheries sector. In general planned activities seek to promote 1) the development of viable artisanal fisheries, which can provide much needed income earning opportunities for the rural population in a manner compatible with traditional village lifestyles and values and contribute towards import substitution, and 2) the establishment of industrial fisheries and related service industries at levels consistent with available resources.

2. Both to sustain ongoing fisheries programmes and to assist with the implementation of new projects and activities, there is a pressing need region-wide for suitably trained and motivated national personnel at all levels of the fishing industry. This acute shortage of skilled and experienced technical and professional local staff, both in government and the private sector, is seen by many Pacific Island governments as the most potent constraint to the attainment of national fisheries development objectives, and has been repeatedly emphasised in national statements on development, both by national administrations and international organisations.

3. Most national fisheries administrations are relatively small and are now faced with a dramatic increase in overall responsibilities associated with the administration of recently declared 200 m EEZs. At the same time activities related to the development or expansion of artisanal and commercial fisheries are also increasing due to the realisation by national governments of the full potential of the fisheries section. Lack of trained manpower and the often severe limits to the recruitment of new personnel imposed by budgetary considerations, has placed a heavy workload on existing staff. Requirements for growth of both artisanal and commercial fisheries are adding to the need for technically proficient advisory and extension officers and for increasing levels of skill in private fishermen and members of support industries.

4. Discussions during the 1983 SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries stressed the need for specialised short to medium term training opportunities, to enable existing national staff to upgrade and improve skills in a wide variety of fisheries related areas, and to develop new skills associated with changing work requirements or duties. This is consistent with the nature of recent requests for training assistance from a number of individual Island governments.

5. The South Pacific Commission, already active in the fisheries training field, is ideally equipped to develop and administer a project designed to meet the need for increased training avenues for Pacific Islanders. An outline of a proposal to expand existing SPC activities to include a "Regional Fisheries Training Project" is presented below for consideration by the meeting.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

6. The objective of the project is to upgrade the technical expertise available to national fisheries administrations and fishing industries, through the provision of specialised training opportunities to fisheries management and development personnel, private fishermen, and fishing industry workers..

IMPLEMENTATION

7. The project would seek to develop a comprehensive programme of training courses, workshops and other activities to meet the identified priority training needs of member governments and territories of the SPC area. As far as possible this project would draw on existing training facilities and expertise both from within and outside the region to take full advantage of available resources, and to avoid the need to develop costly infrastructure. The training programme would be structured to complement rather than compete with existing training courses and programmes co-ordinated by other organisations and training institutions from within the region. Where possible all training activities would be carried out within the SPC area in co-operation with existing institutions where appropriate. In addition to formal courses, the project would promote the more effective use of regional expertise through training attachments and the exchange of technical personnel between fisheries administrations.

8. Proposed activities would include:

- (1) A review of existing training arrangements available to Pacific Islanders with a view to developing new initiatives and opportunities to meet the varied training needs of individual countries. This would be carried out in close consultation with island governments, regional organisations, institutions involved in fisheries training activities both within and outside the SPC area, and donor agencies with an interest in fisheries training. This activity would meet action requested under Recommendation No. 7(b) from the 1983 Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries.

(2) Development of a comprehensive programme of specific training activities which reflects the training priorities established by this meeting. Apart from a limited number of core regional courses, it is envisaged that most courses would be short term specialist courses organised at a national or sub-regional level for limited numbers of trainees.

This list of training activities would be reviewed in detail by the 1985 Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries, and the training programme finalised for the 1985/86 period in the light of priorities set by that meeting.

(3) Existing SPC training courses (e.g. SPC/Nelson Polytechnic Fisheries Officer Course, SPC/UNDP Regional Refrigeration Training Course, etc.) would be administered under this project where appropriate.

(4) In addition to the above training programme, the project will include the capacity to respond effectively at short notice to immediate requests for specific training assistance from individual governments.

(5) Follow-up assistance to trainees will be provided in-country where possible to consolidate the training provided and to evaluate the effectiveness of the training activity.

STAFFING

9. Two posts are envisaged -

(1) Fisheries Training Officer: This position calls for a high calibre professional officer with an appropriate background in fisheries training. He would assist with the planning and development of the training programme, and be responsible for the field co-ordination of all training activities.

(2) Administrative assistant: Based in Noumea, this post would provide the necessary support to the training programme, in the administration of training activities, the preparation of training materials, etc.

TRAINING FACILITIES

10. The facilities required for a small training base could be made available at the SPC centre at Samabula, Suva. This would include a basic classroom, office and sufficient storage room for training equipment. In general the project would seek special arrangements with host countries for the use of existing facilities as required.

FUNDING/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

11. Funding would be sought from a wide variety of sources. Donor agencies and countries with an interest in fisheries training would be approached for support both for specific activities and to the project as a whole. This support could be in the form of funds or technical assistance (e.g. provision of specialist tutors, etc.). The establishment of a scholarship scheme would be promoted to facilitate country participation in planned training activities.
