

Promoting sustainable mariculture in Papua New Guinea



Inception meeting of “Mariculture Development in New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea”.

A new mariculture project focusing on the development and promotion of sustainable mariculture activities in New Ireland Province in Papua New Guinea (PNG) was recently launched. The project is funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and is based on Nago Island near the town of Kavieng. SPC’s Aquaculture Section is involved in the project’s implementation, in partnership with Australia’s James Cook University, PNG’s National Fisheries Authority (NFA), and PNG’s University for Natural Resources and Environment, the main implementing agencies.

Despite substantial efforts and large injections of research and development financing, mariculture development in many Pacific Island nations such as PNG has been relatively limited. This is, in part, due to the manner in which mariculture has been promoted in the past¹ and a range of more specific practical and economic constraints.

In addition, there is little tradition of mariculture in PNG coastal areas; however, the development of livelihood opportunities for poor coastal communities in PNG is among the highest priorities of both NFA and the PNG government.

In order to support such development, NFA recently completed the Nago Island marine hatchery and training facility in Kavieng, which is equipped to support mariculture-related research and training activities, and

which is now fully operational. The facility has been established to support development of mariculture opportunities in PNG, and is intended as a training centre for students from the National Fisheries College (Kavieng) and affiliated with the University of Natural Resources and Environment.

Key components for successful mariculture development in PNG have been assessed and include increased institutional capacity in the sector and improved baseline information on the feasibility of village-based mariculture of key marine commodities. This new project will address the need for capacity building by developing a strategy to strengthen institutional mariculture training in PNG, and will identify local species that have the potential to support viable, sustainable mariculture industries for coastal communities.

¹ “...mariculture is often viewed as a solution, not as an option; critical factors for financial and economic success have often been regarded as of lower priority; many projects are designed with a very small duration...” From: Hambrey Consulting and Nautilus Consultants. 2012. Opportunities for the development of the Pacific Islands’ mariculture sector. Report to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia: Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 129 p.

² Anon. 2007. SPC Aquaculture Action Plan 2007. Noumea, New Caledonia: Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 28 p.

NEWS FROM IN AND AROUND THE REGION



Working at Nago Island Mariculture Centre's wet laboratory.

The main aim of the project is to provide a sustainable basis for development of a mariculture sector in PNG and to build capacity within country partner organisations to support this development. Specific objectives include:

- developing community-based sea cucumber culture methodologies;
- trialling and assessing other mariculture commodities, such as edible oysters and marine ornamentals; and
- improving the capacity of PNG institutions to support mariculture development.

The project is closely aligned with SPC's Aquaculture Action Plan 2007,² which identified sea cucumbers and marine ornamentals as high priority commodities for aquaculture development within the region.

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A visit to the Nago Island Mariculture Centre's outdoor facility during the inception workshop.