

Raising the profile of coastal fisheries and aquaculture governance in the Pacific

In the Pacific Islands region, coastal fisheries provide the main source of protein (50–90%) for coastal communities and the primary or secondary source of income for up to 50% of households. Coastal resources, however, are finite and there is growing evidence that overfishing is occurring, especially for finfish around main urban centres, and many countries have closed their sea cucumber fisheries due to overexploitation. In addition, a major concern for the region is the growing human population, which is expected to increase 50% by 2030, and the associated added pressures on already heavily fished coastal resources.

In March 2015, SPC hosted a major workshop on the “Future of coastal/inshore fisheries management”, which produced “A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change”.¹ The New Song highlights eight key outcome areas, all focused on strengthening coastal fisheries management, policies, legislation and availability of information. The New Song was endorsed by the Heads of Fisheries in March 2015, the Forum Fisheries Officials in May 2015, and the Forum Fisheries Ministers meeting in July 2015. The New Song sets the direction for SPC, donors and other partners to deliver on priorities agreed on by Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs).

In addition, “A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries” has been developed by FFA and SPC with input from PICTs. The Roadmap sets out a range of goals, indicators and strategies for both oceanic and coastal fisheries, with the coastal component well aligned to the New Song. The Roadmap was endorsed by Forum Fisheries Officials (May 2015), Forum Fisheries Ministers (July 2015), and Pacific Island Forum Leaders (September 2015).

To assist PICTs with responding to and achieving the outcomes in the New Song and the Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries, the Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP) within SPC’s Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME), through extensive stakeholder consultations with key partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and SPC member countries, developed a project to address coastal fisheries governance priorities. The project is funded by New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and focuses on strengthening governance structures and processes, specifically legislation, policy and monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement (MCS&E), which are very weak for coastal fisheries and aquaculture. In strengthening governance, the project will contribute to the enhancement of food security and sustainable livelihoods for the future. This is a milestone project in that for the first time since its

establishment, SPC’s FAME can offer technical capacity to its member countries in coastal fisheries and aquaculture legal advice, and MCS&E-related assistance.

Three staff members were recruited under the coastal fisheries governance project: 1) a Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Policy Specialist, 2) a Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Legal Adviser, and 3) a Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture MCS&E Specialist.

Ian Freeman joined SPC in January 2017 as the MCS&E Specialist after spending the last six years at FFA in Honiara, Solomon Islands. He worked at FFA as a Fisheries Management Adviser on offshore tuna fisheries and this involved development and implementation of tuna plans and policies for most of SPC’s Pacific Island members. This experience has provided Ian with a fundamental understanding of the cultural importance of fisheries and its critical role in the community.

In his role as the MCS&E Specialist, he will work with the other project team members and regional partners (FFA and MPI) to provide technical support and MCS&E advice to fisheries departments at the national and sub-national level. This will involve working within government processes, including stakeholder input, to develop resources and capacity in coastal fisheries and aquaculture MCS&E at the national and subnational level in collaboration with FFA, MPI and other stakeholders.

The initial focus of his work will be overseeing the development of regional training modules specific to coastal fisheries and aquaculture MCS&E, in collaboration with FFA and MPI, to complement the training modules they have developed for tuna fisheries. When finalised, Ian will work with staff from FFA and University of the South Pacific to have the course and its materials accredited as a recognised training course.

Ian will also develop specific training materials for individual countries based on their needs through stakeholder consultations, taking into account gender, culture and human rights needs in the country. Activities will be coordinated with other partners, such as MPI and FFA, to ensure collaboration and prevent duplication.

¹ The New Song is a policy document that calls for an enhanced focus on coastal fisheries management and related development activities in the Pacific Islands region. See: http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Reports/Anon_2015_New_song_for_coastal_fisheries.pdf



Ian Freeman (image: Jipé Le-Bars, SPC)



Ariella D'Andrea (image: Jipé Le-Bars)



Jason Raubani (image: Jipé Le-Bars)

In January 2017, Ariella D'Andrea joined SPC as the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Legal Adviser in support of the governance team. Her main role is to assist national and subnational governments in reviewing and updating coastal fisheries and aquaculture legislation, in line with national and regional policies and international commitments. She will be able to provide assistance in both English and French.

Ariella has extensive experience in reviewing and drafting legislation in support of sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and water resources management. A member of the Rome Bar, she has been providing legal assistance to governments in 54 countries worldwide over the past 15 years. Ariella has worked for many years with FAO and, more recently, with other organisations and firms at the regional and international level.

As legal adviser at SPC, Ariella will offer her expertise to PICT governments in developing national and subnational laws and regulations aimed at countering illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in coastal waters, particularly by enhancing community-based fisheries management, as set out in the objectives of the New Song. The focus taken will be reflective of an ecosystem approach, cognizant of the main human rights and gender issues involved.

Active support from national and subnational authorities, and participation of all relevant stakeholders in the normative process, are crucial to the success of any legal reform. For this reason, the assistance provided will include a prior review of the existing legal and institutional framework, stakeholder consultations to discuss and validate the proposed texts, and legal training where needed. Her assignments will be carried out in collaboration with all relevant partners in the region, including FFA, FAO and MPI.

Jason Raubani is the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Policy Specialist. Before joining the project team in October of 2016, Jason was Director of the Vanuatu Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation, and long-time Vanuatu Fisheries Department Policy Officer.

In Vanuatu, Jason accumulated a wealth of experience in policy review and development at both the national and subnational level, including reviewing and drafting several community and fisheries management plans, the Vanuatu national fisheries sector policy and implementation plan, and the Vanuatu national environmental policy.

Jason will lead the implementation the project output related to the review, update and development of fisheries policies and management plans. This output links directly to one of the short-term outcomes of the project, which is for PICTs to have improved and robust policies and management plans at the national and subnational level.

One of the key goals of the project is to ensure long-term continuity of its benefits at the national and subnational level. Jason's role will, therefore, also focus on capacity development, training and mentoring in policy and management plans. The review, update and development of policies and management plans will be driven by national authorities.

As a regional organisation, SPC will provide through this MFAT project the technical and expert inputs and assistance to support government action at the forefront of sustainable management of coastal fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific.

For more information:

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