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The Pacific handbook for human rights, gender equity and social inclusion in tuna industries

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Introduction

1. Following development of the Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture ([available here](#)), the PEUMP project has supported the development of a Pacific handbook for Human Rights, Gender equity and Social Inclusion in tuna industries, led by Kate Barclay, Aliti Vunisea, Megan Streeter and Senoveva Maui. This handbook aims to assist practitioners in applying gender equity and social inclusion (GSI) lenses and human-rights based approaches in the Pacific's tuna industry.
2. This HoF information paper draws attention to this work and the process undertaken to develop it, highlights key findings, and summarises the timeline for publication.

Approach to the handbook

3. The approach used built upon that for the Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture. An initial draft module on HR/GSI in oceanic fisheries was developed in 2019 by Kate Barclay with the idea of complementing the coastal fisheries and aquaculture handbook. However, stakeholders strongly indicated that development of a separate handbook was preferred, with the opportunity to address issues in tuna industries more broadly. These issues included human rights dimensions, which were not covered in the handbook for coastal fisheries and aquaculture. The initial oceanic draft module was used as a basis for this. The authors undertook interviews with key stakeholders across the region, as well as extensive reviews of existing literature, and included information from PEUMP HR/GSI training materials developed for FFA, WWF and industry stakeholders. The MFAT-funded and PEUMP-supported WWF 2021 Gender mainstreaming in the Fiji offshore tuna industry report ([available here](#)) served as an updated baseline for a Fiji specific case study (module 9). Findings were synthesised by the authors into a draft handbook, which was presented at a virtual regional workshop on the 21st and 22nd April 2022. This workshop invited stakeholders from government, educational institutions, public sector, individual specialists, and civil society representatives to provide feedback on the draft.

Content and draft key findings

4. The handbook examines human rights, gender equity and social inclusion issues in various elements of the tuna fishery, including at sea, in port, in onshore processing, in the informal small-scale tuna sector, and in fisheries management and science. The ways that stakeholders can relate to tuna industries are discussed, noting that development of tuna industries and changes in fisheries management rules can have different effects for women and men, and people of various ages, ethnicities and abilities, and that being inclusive means trying to ensure all voices are heard and different interests are identified and met within these structures and cultural norms. A case study from Fiji is used to illustrate issues. The handbook provides extensive discussion and examples of potential issues and solutions for the Pacific tuna fishery (see also the article [here](#)). Key findings include:
 - Human rights abuses are a problem in the offshore tuna industry in the Pacific - as they are globally - and seem to be worst in the longline fishery.
 - Monitoring and regulating human rights on fishing vessels is made difficult by the multi-jurisdictional nature of operations, with beneficial ownership, vessel flag, company base and labour recruitment often being across multiple states.
 - Good foundations for protecting human rights on fishing vessels are laid out in the FFA Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions, and in international frameworks such as the

ILO Convention 188 on work in fishing. The next step is to collaborate to implement and enforce these frameworks.

- There are potential areas of improvement for GSI in offshore tuna fishing. There are now more opportunities for women to work on fishing fleets, but improved human rights protections are needed. Even when women are not present, sexual abuse among men is part of the human rights at sea problem to be addressed.
- Broader social exclusion issues with inequality of pay and discrimination around nationality and hierarchies on board are also important considerations.
- Port areas are vibrant places full of people and economic activity, but an element of seafarer culture means there also tends to be bingeing on drugs and alcohol, and casual sexual encounters, which can give rise to HR & GSI issues.
- Some of the key factors in good governance of port areas is to avoid stigmatising or criminalising sexual encounters, including transactional sex, to avoid driving it underground and exposing people to more risk. It calls for good services for prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, gender-based violence, and for economic empowerment so that everyone has a viable alternative to sex work if they want it. Economic empowerment is especially important to prevent children from becoming involved in the sex trade.
- HR & GSI around fishing ports is relevant for fisheries management, but fisheries managers may not have the expertise or resources to address it, so collaboration with other organisations interested in social issues around port areas is key.
- Onshore processing is female-intensive, in that women make up the bulk of the workforce, but most leadership and higher paid roles are held by men.
- The pressures of paid work and family responsibilities can place unrealistically heavy expectations on women. This can be addressed by companies and by communities.
- In some countries and companies, the divide between expatriate managers and local employees is still discriminatory. For example, there may be few locals in management roles.
- There is a need to ensure workers' housing is safe and affordable, that there is safe, affordable and timely transport to and from work, and that workers are able to live with dignity on their wages, which is about both the amounts paid, and financial literacy.
- The potential obstacles for organisations representing labour, such as trades unions, need to be considered to facilitate worker participation and rights.
- Small-scale tuna fisheries are usually managed separately from offshore industrial tuna fisheries, but there are many connections between small- and large-scale tuna activities, so it is important to consider the impacts (positive and negative) of large-scale tuna industries on small scale fishing and marketing activities.
- Small-scale tuna activities are vital for food security and the livelihood activities of many Pacific people, so it is important to make sure small-scale actors continue to have access to tuna resources for fishing, for processing and selling, and as a source of affordable, high-quality protein.
- The rights of Pacific people to tuna resources via small-scale activities can be viewed through a human rights-based approach, such as the right to food and freedom from discrimination. A GSI lens is useful for ensuring that all people in communities benefit equally from small-scale tuna activities.

- There are many more women involved in fisheries management in the Pacific now than there were in previous decades. But having more women employed is only one part of promoting GSI.
- There is continuing bias in the relatively small proportions of Pacific people and women in tuna fisheries management science, both as employees in national and regional agencies, and as consultants contracted for scientific and technical work.
- There are continuing inequities in opportunities for women in MCS work, due factors such as the heavier burden of family caring responsibilities seen as belonging to female versus male employees, and stereotypes that women do not belong on fishing vessels.

Next steps

5. The handbook is designed as a self-explanatory guide that practitioners from government, industry, and civil society as well as training institutions can use to apply HR/GSI lenses in their work. To maximise uptake of the handbook, the next steps focus on socialisation efforts among the multi-user audience to (1) ensure people are aware of the handbook, (2) can access it, and (3) have an opportunity to ask for complementary capacity building support through the PEUMP services on HR/GSI mainstreaming, or by other organisations who work in this field.
6. Initial discussions with WWF have identified the opportunity for rollout of the handbook in Fiji through training, which will also allow trialling and testing. Through PEUMP, USP has indicated interest in mainstreaming some of the content in existing marine science courses, and this is a next step that needs to be further explored. The handbook will also serve FFA in its current ambitions to lead regional dialogues on HR/GSI in tuna industries, aligned to the objectives set out in their gender framework and regionally harmonised terms and conditions. This will support FFA's objectives of achieving more equitable benefits and decent employment in the region, guided by their commitment to meet regional GSI/HR standards.
7. During the socialisation workshop, participants stressed the need to increase awareness and undertake advocacy campaigns on the handbook's key topics, not only among its target audience but also at political leadership level. Wider coverage using mainstream media for educational outreach, as well as information material focussed on selected topics and translation into local vernaculars, were some of the identified additional next steps that can support the uptake of the handbook.