

Drafting coastal fisheries legislation: A new training course available online!

The Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC) has recently published an online capacity building course on legislative drafting for coastal fisheries, targeting fisheries policy and legal officers from Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). The course was developed with expertise from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law (UC Hastings). Funding for the development of the course was provided under the Effective Coastal Fisheries Management Project, through the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Why this course?

PICTs have highlighted the need for legal support in preparing and reviewing coastal fisheries legislation in regional forums, such as the SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting and the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture, at least since 2003.¹ SPC has been providing support through mentoring as well as face-to-face training on legal matters,² until the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt on travel within the Pacific region. Although restrictions are now slowly being lifted, the shift to online – or at least to hybrid mode – for workshops seems inevitable. Against this backdrop, SPC is pleased to announce the launch of a new online training course on legal drafting to help build capacity for effective coastal fisheries management.

Content overview

The course covers legislative drafting and analysis techniques, including how to draft clearly and unambiguously, organise concepts logically, and turn policy into law. This online course merges different learning modes, including video lectures, presentation slides, reading material and quizzes, exercises, or assignments, in order to be as engaging as possible for participants. The course requires an internet connection and is organised in two phases of five modules each: Phase I explores the basics of legal drafting for coastal fisheries and can be taken online without the need for personalised feedback from SPC; Phase II aims to guide participants through the drafting process and will require SPC staff to provide personalised feedback on the assignments.

Learning outcomes and assessment

After successful completion of the course, participants will be able to understand the importance of clear drafting, identify key features of legislation, and formulate clear legislative language to achieve identified policy goals. Most importantly, they will learn how to critically analyse and review the form and substance of legislation and explanatory documents, and understand how to improve them. A competency-based assessment workshop will then be organised to allow those



who have taken the full online course to present their work and share their drafting experience with others.

Course access and duration

If you want to learn how to draft laws and regulations on coastal fisheries or you know someone who would, please get in touch with us. We will be circulating information through SPC's official channels on how to apply for the course. No prior knowledge of coastal fisheries or legislation is required. The estimated total duration of the course is around 25 to 30 hours, but participants can take each of the 10 online modules at their own pace. Those who have successfully completed the course will be able to participate in the assessment workshop, which will be supervised and facilitated by SPC to ensure a fruitful exchange within the region.

For more information:

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¹ Recommendation 4 of the Strategic plan for fisheries management and sustainable coastal fisheries in Pacific Islands, endorsed by the Third SPC Head of Fisheries Meeting reads as follows: "It is recommended that SPC establish a legal service to respond to requests from island countries for assistance in legislation related to coastal fisheries." (HOF3/WP7 p. 13; see HOF3 Recommendations, n. 13).

² How to draft effective coastal fisheries and aquaculture legislation by Alex Sauerwein, Ariella D'Andrea and Jessica Vapnek. SPC Fisheries Newsletter, Number 164 (January–April 2021).