

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

2nd SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting
(*Noumea, New Caledonia, 23–27 July 2001*)

Working Paper 3

Original: English

Overview of the Coastal Fisheries Programme

Coastal Fisheries Programme
Marine Resources Division
Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Noumea, New Caledonia



Overview of the Coastal Fisheries Programme

Introduction

1. The mission of the SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme is

"To provide a regional support service that assists Pacific Islanders in identifying the status, and optimising the long-term social and economic value, of small-scale fisheries and aquatic resource use in Pacific Island waters."

2. The Coastal Fisheries Programme currently has a complement of 13 professional and 4 support staff grouped into 5 sections as follows

Community Fisheries Section

Objective

3. The objective of the Community Fisheries Section (CFS) since it was introduced to the first Head of Fisheries Meeting in 1999 has been modified to read:

Promote the participation of coastal fishing communities, particularly women, in the management of subsistence and artisanal fisheries and to allow them to benefit from regional and national fisheries assessment, management and development activities.

Highlights

4. The Community Fisheries Section since 1999 has carried out 11 assignments in SPC member countries on the area of research and assessment support.
 - Baseline studies on the role of women in fisheries were carried out in Tuvalu, Wallis and Futuna, and 4 states (Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk and Yap) in the Federated States of Micronesia.
 - A study identifying and documenting the marine invertebrates collected in Niue has been drafted and will contribute to an inshore fisheries management plan for Niue.
 - The section in collaboration with the Forum Secretariat has assisted in the study on gender impacts of the tuna industry, to form part of national tuna management plans for Palau and Vanuatu.
 - The section for the first time has involved in formulation of community-based fisheries programme. It assisted in setting up of American Samoa's Community Fisheries Management Programme and the design of village fisheries plan appropriate for local communities. The section also assisted in the review of village fisheries management plans for Samoa.

5. Under the Development support, the section has carried out 10 national assignments:
 - Eight workshops were conducted on small-scale fisheries activities (including seafood quality and spoilage; seafood preservation; small business skills; conservation and management) in Palau, Marshall Islands, Wallis and Futuna, four states (Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk and Yap) of FSM, and Tuvalu.
 - The section was involved in the FAO National Legislative Review and Enforcement Training Workshop in Tonga.
 - The section was also involved in the training of the programme staff for the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources in American Samoa on community facilitation work.
6. On regional activities, the section has been involved in co-ordinating the *Women in Fisheries bulletin*, production of the *Community Fisheries management manual*, reprint of the *Seafood preservation manual*, development and delivery of the *CETC fisheries training module*, and maintaining of the CFS homepage on the SPC website.

Future activities

7. The CFS will continue to conduct baseline studies identifying needs for women and coastal fishing communities to be more involved in fisheries activities. Depending on the needs identified, the section will provide development support through conducting workshops on sustainable harvesting techniques, seafood processing and marketing, and small-scale business skills.
8. Depending on staff availability, the section will continue to assist the Forum Fisheries Agency and Forum Secretariat in gender analysis studies of national tuna industries.
9. The section will attempt to be more involved in the management aspects of subsistence and artisanal fisheries. Depending on national needs, the CFS will assist national fisheries agencies to design and set up management programmes to conserve and manage inshore fishery resources of island countries. It will help identify government support that may help fishing communities manage their fishery resources and marine environment. It will assist national fisheries authorities develop strategies to motivate fishing communities to take actions and other conservation measures in order to protect their marine environment. It will run national workshops to train programme staff on how to facilitate community work and formulate village fisheries management plans.
10. Other activities the section will continue to be involved with include the production of *Women in Fisheries Bulletin*, which is issued every six months, and assistance to the Community Education Training Centre (CETC) — providing training and developing a series of community fisheries training manuals.
11. The section is also attempting to promote a regional workshop on the “Participation of communities in the management of subsistence and artisanal fisheries”. The target groups are the fisheries managers and responsible authorities in the management of inshore fisheries. This workshop will allow them to discuss problems and exchange experiences involved in their existing situation and thus enable SPC to better respond to their needs.

12. Since 1995, the CFS's main donors have been Australia and New Zealand although the section has been able to attract additional, one-off funding for specific activities from other sources. The AusAID provides a three-year cycle of A\$ 185,000 each year. This cycle will end in 2002. The NZODA provides annual funding depending on yearly submission and justifications. The NZODA in 2000 and 2001 provided NZ\$ 165,000 and NZ\$ 180,000 respectively. In 2001, Taiwan /Republic of China has provided US \$ 20,000 for training activities for the small-scale fisheries sector. With the new terms and conditions likely to be in place in the near future, coupled with the new salary adjustment now implemented by SPC, the ability of the CFS to carry out its obligation for the island countries will be severely affected unless the main donor countries review their contributions.

General comment

13. The general perception is that relevant authorities have not spent adequate time in examining the importance of subsistence and artisanal fisheries. In particular, their value as everyday sources of protein to the livelihoods of many people especially those in coastal rural communities, has been overlooked or undervalued. Recent studies by SPC revealed that subsistence fisheries have always provided a much larger portion of national fish catches in island countries. The average of subsistence fish catches amongst island countries of the SPC is estimated to 83,913 metric tonne annually, with the value of about US\$ 179.9 million (Dalzell et al. 1996). This huge amount represents the extent of subsistence fisheries that are consumed at local levels by SPC island countries. With this amount source from subsistence fisheries, it is certainly an important matter for responsible authorities to accord high priority. It is for that reason that the CFS of the Coastal Fisheries Programme of SPC has introduced a new dimension in its programme activities in order to assist its island members set up national management programmes in order to motivate communities to take actions for management of subsistence fisheries and marine environment. It is therefore timely and vitally important for island countries of SPC to introduce this initiative into their national fisheries activities or it will be too late to rescue the deteriorated situation now common in the marine environment of Pacific island countries.

Fisheries Development Section

14. The Section changed its name from the Capture Section to the Fisheries Development Section in March 2000. The Objective of the Section has also been modified, and is now to:

Assist countries and territories to develop economically viable commercial fishing operations focusing on vessel operations, harvesting activities and post-harvest practices.

15. To meet the above objective, the Section provides the following services or outputs:

- Hands-on transfer of technical skills in:
 - tuna catching methods (especially longlining);
 - navigation and seamanship skills;
 - vessel operating costs and procedures;
 - maintenance of vessel machinery and fishing equipment; and
 - on board handling, processing and icing of the catch to export standards, through in-country expert placements.
- National workshops conducted on identified topics as part of expert placements.
- Reports published on in-country expert placements.
- Technical manuals on specific fishing equipment and techniques or fish handling practices.
- Advice and information provided on priority development needs in:
 - fish aggregating device (FAD) material suppliers;
 - FAD construction and deployment procedures;
 - appropriate fishing vessel parameters for different applications;
 - alternative value-adding processes for tuna and associated species;
 - deep-water snapper fishing gear and techniques; and
 - sportfishing potential.
- Studies on development options for domestic fishing operations as input to national fishery management plans and development initiatives by countries and territories.

Highlights of Section activities

16. During the last 12 months, the three professional staff of the Section have conducted ten national-level technical assistance projects, been involved with four workshops, and attended six meetings and conferences. Field Reports have been produced on the technical assistance projects, with one published report produced. Highlights of the Section's work over the last 12 months include:

- A very successful project in Samoa conducting the sea and fishing trials on the new 12.2 m *super alia* catamaran longline vessel developed by the Samoan Fisheries Division. The results of these trials were very positive, and several countries in the region have requested copies of the report, which includes a projection on the vessel's viability fishing under Samoan conditions;
- The production of information and awareness materials (brochure and posters) on marine debris and derelict fishing gear in close collaboration with the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council and SPREP/PACPOL. The materials have a clear message on the damage that plastics and oils can cause when discarded into the marine environment. These materials have been very well received, and the education departments in some countries are now seeking these materials for school children;
- Initial swordfishing trials conducted in New Caledonia which show promise and need further work to see if there is a potential fishery around the country; and
- Drafting a paper on bycatch from tuna longlining for the Heads of Fisheries meeting. The paper was developed to highlight the growing concerns being expressed by some people, the measures that have been imposed in Hawaii to address this issue, and the need for Pacific Island countries and territories to look at ways to ensure that this does not become an issue for them.

Commitments and future directions for the Section

17. The section will continue to provide its existing services, and respond to official requests in a timely fashion. In addition, the Section will focus on the following areas:
 - New Zealand has funded a three-year FAD research project, through their Pacific Initiative for the Environment (PIE) fund. The project will be implemented in the Cook Islands and Niue, with a commencement date of July/August 2001. The aim is to find a cheaper mooring system that will hopefully last at least two years on average. Coupled with this is the use of FADs as a management tool, especially in areas where Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have been implemented, to assist displaced fishermen and reduce fishing pressure on inshore resources. Surveys are to be conducted in coastal communities to try to measure the effects, plus a logbook system will be implemented to record catch and effort data, so that a cost benefit analysis can be undertaken. Member countries and territories will be kept informed of progress on this project, especially any design changes that improve the lifespan of units and reduce costs;
 - Production of a technical manual 'Horizontal longline fishing methods and techniques'. This activity was commenced over two years ago, with an initial draft text produced by Steve Beverly. Time constraints and budget limitations have hindered the progression of this manual to date, however, the Section is now placing a high priority on getting this manual completed over the next 12 months in both English and French;
 - The production of a brochure and poster(s) to provide fishermen with information on tuna longline bycatch and ways to reduce or mitigate the problem, or in the event of catching unwanted species, ways to release them with the best chance of survival. As other specific awareness issues are identified, the Section will undertake to produce relevant literature and distribute this throughout the region; and
 - Seek funding for post-harvest activities to address the needs of member countries and territories, as these skills are lacking in the Coastal Fisheries Programme at present.

Information section

Introduction

18. The Information Section assists fisheries scientists, development officers, extension agents, planners, managers, and other involved in fisheries by providing fisheries-related information routinely and on request.
19. The Section's staff include: Jean-Paul Gaudechoux (Fisheries Information Adviser), Aymeric Desurmont (Fisheries Information Specialist), James Uan (Fisheries Information and Training Associate), and Erina Avazeri (Project Assistant).
20. Funding is provided by France, Australia (through AusAID), and the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Council.

Objective

21. The Section's objective, as set out in the 1999-2003 Corporate Plan, is as follows:

Promote information transfer in countries and territories through dissemination of current fishery information and maintenance of technical networks.

Activities

22. The section main activities are:

- Edit and publish the SPC *Fisheries Newsletter*
- Co-ordinate the publication of Special Interest Group Information Bulletins
- Update and publish the SPC Fisheries Address Book
- Develop the Coastal Fisheries Programme's web site
- In collaboration with PIMRIS, provide technical assistance to National Fisheries Departments to systematically organise collection of documents, to create small libraries or resource centres, and to provide on-site training for staff
- Co-ordinate a responsive information advisory service
- Provide attachment training opportunities
- Assist National Fisheries Departments in producing awareness materials (posters, booklets and educational leaflets)
- Assist other SPC Marine Resource Division Sections in finalising and publishing technical reports

More details on the activities of the Information Section for 2000 can be found in Information Paper 1.

Reef Fisheries Assessment and Management Section

Introduction

23. Formerly known as the Resource Assessment Section, the Section changed names in 1998 in order to reflect its focus on the reef and lagoon fisheries issues that are closely related to the living conditions of island communities, including problems with food security and grassroots economic development.
24. The Section's has five staff members: Pierre Labrosse (Reef Fisheries Management Advisor), Being Yeeting (Live Reef Fisheries Specialist), Ben Ponia (Aquaculture Advisor, temporarily included in the Section), Eric Clua (training associate) and a social scientist position which is currently being filled.
25. Its funding sources depend largely on the projects it carries out and include, in particular, France, Australia, the Asian Development Bank, MacArthur Foundation and European Union, although SPC core has provided some gap-filling support to the section in the past.

Objective

26. The Section's main objective is to:

Provide Pacific Island fisheries services with information on the status, exploitation levels and prospects of the coastal resources they manage, offer recommendations and assist these services to define and apply pertinent ecosystem or fisheries management measures.

Activities

Technical assistance

27. The Section provides vital information on reef and lagoon resources of interest for local consumption and marketing. It conducts assessments of their exploitation potential and advises managers and decision-makers on devising and implementing reef fisheries management plans with a view to safeguarding the community's food security and maintaining a sustainable balance between resource conservation and economic development. The Section takes part in strengthening national reef fisheries assessment and monitoring capacities within Pacific Island fisheries services.

Research

28. The Section has set up programmes and undertaken applied research aimed at strengthening the theoretical bases of reef fisheries assessment and management.

Coordination

29. The Section coordinates regional initiatives implemented in collaboration with other institutions on subjects of high priority for Pacific Island fisheries services.

Main projects

30. The Section main projects are:

- Reef component of the PROCFISH Project, a comparative approach to reef fisheries in ACP and OCT countries (awaiting funding by the European Union);
- DemEcoFish, a study on the role of demography and ecology in the fisheries of coastal resources in Pacific Islands (MacArthur Foundation funding – to begin in July 2001);
- CoReUs, a joint research programme with IRD (formerly ORSTOM) on the effects of ecosystems on reef communities and their uses in the Pacific Islands (to begin in January 2002);
- Strengthening fisheries and biodiversity management in ACP countries (European Union-funded ICLARM project to end in June 2001);
- Devising and/or improving on-site methods and tools for studying reef and lagoon fisheries (French funding – to begin in June 2001);

- The Pacific Regional Live Reef Fish Trade Initiative (underway since 2000). Conducted jointly with IMA (International Marinelife Alliance), WRI (World Resources Institute) and TNC (The Nature Conservancy) with a variety of funding sources;
- Regional Aquaculture Development Strategy (project temporarily hosted by the Section while awaiting funding. This is under the direct supervision of the Director of the Marine Resources Division and the Aquaculture Adviser).

Training Section

31. The section's staff include: Michel Blanc (Fisheries Education and Training Adviser), Terii Luciani (Fisheries Training Specialist) and Christine Bury (Project Assistant).
32. Funding is provided by: Australia, France, New Zealand, Taiwan, Commonwealth Secretariat, and Commonwealth Foundation.

Objective

33. The Section's main objective is to:

Identify needs and promote practical training for Pacific Islanders from government and private sectors in all aspects of marine resource utilisation, particularly promoting sustainable income-earning opportunities.

Activities

34. The Section main activities are:
 - Co-ordination of fisheries training/exchange of information
 - Maintenance of SPC database on training institutions and programmes and regular distribution of associated Fisheries Training Directory
 - Maintenance of SPC database on Pacific Island fisheries personnel
 - Bi-annual information bulletin on fisheries education and training
 - Planning of human resource development and training programmes
 - Assessments of training needs in the fisheries sector
 - Strategies to meet the identified training needs
 - Implementation of training activities
 - Funding proposals to implement training strategies
 - Regional and national training activities, training attachments
 - Resource materials developed.

35. Activities for 2000 included:

- Conducted a three-month traineeship programme for Pacific Island fishers in collaboration with the Australian Fisheries Academy;
- Facilitated several in-country workshops on seafood handling and quality management;
- Promoted safety at sea through the development of several awareness and course materials.

More details on the activities of the Training Section for 2000 can be found in Information Paper 5.

Conclusion

36. Using opinions and feedback generated by this meeting, and the results of independent reviews of various constituent projects, the Coastal Fisheries Programme will review its direction and produce a programme strategic plan before the end of the year. The programme is going through a process of change that is more profound than usual, and the coming months will be an appropriate time to take stock of these changes and consolidate working arrangements for 2002.

37. These changes include:

- presentation of the 8th EDF European Union Pacific Regional Indicative Programme project "PROCFISH" to the EU EDF committee in July 2001. This project encapsulates both phase II of the Oceanic Fisheries SPRTRAMP project and the new Coastal Fisheries SPRCARF project presented at the last two SPC fisheries meetings. If approved, this project will significantly increase the size of the Coastal Fisheries Programme and it may become functionally logical to split the current programme into separate Development and Assessment programmes;
- institution of the new AusAID Aquaculture Project. Whilst individual sections have undertaken several aquaculture-related tasks over the years, this will be the first time that SPC has had a dedicated aquaculture function since the early 1970s.
- the financial squeeze on all SPC Noumea activities caused by the harmonisation of staff terms and conditions across regional intergovernmental (CROP) agencies will require sacrifices by all programmes. As is usual during such times, the SPC core-funded activities that stand a chance of being funded from external sources are being particularly squeezed, and the Coastal Fisheries Programme, having demonstrated a good record of justifying, and delivering on, external project support, has been asked to shift half of its core-funded (fisheries development) activities to external sources.
- The review and renewal of the AusAID Coastal Fisheries Development Project, which has formed the backbone of the CFP's fisheries development work for three years. Regional level fisheries development programmes are becoming difficult to finance, as donor support goes increasingly through bilateral mechanisms and directly to the private sector in this area. This is why the CFP development support is derived mainly from SPC "programme funding" (which is non-core funding allocated specifically to SPC by certain member country donors, over which the SPC Executive has a major say in allocation to programmes), with some from SPC core itself. The funding prospects of regional-level fisheries development work as a whole need to be strategically assessed.

- The consolidation of new working arrangements whereby an SPC coastal fisheries section forms the "focal point" for a regionally-inclusive strategy that involves the attention of other agencies and partners in a directed attack on a particular issue. This approach has been successfully used with the Live Reef Fish Strategy over the past two years and will be implemented by the Regional Aquaculture Strategy as well. One useful spin-off is that this approach seems to be an effective way of harnessing regional NGO and IGO capabilities in support of national and community issues - an area which has been traditionally fraught with institutional friction.