

Financial management training for fisheries officers in the Solomon Islands



Fisheries officers during a field trip to Don Bosko Training Centre. From left to right: Alex Carlos, Reuben Vae, James Ngwaerobo, Alan Aba, Sylvester Diake Jnr, James Driver and Ben Buga.

Too often fishery development projects are implemented without consideration of their financial and economic viability. In many cases, this results in the implementation of a project that requires long-term subsidisation or, without this, results in project failure. The success of a fishery project is dependent on good financial management and planning before, during and after project implementation, and the first step towards this is improving the capacity of project managers.

Whether fisheries officers manage fish market centres, or work in capture-based fisheries, aquaculture or marketing, they all have a common need to understand basic financial management. The Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), in partnership with SPC and the Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries Programme (MSSIF), organised a week-long introductory course in financial management for fisheries officers in March 2012. The course was delivered by SPC's Nearshore Fisheries Development Section and facilitated by MFMR's Marketing Section, and had 22 participants.

Background to the course

This applied course on economic evaluation and project management was designed to introduce fisheries officers to financial concepts, project planning, fisheries economics and business, and included topics on:

- Introduction to financial management;
- Vessel economics;
- Aquaculture economics;
- Project planning and budgeting; and
- Business management, marketing and banking.

The workshop was designed to give a brief overview of fisheries economics and financial management, with the objective of introducing general concepts and evaluation techniques that can be used in day-to-day work and transferred to the private sector.

Outcome

Increased financial capacity provides an opportunity for fisheries officers to conduct viability assessments in their area of specialisation. Provincial marketing centres, seaweed farmers, the Honiara fish market and small-scale fishing vessels will have improved financial analysis, and the private sector will have access to advice from MFMR's fisheries officers.

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