

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

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Working Paper 6

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Nelson/SPC Fisheries Training Course Review Secretariat Response

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

www.spc.int/coastfish



Background

1. The SPC undertakes a process of programme development, monitoring and evaluation as part of its commitment to accountability and excellence, as outlined in the SPC Corporate Plan, 1999-2003. The review of the Nelson course, which has been CFP's core training activity since 1979, was part of that process, and had the following purpose:
2. To review the role, goal and objectives of the SPC/Nelson Fisheries Officers Course in support of the fisheries administrations of the region, to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting stakeholder expectations and to provide advice on how SPC can best fulfil its mandate for fisheries officer training in the future.
3. Mr Ian Cartwright was engaged in August 2002 to undertake the review. Five countries were visited (Niue, Tonga, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) and discussions held with both public and private sectors. The consultant also visited SPC and the New Zealand School of Fisheries in Nelson. Questionnaires to heads of Fisheries and past participants were sent out and followed up as necessary with telephone interviews. A total of 16 returns were received from Heads of Fisheries (including two from Provincial Heads of Fisheries) and 30 from past participants. Personal interviews with 21 course participants were carried out during country visits. The consultant produced a first draft report for consideration by the Secretariat in October 2002 and, following feedback, the final report, dated December 2002.
4. The purpose of this document is to provide the Secretariat's formal response to each of the recommendations that the review report contains. The intention is to not only inform stakeholders about SPC's position but also to map out a plan of action for the Marine Resources Division in fisheries officer training.

Responses by recommendation

Recommendation 1: A regional fisheries officers course should continue to be offered, subject to consideration by HoF of subject material, delivery and other matters raised in this review.

Recommendation 11: That the SPC Fisheries Training Section continue to act as Course manager/coordinator for a period of at least five years.

5. SPC response: both recommendations are accepted

6. SPC is a strong advocate for the continuation with the 'regional' format of the Course. The current size of most fisheries administrations in the region is such that, at the possible exception of Papua New Guinea, a six-month broad-ranging training for local officers is not financially viable for SPC member countries and territories.

7. The avowed aim of the SPC Fisheries Training Section is to 'fill the gaps that established training institutions cannot currently fill'. For the time being – the 5-year period suggested by the consultant seems realistic – the Section will continue to act as Course manager/coordinator. If the Pacific Island Fisheries Officer Training Course can become self-sufficient both financially and institutionally, then SPC will willingly assist in its devolution

Recommendation 2: That the 'Nelson' component of the Course be re-aligned more towards sustainable management and industry development, while maintaining key elements of existing practical training.

8. SPC response: recommendation accepted

9. SPC shares the consultant's views about the need for a training programme aimed at passing on to Pacific Island fisheries officers essential practical skills as well as the collective principles of sound fishery stewardship - principles that are currently changing in a major way worldwide. At this critical stage in the evolution of Pacific Island fisheries management, SPC approves a change in the Course focus, towards a better balance between development and conservation. Such a change also finds its justification in the recent CFP Strategic Plan and CFP Review, both presented at this meeting.

10. A new Course outline was drafted by the Fisheries Training Section based on the consultant's suggestions and extensive consultations with staff of other CFP Sections. This draft outline (attached to this document) is tabled for consideration by Heads of Fisheries. Following finalisation and approval by the meeting, the outline will form the basis of the new Course, tentatively scheduled for the first semester of 2004.

Recommendation 3: That the current 'Nelson' component of the SPC Fisheries Officers Training Course continue to be offered at an overseas institution.

11. SPC response: recommendation accepted

12. While financial aspects need to be carefully considered, SPC sees immense benefits in running the Course at a well-selected overseas institution. Nelson, the host town for the period 1979-2002, is the capital of New Zealand seafood industry and there is no doubt that such a strategic position has played a major role in the Course's success. The exposure of trainees to a modern and innovative seafood industry is not the least of the Course outputs; similarly, professional contacts made outside of the Pacific region have been a real bonus for those participants now leading the fisheries administration in their country.

Recommendation 4:

- **that the current practical fishing component continue to be run in New Caledonia; further, that topics offered be broadened considerably in scope to make full use of SPC and other facilities and operations available in New Caledonia; and**
- **consideration be given to changing the name of the component and extending its duration by at least two weeks.**

13. SPC response: recommendation accepted

14. The 2002 practical fishing component of the Course was run in Koumac (Northern Province of New Caledonia). Based on experience gained during previous years, all the tutors involved felt Koumac was an ideal site for basing future practical fishing modules. The vicinity of good fishing grounds, the availability of suitable facilities (fishing port, processing plant of a local tuna longlining company, catch marketing networks) and the support provided by local authorities made the 2002 event a success. Future practical fishing activities will be run out of Koumac.

15. SPC also agrees to broaden the scope of topics offered to trainees while in New Caledonia and, to that effect, it is planned to base part of that practical component at SPC Headquarters where trainees will be exposed to the work of the various Sections making the SPC Marine Resource Division and to fisheries/aquaculture activities in the southern part of New Caledonia. After Noumea, trainees will be transported to Koumac for the final part of their training, where they will be exposed to the realities of commercial fishing.

16. The attached draft Course outline suggests a duration of six weeks for the practical component (was 5 weeks until 2002): 2 weeks in Noumea followed by 4 weeks of fishing in Koumac. For financial reasons, it is difficult to extend the practical component further. It is worth noting that one key input from SPC fisheries staff (the observer training workshop) would take place at the overseas institution, not in Noumea, again for financial reasons.

17. In line with the above changes, it is proposed to change the name of the practical fishing component to “field” component, or “work experience” component.

Recommendation 5: That the length of the fisheries extension officers Course be no longer than six months (currently 23 weeks).

18. SPC response: recommendation accepted

19. The proposed new course is 24 weeks with 18 weeks at the overseas institutions and 6 weeks for the field component (increased by one week). SPC shares the consultant’s view that extending more substantially the Course duration might be prejudicial to its overall effectiveness.

Recommendation 6: That any future fisheries officers course should focus on the basic training required to promote the sustainable development and management of fisheries resources. This will include the delivery of extension services to remote communities, as well as working with and supporting the private sector engaged in tuna longlining and other commercial enterprises.

20. SPC response: recommendation accepted

21. See response to Recommendation 3 and attached draft Course outline

Recommendation 7: That Course participants should continue to be drawn primarily from the public sector.

22. SPC response: recommendation accepted

23. The vast majority (249 out of a total of 275 i.e. 91%) of past participants has been drawn from the public sector and this will not change in future. It is clear to SPC that the Course is aimed towards the capacity building of national fisheries administrations.

Recommendation 8: That a longer lead-time be allowed between invitations to apply and the commencement of the Course to allow for effective national selection processes, adequate in-country briefings and administrative and student preparations.

24. SPC response: recommendation accepted

25. Traditionally, the lead-time between invitations (October) and the Course commencement (early February) has been four months, with the selection of participants usually done early in December. The Christmas period has always slowed the Course administration process (correspondence between SPC and countries and entry visas to New Zealand).

26. It is proposed to announce the Course earlier (August) in order to finalise selection no later than early November, leaving ample time for trainees to obtain their visa and for SPC to make travel arrangements.

Recommendation 9: That Course entry requirements be reviewed and consideration given to an entry requirement that includes one or two years fisheries experience.

27. SPC response: recommendation accepted

28. While the Course should remain a broad-based introduction to fisheries, SPC favours a slight elevation of entry requirements. Junior officers having been exposed to national fisheries issues for one or two years would probably benefit further from the course than totally new recruits. This new selection criteria will be added to the course advertisement.

Recommendation 10: That SPC and the training provider give full consideration to unitising the Course where possible and accrediting relevant sections or units under the New Zealand Qualifications Authority fishing industry standards, or some equivalent accreditation scheme.

29. SPC response: recommendation accepted in principle

30. Although the intent behind this recommendation is accepted, the mechanism for best implementing it would need to be investigated once the overseas institution which will run the Course is identified. Some years ago, the NZ School of Fisheries approached the New Zealand Qualifications Authority concerning the possible accreditation of the Course. This was possible but, after some concerns about difficulties in the recognition of NZ standards by regional institutions, SPC decided not to pursue the matter further. It is possible the more comprehensive coverage of 'scientific' subjects (fisheries science, fisheries management, aquaculture), in a modular form, will make accreditation possible for some parts of the Course.

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Recommendations 12:

- **That SPC undertakes a review of the curriculum in relevant areas and provides an outline of a revised curriculum to the 2003 HoF meeting for comment and input;**
- **and invitations to training providers to bid for provision the Course be arranged; alternatively, negotiations could be directly entered into with NMIT for continued delivery of the Course**

32. SPC response: recommendation accepted

33. The Course curriculum was thoroughly reviewed, early in 2003, in consultation with SPC fisheries staff, the current training provider and using the consultant's report as a reference document. The resulting draft outline is tabled at this meeting for comment and input.

34. Soon after HOF3, key regional training providers (including selected ones in Australia and New Zealand) will be invited to bid for delivery of the new Course.

Appendix 1

Comparison between old and proposed outline for SPC annual Fisheries Officers course

#	Topic	Hrs (OLD)	Hrs (NEW)	Remarks
1	Introduction and orientation	7	7	
2	General fishing Subjects	35		Removed
3	Navigation and chartwork	42	35	Reduced
4	Practical netting and seamanship	49	35	Reduced
5	Marine Electronics (incl. Radio Operators Certificate)	31.5	24.5	Reduced
6	Sea safety and survival ¹	21	35	Expanded
7	Outboard repair and maintenance	56	35	Reduced
8	Engineering workshop practice	28		Removed
9	Welding	28		Removed
10	Fiberglassing	31.5		Removed
11	Boat maintenance / hand tools ²	28	21	Reduced
12	Fish handling, quality control ³	31.5	42	Expanded
13	Business management	28	21	Reduced
14	Fisheries biology and research, incorporating fisheries management ⁴	28		Removed
15	Extension and communication skills	35	35	
16	Computer studies	56	56	
17	Fisheries Science		56	NEW
18	Aquaculture		35	NEW
19	Pacific Fisheries		21	NEW
20	Fisheries Management		42	NEW
21	Observer workshop		35	NEW
22	Project, Private Study, and Report Writing	42	40	
23	Learning Reviews	18	18	
	Total hours =	595.5	593.5	
	Total Weeks ⁵ =	17.0	17.0	
24 Field component: SPC Marine Resource Division			70	NEW
25 Field component: practical fishing		175	140	Reduced
		Total Weeks =	5	6

¹ Module expanded to include basic fire-fighting (NZ certificate)

² Topic name will change to "Vessel construction and safety management"

³ Topic name will change to "Seafood safety and quality management"

⁴ This topic is replaced by a more comprehensive "Fisheries Science" module

⁵ This total does not include public holidays (usually 4-5 days during this component of the Course)
The actual duration of this Course component is 18 weeks (35 contact hours in a week)