

## EU-funded SciCOFish project gets underway

### Background

*Fisheries resources of Pacific ACP<sup>1</sup> countries are the target of efforts to improve the lives of Pacific Islanders. Oceanic resources provide around one-quarter of the world's tuna catch; support both small- and large-scale fishing enterprises; provide government revenue; and, in many countries, represent the main opportunity for economic development. Coastal fisheries contribute to food security and the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people across the region. Both oceanic and coastal resources are at risk of overfishing, however. In oceanic fisheries, a rapid growth in industrial fishing effort threatens two important commercial tuna species. In coastal fisheries, food fish resources are overexploited in the vicinities of major population centres, while certain invertebrate species that are harvested for export are severely depleted across much of the region. Well-informed management action is needed to halt and reverse these trends.*

The Regional Strategy Paper (RSP) and Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) agreed on by Pacific ACP countries and the European Community (EC) for the period 2008–2013, identifies “sustainable management of natural resources” as one of two focal areas for the 10th European Development Fund (EDF10) cooperation. The intervention framework for this focal area consists of assisting the region in developing the economic potential of its natural resources in a sustainable way through sound science upon which management decisions can be made.

The Scientific Support for the Management of Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries in the Pacific Islands Region (SciCOFish) project will complement the ongoing EDF-funded SciFish Project<sup>2</sup>, while following on and learning from the PROCFish<sup>3</sup> and CoFish<sup>4</sup> projects, both of which focused on tuna and reef fishery assessment and monitoring. The SciCOFish project will fulfill the visions of the RSP and RIP for Pacific ACP/EC cooperation in fisheries, and will broaden the growing cooperation between Pacific ACP countries and the EC in fisheries.

### Overall objective

SciCOFish's overall objective is the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and oceanic fisheries resources in the Pacific ACP region. The project addresses a key aspect of the RIP: the development of cost-effective solutions for sustainably managing marine and land-based resources. The project directly responds to Pacific ACP leaders' Vava'u Declaration and the recent 2008 Forum Leaders' meeting in Niue, which called for comprehensive fisheries conservation measures, both in exclusive economic zones and on the high seas; and the sustainable and effective management of national coastal fisheries.

### Purpose

The purpose of the SciCOFish project is to provide a reliable and improved scientific basis for management and decision-making in oceanic and coastal fisheries. The project will provide Pacific ACP countries with 1) the means to develop efficient management measures; 2) the skills to monitor their effectiveness; and 3) some important tools to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing on the high seas. A “demand-driven” approach to implementation will ensure that assistance is provided to those countries that are most likely to take up management advice.

### Project results

Project results will be in two main areas: scientific support for oceanic fisheries management (component 1) and scientific monitoring and management of coastal fisheries (component 2). These two components will strengthen scientific understanding of oceanic and coastal ecosystems, and will help address cross-cutting issues such as ecosystem relationships and the impacts of climate change by linking results via databases. Oceanic activities will provide scientific support for new tuna management initiatives adopted by Pacific ACP countries at a critical time for the conservation of stocks. In particular, intensive observer training and the enhancement of national fishing activity databases will, in combination with the development of a monitoring, control and surveillance strategy under the proposed DevFish<sup>5</sup> study, allow more effective identification and deterrence of IUU fishing activities. Furthermore, the proposed modelling studies respond to calls by Pacific ACP countries to develop tools and strategies for evaluating national impacts from management measures

<sup>1</sup> ACP = African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).

<sup>2</sup> SciFish = Scientific Support for Oceanic Fisheries Management in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean Project

<sup>3</sup> PROCFish = Pacific Regional Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries project. PROCFish was funded by the European Development Fund and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. This five-year project was initiated in March 2002.

<sup>4</sup> CoFish = Coastal Fisheries project.

<sup>5</sup> DevFish = Development of Tuna Fisheries in the Pacific ACP Countries Project

and alleviating the effects of climate change. Coastal activities will focus on (through initial stakeholder consultations) projects that combine an urgent resource management issue with a strong local capability to address the issue and maintain a long-term programme.

**Component 1:** Pacific ACP governments, the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission will be provided with scientific data, modelling, and advice on oceanic fisheries in order to underpin their management decision-making and strategic positioning.

Project activities include:

- developing observer training and systems;
- developing integrated tuna fisheries databases;
- modelling bioeconomic parameters and providing national advice;
- ecosystem modelling of management and climate change; and
- validating key model parameters through tagging.

**Component 2:** Pacific ACP governments, the private sector and communities will be provided with technical methods and training to monitor coastal fisheries, which will result in practical scientific advice for informing management decisions, and the development of in-country capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of these decisions.

Project activities include:

- conducting stakeholder consultations;
- developing local capacity to implement field monitoring protocols;
- developing and implementing secondary data collection protocols; and
- developing management advice.

---

## Staff

*Most staff positions have been filled although several additional positions will be recruited in 2011 under Component 1. Staff members working for the SciCOFish project are:*

---

### **Project Administration and Communications Officer: Anne Lefeuvre**



Anne is an agroeconomist who specialises in natural resources management. She has been working on international projects in various technical areas. Before joining SPC, she was a technical assistant for activities planning and assessment for a regional EDF programme on protected areas management in Central Africa. She is French and has worked in the Pacific Islands region as well as in Africa and Latin America. Her fisheries experience has focused on the preservation of marine biodiversity and on the economic development of the fisheries sector.

### **Fisheries Scientist (National Support) for Component 1: Ashley Williams**



Ashley joined the Stock Assessment and Modelling team in mid-September 2010. He came from the Ecosystem Monitoring and Analysis Section of SPC's Oceanic Fisheries Programme where he was principally responsible for analysing biological and ecological data leading to the enhanced understanding of population dynamics of South Pacific albacore tuna. Prior to this appointment he was a Senior Research Fellow at the Fishing and Fisheries Research Centre at James Cook University in Townsville, Australia where he led several research projects that focused on providing fisheries managers and stakeholders with pertinent information for assessing and managing fisheries within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and Torres Strait. His PhD research at James Cook University examined the implications for fisheries management of spatial and temporal variation in life history parameters of a commercially important coral reef fish.

### **Data Audit Officer for Component 1: Bruno Deprez**

Bruno is an engineer with a Master's degree in IT, who has worked in different professional settings — from developing pharmaceutical software in the USA to setting up a new statistical information system for use with socio-economic and stock evaluation surveys for the Seychelles Fishing Authority.

### **Sub-regional Observer Trainer (Pohnpei) for Component 1: Manasseh Avicks**



Manasseh is from the Solomon Islands but joins us from the Marshall Islands, where he coordinated the port sampling and observer programmes for the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority. He has been contracted by SPC and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency in the past, and is well known to

observer coordinators in the region through his participation at Observer Coordinators Workshops. Manasseh has a great deal of experience managing tuna fishery sampling programmes and training samplers, and will work from Pohnpei to improve the sampling programmes in the northern part of the region.

### **Reef Fisheries Information Manager for Component 2: Franck Magron**



Many readers will remember that Franck held the same position within the PROCFish/C project, where he developed the regional coastal fisheries database and supporting query systems. Franck has worked in many SPC member countries through his previous post, assisting with database development.

More recently, he has been coordinating a “monitoring the vulnerability and adaptation of coastal fisheries to climate change” project, and developing a database and photo-quad analysis tool for coral reef monitoring.

### **Fisheries Scientist (finfish) for Component 2: Being Yeeting**



Being has worked as SPC's Fisheries Scientist (live reef fish trade) for the last nine years, and has worked in most of SPC's member countries, assisting with surveying, data analysis, development and management of aquarium fish fisheries, as well as some work on live reef food fish fisheries. A large part of Being's

work has focused on training and capacity building of local fisheries staff. Being also has experience in monitoring spawning aggregations of reef fish, underwater visual census methodologies, and sampling and monitoring protocols for ciguatera-related toxic algae.

### **Fisheries Scientist (invertebrates) for Component 2: Kalo Pakoa**



Like Franck, Kalo previously worked for the PROCFish/C project as a Reef Fisheries Officer, where he conducted invertebrate surveys and data analysis in many SPC member countries, while training some country staff in invertebrate survey methodologies. He was also involved in several targeted invertebrate surveys designed to answer specific management

needs for key commercial species. Kalo's experience in Vanuatu included invertebrate survey work for management purposes, and coordinating a project on “enhancing coastal and marine ecosystems resilience to climate change impacts through strengthened coastal governance and conservation measures”.

### **Project Administrator and Support (half-time position) for Component 2: Marie-Therese Bui**

Marie-Therese was the Project Administrator with the EU-funded PROCFish/C project and has worked for SPC for many years. She fully understands the EU finance and reporting systems as well as those for SPC. She will be working half-time with the SciCOFish project (Component 2) and half time with other areas of SPC's Coastal Fisheries Science and Management Section.

### *Work plan for 2010*

The contribution agreement between SPC and the EC was signed in April 2010 and project activities began in July.

The project's oceanic component will focus on observer trainings provided in several North Pacific ACP countries (i.e. Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Palau), while procedures will be developed and documented for national tuna data audits and auditing systems for national port sampling. The development of SEAPODYM software for providing national-level analyses will be undertaken, and a two-month tuna tagging cruise focusing on bigeye tuna in the central Pacific will be made.

The project's coastal component will identify the types of monitoring assistance that is needed to address countries' specific management needs, and will begin fieldwork when requests are received or identified for specific monitoring or assessment work necessary for making management decisions. In support of this, the development of database modules for specific monitoring approaches that are identified will begin and at least one national or sub-regional workshop covering monitoring protocols or data collection and analysis is planned.

A regional workshop is also being organised on "Approaches to implementing and monitoring community-based ecosystem approach to fisheries management (CEAFM): Finding common ground between coastal fisheries and conservation approaches in the Pacific". The workshop will be held in Noumea, New Caledonia from 29 November to 3 December 2010, and will bring together key stakeholders from national government conservation and fisheries departments, regional and national non-governmental organisations, and other institutions working in the CEAFM area (including monitoring) to try to find common ground between fisheries and conservation approaches in the Pacific. Collaborations will also be explored so that there is better service delivery at the community level, with consistent messages being delivered, and complementary systems put in place for both management and monitoring purposes, taking into consideration possible climate change effects and the need for adaptation.

Some activities are shared by both components of the project:

- East Timor is not an SPC member but is an ACP country, and therefore must be included in SciCOFish activities. An initial SPC visit will be undertaken in late 2010 to meet national partners of this country and to identify opportunities for project engagement.
- A gender analysis study is planned for late 2010. The project's gender objective is to increase women's benefits from fisheries by increasing their participation in different areas of oceanic and coastal fisheries science and management. To measure this increase in participation, it is necessary to establish a bench mark of the current situation so that increases can be detected at the end of the project. Three countries have been chosen for the gender analysis: Solomon Islands (Melanesia), Marshall Islands (Micronesia) and Tonga (Polynesia).

An invitation for proposals by consultants was advertised in August. The consultant(s) will undertake this analysis with a focus on 1) collecting and analysing sex disaggregated data in different areas of involvement; 2) identifying and assessing national factors that form barriers to women's participation in fisheries science and management; 3) identifying specific approaches and measures to address barriers that have been identified; 4) identifying opportunities for specific interventions in each of the three countries; and 5) developing a gender mainstreaming toolkit for increasing women's participation in fisheries science and management with gender indicators.

#### **For more information, please contact:**

*Anne Lefevre*

*Project Administration and Communications Officer*

*Email: [AnneL@spc.int](mailto:AnneL@spc.int)*