

## Enhancing coastal fisheries monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement

*The Pacific Community (SPC) and the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries (NZMPI) have been working together since 2017 to deliver training in coastal fisheries monitoring control surveillance and enforcement (MCS&E) for SPC Pacific Island members. The workshops focus on the basic skills that a coastal fisheries officer needs in order to fulfil his or her day-to-day roles in the field, such as interviewing techniques, taking statements, gathering evidence, operational planning, and undertaking market inspections. The training also emphasises community education and awareness of the need to sustainably manage their marine resources. Workshop participants are provided with fishery officer notebooks, high-visibility vests, and caps they can use in future inspections.*

Regular members of the training team are Ian Freeman from SPC, and Jeff Dunlop and Mark Nicholson from NZMPI's *Te Pātui* programme, with additional trainers available as required. The workshops have been successfully conducted in Port Vila and Santo in Vanuatu; Kiritimati in Kiribati; and Majuro in the Marshall Islands.

The workshops include classroom sessions along with practical exercises, including a market and fish vendor inspection at the end of each workshop to give participants some real life experience. The inspections have been a huge success, with several offences being detected and illegal product confiscated in Kiribati and Vanuatu. On Santo, one retailer was issued an infringement notice in the

amount of VUV 100,000 (~USD 1000) for possession of a considerable amount of green snail shells and meat and undersized lobsters.

A recent workshop took place in Port Vila and Luganville on Santo in Vanuatu in July 2019. Ian Freeman and Jeff Dunlop were accompanied by Mark Nicholson, whose experience as a fisheries officer and fisheries prosecutor for the New Zealand government strengthened the delivery of more advanced training to participants, particularly in Port Vila. The usual market inspections were conducted after both training workshops, with illegal product including green snail and trumpet shells confiscated in Port Vila and Luganville. A significant quantity of frozen beche-de-mer



Fisheries officers in Kiritimati, Kiribati, inspecting a lobster-holding raft. (Image: Ian Freeman, SPC)

was also confiscated from one of the retailers, and should result in the issuance of a heavy penalty paid to the Vanuatu Fisheries Department.

An interesting discovery during the inspections in Luganville was three whale teeth. While these were most likely removed from a dead stranded whale, their possession in Vanuatu is illegal so they were confiscated. Management of these species often falls to environmental agencies, so the MCS&E training can be tailored to include CITES<sup>1</sup>-listed species and endangered/protected species if a country requires this.

With the limited number of trained enforcement people in many of our member countries, the training team encourages the involvement of officers from the various regulatory and enforcement agencies such as Police, Customs, Environment, Wildlife along with fisheries officers so each agency can assist each other when needed or as requested, which helps to improve consistency in enforcement approaches. The benefits of this interagency approach were highlighted recently in Kiritimati in Kiribati where three conservation officers from the Environment Department attended the MC&S workshop, and in Majuro, Marshall Islands where officers from Customs, Immigration, and Biosecurity attended alongside coastal fisheries staff.

The team will adapt the coastal fisheries MCS&E training to suit each country's or territory's needs and will place



Fisheries officers inspecting the Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority market on Majuro Atoll. (Image: Ian Freeman, SPC)



Jeff Dunlop presenting to students in Majuro, Marshall Islands. (Image: Ian Freeman, SPC)

<sup>1</sup> CITES = Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora



special emphasis on specific MCS&E areas as required. The training team is also able to assist individual fisheries officers with specific MCS&E advice and mentoring upon request.

## Most recent and future work

In August 2019, one week of coastal fisheries MCS&E training took place in Tarawa, Kiribati, which included authorised officers from the outer islands along with fisheries officers appointed by the Ministry of Fisheries Marine Resources Development. With Kiribati's reliance on subsistence fishing as its main source of animal protein and 29 participants attending, the training provided important knowledge to those involved with managing the fisheries.



Illegal frozen beche-de-mer taken from a retailer in Luganville on Santo in Vanuatu, July 2019. (Image: Jeff Dunlop, NZMPI)

Several new training activities are planned for the coming months. Mark Nicholson has developed learning modules that cover the processes needed to develop a prosecution case file to the standards required to support prosecutors in court. How well a case file is put together, including having enough evidence to prove each element of the offence, is critical to the successful outcome of a court case. Included in these modules are important lessons on courtroom etiquette and processes so that new fisheries officers will be less apprehensive when they give evidence in court for the first time.

The team anticipates this training will only be offered to those countries and territories that have experienced coastal fisheries officers, or countries where coastal MCS officers have completed the first workshops.

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### For more information:

**Ian Freeman**

Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring and Surveillance Specialist, SPC  
ianf@spc.int

**Mark Nicholson**

Senior Advisor Pacific Fisheries - MCS and Enforcement (Legal), NZMPI  
mark.nicholson@mpi.govt.nz

**Jeff Dunlop**

Compliance Advisor (Pacific Fisheries), NZMPI  
jeff.dunlop@mpi.govt.nz

### Background to capacity building in MCS&E

The Pacific Community's (SPC) involvement in MCS&E commenced with the project 'Improving fisheries food security and sustainable livelihoods for Pacific Island communities'.

The project is funded by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and focuses on strengthening governance structures and processes, specifically legislation, policy and monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement (MCS&E), which are very weak for coastal fisheries and aquaculture.

Te Pātuitanga Ahumoana a Kiwa<sup>2</sup> (or Te Pātui for short) is New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI's) Pacific fisheries capacity development programme. Seven Te Pātui staff work in partnership with Pacific island fisheries administrations to develop their capacity to manage their offshore and coastal fisheries.

Under Te Pātui, MPI fisheries management and compliance subject matter experts develop and deliver support to Pacific fisheries agencies including:

- Needs assessment
- Project advice and support
- Technical fisheries management and compliance training
- Skills development in writing, project management, and data analysis
- Attachments or secondments into MPI
- Career mentoring.

Te Pātui's three MCS advisors offer training and support on a variety of offshore and coastal fisheries matters, including coastal fisheries MCS, high seas boarding, information management, and prosecutions

<sup>2</sup> Te Pātuitanga Ahumoana a Kiwa, means 'partnerships in Pacific fisheries' in Te Reo Māori.