

36 Recommendations

36.1 Recommendations for Improving the Measurement of Fisheries Benefits

Recommendations for improving the measurement of the main categories of fisheries benefits have been discussed in several sections of this book. They are summarised in Table 36-1.

The above table contains a considerable number of (mainly technical) recommendations to improve the measurement of benefits from fisheries. Because many of the suggestions involve enhanced interaction between fisheries agencies and statistics agencies, a general priority arising from the present study is that mechanisms should be explored on how to encourage the desired fisheries/statistical cooperation. In this regard, the 2009 SPC Workshop on Using HIES and Censuses in Fisheries appears to have had a positive impact on fisheries and statistics attendees, and perhaps similar workshops could promote further improvement in this area. Other mechanisms include having fisheries presentations at regional statistics meetings and distribution of the present study to statistics agencies in the region.

The paucity of information on coastal fisheries production is a problem in most countries in the region. If fisheries agencies cannot afford some type of snapshot fisheries survey consideration should be given to obtaining information from studies outside of the fisheries sector, such as a HIES, agriculture census or national census. However, again, cooperation with statistics agencies is critical in ensuring the relevance of those surveys to fisheries.

Three other suggestions for improving the measurement of benefits have been mentioned in sections above:

- Some assistance by a specialist in small-scale fishery statistical systems could either improve coastal fishery production estimates from ongoing fisheries statistical systems, or confirm their credibility. Fiji, Kiribati and Samoa, as well as other countries, could benefit from such reviews.

- Assistance from regional and international development agencies in the production of good fisheries agency annual reports could encourage a better flow of information on coastal fisheries. This would have a range of useful impacts, in addition to contributing to better measurement of fishery benefits.

In the analysis of benefits from specific fisheries sub-sectors, efforts should be taken to ensure that the analytical work is entirely independent of individuals involved in promoting the sub-sector.

Table 36-1: Improving the Measurement of Fisheries Benefits

Benefit Category	Suggestion to Improve Measurement
Fisheries production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all Pacific Island countries and territories estimates of offshore fisheries production is relatively good. Considering the importance of coastal fisheries in terms of food and employment, countries and the relevant development partners should be devoting at least as much attention to estimating the production of coastal fisheries. • For those countries that have long-established market surveys, an objective analysis should be carried out to determine the accuracy of estimating the national catch from the sampled amount. • For those countries that have not made an estimation of the production from coastal fisheries for many years, a snapshot survey should be considered. • Alternatively, in some countries it may be more appropriate to estimate coastal fisheries production from surveys outside the fisheries sector, such as a national census or a household income and expenditure survey (HIES). For both of those, there should be good cooperation between the government fisheries and statistical agencies in the planning of those surveys. • For countries that are contemplating HIES work to estimate coastal fisheries production, consideration should be given to using the new “fisheries-friendly” HIES.
GDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics staff should obtain technical fisheries expertise when devising methodology, collecting data, making the estimate and reviewing the results of estimating the fishing contribution to GDP. • Statistics staff should compare their estimates of the fishing contribution to GDP with estimates in the country/territory chapters of this book, and evaluate the differences and any need for modification of the methodology. • When using the production approach for estimating fishing contribution to GDP, the analyst should: (a) formulate logical fisheries categories that group similar fisheries with similar value added ratios; (b) in the absence of specialised economic studies in the relevant country, the suggested value added ratios in Appendix 3 of this book should be used; and (c) for estimates of offshore fisheries production, the WCPFC national fisheries reports should be used. • The results of past “informal” and “specialised” studies used in estimating the fishing contribution to GDP should be critically reviewed. • In the longer term, and on the level of regional/international institutions supporting Pacific Island fisheries, consideration should be given to additional work in the areas of value-added ratios, the GDP status of locally based foreign fleets, and formulating satellite accounts for fisheries.

Table 36-1: continuation

Benefit Category	Suggestion to Improve Measurement
Exports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government fisheries agency staff should scrutinise the volumes and values of fishery exports in the official customs department data for erroneous information and omissions. If major errors are detected there should be close collaboration between the staff of fisheries and customs agencies to identify the causes of the errors and mitigation measures. • The official value of tuna exports should be compared with the values on the FFA Excel spreadsheet, "The Value of WCPC Tuna Fisheries", available from the Fisheries Development Section of the FFA, Honiara; large differences should be reconciled. • For the fisheries agencies that carry out independent monitoring of exports, the ability to produce accurate/timely export summaries should be evaluated. Where this is deficient, those systems should be improved or abandoned.
Government Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there are large differences in the amount of access fees given by different government agencies, those differences should be reconciled. • In the few fisheries agencies in the region which apply secrecy surrounding access fees, there should be an evaluation of the costs and benefits of that secrecy, bearing in mind the transparency in neighbouring countries. • The annual reports of government fisheries agencies should provide a reconciled list of access fees and other government income (e.g. domestic fishing licence fees). • In terms of both good governance and giving due credit to the fisheries sector for any revenue generated, it would be sensible to track the significant revenue generation and make the results readily available to fishery stakeholders. Dedicating a small section in the annual report of the government fisheries agency, such as that done by the Fisheries Department in Fiji, would be relatively easy, and could institutionalise this process.
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering that much of the information on fisheries-related employment is a heterogeneous assemblage of facts and information (information that is literally "all over the place") conceptual work should be undertaken by the regional/international agencies that support Pacific Island fisheries on the measurement of fisheries-related employment, taking advantage of worldwide experience, both inside and outside of the fisheries sector. • Some degree of standardisation in terminology and units of measurement should be applied. It is not particularly meaningful to compare the number of "full-time equivalents jobs" in one study with the number of people having "full-time or partial employment" in another. • There should be significant fisheries technical input to the design and implementation of general national surveys carried out by statistics agencies that are intended to obtain comparative information on fisheries-related employment.
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of fish consumption studies should state very clearly what they are measuring: (a) food actually consumed or the live weight of the fish that produced the food; and (b) the consumption of just finfish, or all seafood, or all aquatic foods. • Comparisons between different fish consumption studies should be done cautiously; there is considerable justification for avoiding comparing fish consumption surveys unless the methods used by the studies are known and they are either the same or are corrected so that the data are in comparable form.

36.2 Higher-Level and Longer-Term Recommendations

The trends in coastal fisheries production given in this book are quite significant, and lead to a number of recommendations. On the issue of the work of fisheries agencies of the region, there should be an evolution in thinking, from efforts to extract more benefits from coastal fisheries (coastal fisheries development) to efforts to maintain the existing flow of benefits (coastal fisheries management). Similarly, the assistance that regional and international development partners provide to the fisheries sector at the national level needs to focus more on coastal fisheries management. Recent trends in coastal fisheries also indicate that there has already been a dietary impact of the changes in coastal fisheries production, further strengthening the argument for increased attention to coastal fisheries management. This sentiment has appeared in several regional proclamations (Box 36-1).

Box 36-1: Regional Proclamations on the Need for More Focus on Coastal Fisheries Management

- The Declaration at the Pacific Beche-de-Mer and the Future of Coastal Fisheries Meeting (August 2014), which was signed by the seven fisheries ministers, states: "On the state of Coastal Fisheries, participants recognise... The over-exploited state of coastal fisheries in all Pacific Island Nations and calls for urgent action to improve the management of coastal fisheries to be sustainable... It is timely to shift the emphasis in coastal fisheries management".
- In 2012 the MSG Inshore Fisheries Working Group, comprising senior Fisheries Department officials from Fiji, New Caledonia, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu worked to produce the MSG Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries and Food Security. That document stresses the need for more attention to the management of coastal fisheries, and states: "The costs of improved inshore fisheries management in general would be offset by benefits to the national economies."
- The outcome document of the March 2015 SPC regional workshop on the future of coastal/inshore fisheries management states: "Now is the time for government to ensure there is an appropriate level of resource to securing the considerable economic and other benefits that flow from the sustainable management of coastal fisheries."

The remarkable drop of per capita production from coastal fisheries over the period 2007–2014 alone (6%) should be a "wake-up call" for countries that do not focus much attention on effective coastal fisheries management. Because it is coastal fisheries that provide most of the fisheries-related

employment and food in the region there is a moral and professional obligation to pursue the difficult task of implementing effective coastal management measures with greater vigour.

Access fees for foreign fishing expanded greatly between 2007 and 2014. In real terms (i.e. inflation adjusted) the access fees for the region increased 279% during the period. Much of this is due to the Vessel Day Scheme increasing fees in those countries that are parties to the Nauru Agreement. Access fees increase in real terms in all Pacific Island countries and territories that license foreign fishing vessels. This is likely to reflect the long-term global increase in the value of tuna. It is obvious that increases in regional tuna catches taken over the last six decades, and the associated increases in access fees, cannot continue forever. Efforts to diversify the benefits from offshore fisheries, including the areas of GDP (i.e. local basing), exports, employment and food, should receive increased attention, similar to past efforts to expand catches and increase access fees.