When I was there I was busy all the time; every sunrise I’d look forward to going to work.

"Before I found it hard to write. After SPC, I’m more confident; I’ll write that Report!

Former PIJPs on their experience at SPC.
Contents

Executive summary ............................................................................................................. 1

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................. 3
   1.1 Purpose of the evaluation......................................................................................... 3
   1.2 Evaluation approach/methodology ........................................................................ 3

2. Findings ......................................................................................................................... 5
   2.1 Programme overview.............................................................................................. 5
   2.2 Recruitment process and logistics .......................................................................... 6
   2.3 Participant experiences (Kirkpatrick Level 1 – Reaction) ......................................... 9
   2.4 Participant learning (Kirkpatrick Level 2 – Learning) ............................................ 13
   2.5 Participant application of new knowledge and skills (Kirkpatrick Level 3 – Behaviour) .................................................. 13
   2.6 Programme outcomes (Kirkpatrick Level 4 – Results) ........................................ 14

3. Opportunities for improvement .................................................................................... 14
   3.1 Programme design.................................................................................................. 14
   3.2 Individual workplans and learning outcomes........................................................ 15
   3.3 Logistics for moving to Noumea............................................................................ 17
   3.4 PIJP alumni .......................................................................................................... 16

4. Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 18

Annex A – Topic areas for interviews .............................................................................. 19

Annex B – Advertised areas of focus for selected PIJP roles ........................................ 20
Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by:

Andrea Restrepo, former Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Intern, FAME, SPC;
Connie Donato-Hunt, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Adviser, FAME, SPC; and
Bruce Chapman, Consultant, Marine and Pacific Consultants.
For more information about this report, please contact Connie Donato-Hunt at: ConnieD@spc.int.
Executive summary

Purpose and methodology

This report provides the results of an evaluation conducted of the Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division’s Pacific Islander Junior Professionals (PIJP) programme. It outlines key strengths and weaknesses identified as well as opportunities to improve the programme. Since the programme’s inception in 2011, 14 individuals (six women, eight men) have participated in it.1 The evaluation findings are the result of qualitative interviews, conducted with 11 PUPs (6 former, 5 current) and six Pacific Community (SPC) staff members, as well as an analysis implemented using the Kirkpatrick Model2 for evaluating training.

Programme overview

The PIJP Programme is a 12-month programme open to nationals and residents of Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) who are currently employed in roles related to fisheries. The Programme’s key objective is to build personal and professional capacity in the region. The focal areas for PIJP roles have expanded since the programme’s inception – from coastal fisheries science to the inclusion of both oceanic fisheries and coastal fisheries management and policy.

Overview of findings

Almost all of the PIJPs who were interviewed described their experiences positively. Former participants noted that they are applying the knowledge and skills they learned at SPC in their current roles, and current PIJPs indicated that their experiences at SPC have increased their self-confidence.

Recruitment process and logistics

Although not all home agencies were supportive of participants accepting PIJP positions, the PUPs interviewed considered the selection process both “competitive” and “fair”. PUPs appreciated the arrangements SPC made for their travel to Noumea, including provision of a greeter upon arrival at the airport and transportation from the airport to their accommodation. Limitations on baggage allowance and the associated costs for exceeding these limitations were challenging for one-year postings. Although early PUPs who participated in the programme soon after its inception encountered difficulties in the initial days of their arrival, SPC has improved the arrival experience with the addition of induction and buddy systems. Current PUPs who arrived in Noumea around the same time also described support they received through networks informally established with one another. While all PUPs interviewed felt remuneration for PIJP positions was adequate, some felt that having fewer benefits than other international staff disadvantaged them, particularly for those with dependents.

Participant experiences (Kirkpatrick Level 1 – Reaction)

Of the PUPs interviewed, 10 out of 11 spoke positively about their experiences and expressed gratitude for the opportunities the PIJP Programme provided them. Some former PUPs noted that SPC defined the bulk of their workplans without any input from them and others felt the work expected of them was unclear. However, this seems to have improved over time. In fact, while earlier recruits described difficulties with “lack of guidance and/or advice during initial weeks and months”, this experience was not shared by more recent PUPs. As at 2018, the approach of PUP managers to PUP work seems to have moved toward a greater balance between what PUPs wish to learn and what SPC needs. Participants who frequently met with their supervisors appreciated the effective guidance and feedback provided. Overall, the PUPs found fieldwork both challenging and rewarding.

---

1 As at April 2018.
Participant learning (Kirkpatrick Level 2 – Learning)
PIJPs reflected positively on their professional learning experience at SPC. The opportunity to travel and undertake work trips to other PICTs was a prominent feature for most as was the opportunity to gain and strengthen professional knowledge and skills. As one former PIJP stated, “I am grateful to have had the opportunity to learn coastal fisheries science and management at an expert and professional level”. One SPC staff member also noted that the Programme not only strengthens technical skills; it “build[s] professionals”.

Participant application of new knowledge and skills (Kirkpatrick Level 3 – Behaviour)
Of the former PIJPs interviewed, all returned to their home organisation following their PIJP term. Several spoke positively about being able to apply the knowledge they had learned at SPC in their current roles. For one, implementing a national survey at home was the “biggest accomplishment out of SPC work …. I produced the report directly using what I learned at SPC”.

Programme outcomes (Kirkpatrick Level 4 – Results)
The most positive outcomes shared by PIJPs related to their increased confidence in being able to deliver technical work and face the challenges of new work environments and having the opportunity to author documents while at SPC.

Opportunities for improvement

Programme design
• Directly state in the PIJP job descriptions that the programme utilises a “learning by doing approach”, and formalise opportunities for professional development in workplans.
• Broaden the programme to be inclusive of mid-career professionals (e.g. by removing the term “junior” from the title of the programme and renaming it).
• Continue to broaden the scope of the programme for PIJP placements in other areas within FAME.
• Set the same start date or have multiple PIJPs in FAME at the same time in order to foster the informal network of mutual support mentioned above.

Individual workplans and learning outcomes
• Support PIJPs to identify clear individual learning objectives and outcomes.
• Develop holistic workplans which may include multiple technical areas as well as soft skills development.
• Identify learning opportunities (e.g. learning events, training attachments, short courses) at the start.
• Improve measures for ongoing mentoring and workplan adaptation.

Logistics for relocation to Noumea
• Provide a checklist to help ease the relocation process for PIJPs moving to Noumea.
• Compare benefits/allowances between PIJPs and other international staff to address barriers and challenges faced by those with dependents.

PIJP alumni and ongoing programme adaptation
• Establish a PIJP network to enable PIJP alumni to maintain contact with each other and with SPC staff after they have completed the programme.
• Utilise PIJP alumni more in FAME’s work (e.g. promote south-south exchange models of delivering assistance).
• Ensure continued evaluation of the PIJP Programme.
Conclusion

The evaluation highlights that the PIJP Programme has been broadly successful, noting that it provides a positive experience for PIJPs, builds capacity and professional development among PICTs, and contributes to SPC’s overall success. Most of the early challenges encountered with respect to the support provided to PIJPs on arrival and workplans have been addressed as the programme has developed over time. PIJP alumni reflected positively on their experience with the PIJP Programme and their ability to apply knowledge they learned at SPC in their current work. The most positive outcome of the programme shared by PIJP alumni related to their increased confidence in being able to deliver technical work and to face the challenges presented by new work environments.

“I want to thank SPC for helping me get outside the box. Whatever I will do back home, I will do it with what I learned here.”

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

This evaluation seeks to analyse FAME’s Pacific Islander Junior Professionals (PIJP) programme, identify its strengths and weaknesses, and present opportunities to improve the programme. At the time of writing (April 2018), the programme had been in operation for seven years (since 2011) and had supported a total of 14 participants (six women, eight men) who had either completed, or were currently completing, a 12-month placement with SPC.

1.2 Evaluation approach/methodology

Data collection

A qualitative approach was applied to the evaluation. A key objective of the evaluation was to understand the experiences of PIJP alumni and the longer-term impacts of the programme on their personal and professional lives. A consultant was engaged in 2017 to interview PIJP alumni and, to supplement these interviews, internal SPC staff conducted interviews of current PIJPs and their supervisors in 2018.

The key stages of the evaluation process entailed:

- document review of four former PIJP job descriptions;
- qualitative interviews of SPC staff to provide context for both the programme and the evaluation;
- interviews of former PIJPs (via phone, skype, or e-mail); and
- interviews of current PIJPs and their workplace supervisors.

Subsequently, an evaluation report was prepared with the aim to provide:

- a summary of interview outcomes and PIJP experiences;
- an assessment of the PIJP as a capacity development programme;
- a review of SPC and PIJP objectives/experiences; and
- recommendations for future programme implementation.

As at October 2017, six out of nine former PIJPs had been interviewed over the phone, Skype or e-mail, and four current PIJPs had been interviewed face-to-face. As at March 2018, five current PIJPs and six SPC staff members had been interviewed face-to-face. The interviews focused on the topic areas outlined in Annex A.
Analysis

While the programme has changed since its inception, it has been consistently advertised as a professional development opportunity. As such, the Kirkpatrick Model “Evaluating Training Programs: The Kirkpatrick Four Levels” was applied to frame the analysis. This model is comprised of the following four levels:

- **Level 1: Reaction** – The degree to which participants find the training favourable, engaging and relevant to their jobs
- **Level 2: Learning** – The degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and commitment based on their participation in the training
- **Level 3: Behaviour** – The degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they return to their jobs
- **Level 4: Results** – The degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the support and accountability package

2. Findings

2.1 Programme overview

Funding for the PIJP Programme has shifted over time, from the core budget to project funds. Sourcing funds from different projects and budgets has proven to be a more sustainable funding method.

As at February 2018, nine PIJPs had completed their term with SPC FAME and five were continuing their term as summarised in Table 1. All former PIJPs completed their terms in the coastal fisheries programme (CFP). Of the five current PIJPs, three are working with the oceanic fisheries programme (OFP) and two are working with the CFP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PIJP</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Country/Territory</th>
<th>PIJP Focal Area</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former PIJPs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>CFP Science</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>CFP Information</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>CFP Science</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>CFP Science</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>CFP Science</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>CFP Science</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>CFP Science</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>CFP Science</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>CFP Science</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current PIJPs (as at February 2018)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>CFP Policy and Management</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>OFP Fisheries and Ecosystem Monitoring and Analysis</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>OFP Data Management</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Republic of the Marshall Islands</td>
<td>Stock Assessment and Modelling</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>CFP Policy and Management</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PIJP Programme offers 12-month positions to nationals and residents of PICTs who are currently employed in a fisheries related role. A letter of support is needed from the applicant’s home agency, and the agency must agree to hold a position open for the PIJP’s return.

---

3 Kirkpatrick Partners, 2018, “The Kirkpatrick Model”, available online at: https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/Our-Philosophy/The-Kirkpatrick-Model
The scope or range of opportunities within the PIJP role has changed and expanded over time, notably into the OFP, and from uniquely science-based roles to include management and policy roles within the CFP. One staff member noted that, for coastal fisheries, there has always been a focus on science but the field has increasingly expanded into other areas and is likely to continue expanding (e.g. into fisheries economics) in the future.

In 2018, OFP and CFP have also applied a different approach to how they advertise roles and select PIJPs. To allow room for flexibility in the recruitment process, the OFP job description for PIJPs includes the three different areas of the programme (data management; fisheries and ecosystem, modelling and analysis; and stock assessment). The selection panel then identifies the three most qualified candidates and allows them to choose the OFP area in which they would like to work. Annex B provides a summary of the roles and areas of responsibility described in previously advertised OFP PIJP job descriptions.

There has also been a recent shift in the way the PIJP role is described, from emphasising it as a “professional development opportunity” to focusing more on supporting the delivery of SPC’s work. Based on the findings of this evaluation, the PIJP Programme does not have consistently articulated objectives. There is a range of objectives, including providing additional capacity for SPC, promoting diversity within SPC, and fostering personal and professional development. Despite this broad range, it seems the underlying objective of the PIJP Programme is to build capacity in the region, and this is consistent with a number of subsidiary objectives, including personal and professional development.

2.2 Recruitment process and logistics

This section provides an overview of the experiences of PIJP Programme participants – from recruitment through the initial months of their posting.

Selection process

Perhaps unsurprisingly, since the participants were all successful in the recruitment process, the PIJPs interviewed all seemed reasonably pleased with the competitive selection process. Some PIJPs noted that they found certain aspects of the recruitment process to be rather daunting. For example, one PIJP indicated that “it was the first time I had been interviewed by more than three people; there were five or six on the interview panel”. Nonetheless, the aspects described as daunting are not unusual for competitive recruitment processes and, in general, PIJPs found the process to be both “competitive” and “fair”.

Home agency support

Most respondents were employed with government agencies; one was employed with a non-governmental organisation; and one was not currently employed when selected. 4

One of the former PIJPs described support from the home agency as “great”, while others found the process of gaining support more difficult. One PIJP described a process that “took a lot of time” and eventually required ministerial support for approval. Another participant commented that the agency “did not initially support a one-year posting… but when they saw the benefits [my] immediate boss encouraged it”. In this instance, the principal concern for the home agency related to “the workload left behind” in an agency with a wide range of responsibilities and few staff. This concern was echoed by a SPC staff member who also noted that the programme draws staff away from national fisheries offices.

Nonetheless, current PIJPs appear to have been generally encouraged by their home agencies to join SPC. One commented that their government agency was immediately supportive, recognising the PIJP programme as “long-term training” which is supportive of their agency’s “employee development plan”.

---

4 This was exceptional and due to a lack of applicants for the only available position in information management, an unpopular area within fisheries.
Arrival and adaptation in Noumea

PIJP\'s appreciated the arrangements SPC made for their travel to Noumea and being met at the airport and transferred to their accommodation. Concerns were expressed about the limited amount of personal baggage allotted for one-year postings.

The PIJP\'s, especially those recruited earlier in the programme\'s inception, highlighted difficulties they faced in the initial days following their arrival:

\begin{quote}
It was hard to cope [especially in relation to shops and banking].
'It was quite daunting coming to a foreign land and knowing no one.'
'My first thought was homesick.'
'At the beginning it was difficult...[as I] don\'t speak French.'
\end{quote}

SPC implemented measures to respond to some of these concerns to help PIJP\'s more easily adapt in the early days and weeks following their arrival. A more recent PIJP expressed appreciation that \"[the] house was all ready, plus survival kit, bedding, plus a few days' food\".

The time required to settle in differed between PIJP\'s. One noted that \"after a few months you familiarise yourself\", while another indicated that \"everything was ok when I started work\". For a third, there appeared to be no difficulty at all: \"[the] living arrangement[s] were perfect\". Two respondents who were accompanied by family reported that accommodation was provided to suit their circumstances.

Current PIJP\'s who arrived around the same period (i.e. three arrived within the same month), described a smooth induction process, noting that undertaking the programme within the same timeframe as other participants provided them with an informal network of support. Despite coming from different backgrounds, they felt they were living comparable experiences.

Logistics/travel

PIJP\'s acknowledged SPC\'s efficient organisation of travel in relation to the posting, including field missions. The lack of baggage allowance for the posting was noted for both arrival and return: \"I had to foot my entire luggage over the normal airfare allowance at my own expense\".

Some participants, however, commented that SPC could be more proactive with helping PIJP\'s with administrative procedures during their stay in Noumea:

\begin{quote}
Administrative issues... We are treated differently from SPC employees...
They have more benefits... A lot of things we have to do on our own...
[We have] enough workload, they [SPC] could help by telling me where to go, what to pay... Should have some kind of a checklist system."
\end{quote}

A few PIJP\'s experienced challenges and setbacks in obtaining required visas in time for duty travel. One PIJP faced a negative experience in a transit country as she did not receive her transit visa on time. \"I was stuck in the airport for 14 hours. As a woman, I didn\'t feel safe sleeping at the airport.\" The participant stressed the importance for SPC to ensure that PIJP\'s obtain the visas they will need during their stay at SPC. Another respondent commented that: \"It\'s especially hard for Pacific Islanders to acquire a visa... This is a regional institution; it should give some kind of grant for all the visas required: New Caledonia, New Zealand and Australia especially\".

Several participants agreed that bank procedures were difficult and delayed access to their salaries. One PIJP described being obligated to use her personal savings for a full month before receiving her bank card. Another noted that \"the banking system is the worst ... There are many deductions, costs; everything needs to be administered for the bank\".
Lui Bell, sampling tuna, 2017 © Caroline Sanchez, SPC
Remuneration

Although several PIJPs noted that “Noumea is quite expensive”, all seemed to consider the remuneration (housing subsidy, Cost of Living Differential Adjustment (COLDA), etc.) adequate for the PIJP role. One referred to “savings in the bank” being transferred back home.

PIJPs who move to Noumea with their dependents find the salary insufficient to support their needs. PIJPs do not have access to all the SPC benefits available to SPC international staff and, thus, have to cover the extra costs of providing for their families (including airfare for their dependents).

SPC organisation support and adaptation

Although PIJPs who participated in the programme shortly after its inception encountered some difficulties, as described above, it is notable that SPC responded to the most pressing issues by improving the arrival experience and building induction and buddy systems.

Some PIJPs felt that they could have used more guidance and support with respect to administrative procedures (finance, visas, etc.).

Two instances whereby SPC responded positively to specific PIJP needs were cited: In both cases, SPC made arrangements to change the accommodation available to these PIJPs in order to allow their dependents to join them. Although additional support may not be available to all PIJPs, one participant noted that:

- *SPC did pay for my child and his nanny's airfares when we first came…*
- *Housing was very helpful in supplying us with a baby cot for my young son…*
- *I later requested another bed and that was taken to the house pretty quickly also.*

2.3 Participant experiences (Kirkpatrick Level 1 – Reaction)

Development and implementation of a work programme

One PIJP who participated in the programme in its early years commented on the need to improve introduction to the organisation on arrival: “To understand SPC as a new employee, an induction or some sort of orientation would greatly assist … I felt a little lost at the beginning”. This appears to have improved, as it was not raised as a concern by later PIJP participants.

Most of the PIJP alumni indicated that their workplans were set by SPC rather than developed in collaboration with them to ensure their interests and needs were also met: “when I got there the programme was already designed.” For one early recruit, the process was less clear-cut: “the first few weeks were “up in the air” as we tried to work some workable solution around my activities and tasks;” “I was bored for weeks because I had no proper work programme.”

As at 2018, the approach of PIJP managers to PIJP work seems to have moved toward a greater balance between what the PIJPs wish to learn and what SPC needs. One PIJP described it as an “organic and ongoing” process, with meetings being driven by PIJP needs. Another described bimonthly meetings during which plans and priorities are continuously adjusted. Participants who frequently met with their supervisors appreciated the guidance and feedback they received: “Feedback and follow-up is good to know if you’re on the right path and to make sure you’re learning.”

Several PIJPs reflected on the fact that SPC’s work “depends on country requests” which, thus, drive the work programme. Another PIJP commented that “it would have been great to be given a project specific to [my country]…I think it’s better for the PIJPs to have their own programme”.

With respect to the latter, it appears that SPC has begun to take this approach; recently recruited PIJPs have been assigned their own projects, including final work projects. As a related observation, current PIJPs seem to have had a stronger diversity of tasks and topics that may not have a direct connection to their roles, such as gender equality or community engagement, enabling them to broaden their experience and knowledge.
Some participants expressed a desire for more balance and diversity in their workplans with respect to the identified skills they wish to acquire. One PIJP reflected on an anticipated promotion upon his return to his home agency and commented:

"I strongly recommend for SPC to look beyond the PIJP role. It would be good for people like me, for SPC to identify what would help the person grow, [for example] link policy to business plan, look at the whole structure, learn leadership skills.'"

A few indicated that certain aspects of the role differed from that described in the job description: One commented that some of the work was "not part of the advert" and another noted that the role was "not as advertised in the JD but it turned out good!"

Workplace culture and professionalism

Some of the PIJPs commented on the high work expectations, for example: "I expected it to be busy – but more than I expected." One commented on the change from working in a government agency: "I learnt time management … [home agency] is very particular with time in and time out; SPC is more about achieving goals – managing your own time to get things done." Another commented that "I have to work on something every day – no free time – always busy, multi-tasking".

Several PIJPs were surprised by the rapid transition from training to fieldwork:

"[The role was] 'to assist' – but after working with SPC on-site [I] then went out myself! But good experience/challenge – learnt a lot.

'Here only 3 weeks then started travelling.'

'As soon as I arrived in Noumea, two weeks later [ I went] to Tuvalu.

I had never been to an atoll … Waves on both sides of the road!"

For one, this transition could be improved by providing more office-based training during the first six months. For another, "work was great, fieldwork more fun and exciting", and one other commented that the workload was "just right – apart from hiccups".

PIJP staff appointments differ from other SPC international staff contracts mainly in that they are shorter in duration (12-month, fixed-term contracts) and lack additional support. This may also result in additional stress or pressure felt by PIJPs, particularly those feeling significant professional consequences for achievement or non-achievement in the role going into a new professional environment. These factors contribute to greater stress among PIJPs than other internationally recruited SPC staff.

Balance of support/independence

Earlier recruits experienced some difficulties with "lack of guidance and/or advice during initial weeks and months" due to the frequent absence (on duty travel) of staff responsible for their area of work. More recent PIJPs had more positive experiences: "I had a lot of support from my supervisor". One earlier PIJP commented that they were "not taken to observe and assist the immediate supervisor" on an initial mission; perhaps as a consequence, they faced challenges on mission, including; "lack of preparation by the fisheries office (in country)" and "animosity" with staff of other agencies working in the same country.

Overall, however, PIJPs found fieldwork both challenging (in terms of professional work and the logistics of travel) and rewarding. One later PIJP stated; "I was mentored well on the first trip and the second. For the third trip, I did it myself – even the letter of agreement" (approximately 4-5 months after starting the PIJP term). This was described as a "big change and learning process".

Difficulties experienced by some PIJPs could be related to the time constraints of their supervisors. As one SPC staff member noted, supervision of PIJPs often requires a significant time commitment, with the level of supervision and workplace support provided depending on the timing of PIJP arrival and the person/personality of the workplace supervisor and/or PIJP. The workplace supervisor is also not always involved in PIJP recruitment or decisions regarding the start date or area of work.
For SPC, it should be recognised that the role of mentoring is a serious one; the pace at which people adapt to new surroundings and uptake of new information is affected by many factors and is not necessarily an indicator of capability or effectiveness. Feedback and follow-up is essential for PIJPs to feel supported and effective in their roles. PIJP experiences and learning outcomes largely depend on the support and investment of their respective supervisors. In addition, supervising staff may also benefit from capacity development in training and mentoring.

**Final output of the PIJP posting**

The PIJPs took considerable satisfaction from being able to produce, or co-author, a written report of their work. For example:

"For me to have my name on the report was a big achievement."

"I was able to produce all the technical manuals."

"By the end, [I was] co-author on four country reports."

For one though; “my final report wasn’t completed, as expected, as I felt I needed more time”.

**PIJP overall impressions**

It is clear that most of the participants experienced a range of reactions at different stages. At the outset, they were grateful to be selected; on arrival, they were generally daunted by the new circumstances; and, then, they accepted, to varying degrees, the challenges of their new roles and, ultimately, departed with a sense of confidence and satisfaction.

Of the PIJPs that participated in the evaluation, 10 out of 11 were positive about their experiences and seemed to have enjoyed the experience overall and felt grateful for the opportunity. Individual responses depended, in part, on their circumstances (e.g. single mother; young man without dependents) and other factors. In general, the level of satisfaction seemed more consistently favourable as SPC gained experience with the programme and responded to the feedback it received, developing induction and buddy systems, for example.

Some of the PIJPs provided the following reflections on their time at SPC:

"Understanding all this gives one a sense of cautiousness and openness to respect and appreciate life in general."

"I have always felt positive towards SPC and have a deep respect for the work that it does but I strongly believe in sustainability. As a Pacific Islander, I hate to think that foreign consultants provide solutions and advice that are short-term."

"I learned and appreciated the hard work that [the] coastal [fisheries programme] take on [responding to] country requests"
2.4 Participant learning (Kirkpatrick Level 2 – Learning)

PIJP commented positively on their professional learning experience; “I am grateful to have had the opportunity to learn coastal fisheries science and management at an expert and professional level”.

At the same time, there was a sense for some earlier PIJPs that they had been “thrown in the deep end” (in particular, in relation to field missions) without sufficient preparation or training. One PIJP noted: “my learning curve was mainly based around the [technical issue]. Everything else I just used my experience to help me perform my tasks.”

Learning was not always limited to the work programme; “[SPC] pushed me to other opportunities for learning … not specific to the project”. The opportunity to travel and work in other countries was a highlight for most:

“I travelled to Pacific Island countries to see first-hand coastal issues and learned how communities and local governance deal with them.’

‘The best was travelling to those Pacific islands and learning new cultures, traditions, visiting new places and most of all the overall experience gained.’

‘The best aspect? Working with other Pacific Island countries; visiting and working with people; seeing how others approach things; [and] their challenges. [This all] makes a big difference in understanding.’

One SPC staff member also noted that the programme is not only intended to build capacity in relation to technical skills but also “to build professionals”. However, this person felt that aspects relating to professional behaviour were not always clearly articulated or part of the professional development support provided.

2.5 Participant application of new knowledge and skills (Kirkpatrick Level 3 – Behaviour)

Of the former PIJPs interviewed, all who were recruited from an organisation returned to their home organisation after their PIJP term (except for the individual who was not employed at the time of recruitment). This was in line with the organisations’ commitments to hold a position open for the returning PIJP; however, PIJPs did not always return to the same role.

Several former PIJPs spoke positively about their application of knowledge learned at SPC in their current roles:

“My experience has been vital in leading and assisting in conducting trainings, collecting data, doing monitoring and evaluation of data collection.”

“They really appreciated, acknowledged the skills brought back to the organisation.”

For one, implementing a national survey on returning home was the “biggest accomplishment out of SPC work …. I produced the report directly using what I learned at SPC – organisation, science…”. For the PIJP who did was not employed when recruited, “the benefits of working with SPC are huge but I found it somewhat difficult to find work … on my return”.

---

SPC seems to have improved this as none of the current PIJPs shared this sentiment.
2.6 Programme outcomes (Kirkpatrick Level 4 - Results)

The most positive outcomes seemed to be increased confidence in the PIJPs’ ability to deliver technical work and to face the challenges presented by working in new environments. On the technical side, the opportunity to author documents while at SPC was cited by several PIJPs as a key outcome of the programme. For example:

“Good to learn writing and publications – I am still publishing reports from this learning.”

“Before I found it hard to write; after SPC, I’m more confident: ‘I’ll write that Report!’”

For one, “I specially learned to be more confident at meetings. Before, I would ask someone to speak for me – now, I’ll take the mic!” With respect to the overall learning experience, one summed it up by saying: there are “ups and downs, but, you learn things; next time it comes up, you know how to deal with the situation.”

SPC staff noted that, while the programme invariably entails costs, it is directly beneficial to SPC in that it provides the agency with additional staff who offer unique skills and establishes or maintains country connections.

3. Opportunities for improvement

A number of suggestions to improve the programme were provided by participants and revealed in the evaluation findings:

3.1 Programme design

Clara/try the opportunities for professional development and the programme objectives

The emphasis on an “exciting professional development opportunity” in job advertisements led to certain expectations that SPC offers PIJPs a teaching/learning environment. Instead, many PIJPs found the agency’s expectations and focus to be on action – a doing environment – in which learning is gained through experience not necessarily through professional training or support. SPC could clarify the nature of the programme by advertising it as “facilitated learning through experience” rather than a training-oriented approach, and by ensuring professional development is formalised in workplans. Some PIJP job descriptions could be better articulated, clearly indicating what applicants might expect from a PIJP opportunity.

Broaden the programme to be inclusive of mid-career professionals (i.e. rename it)

The term “junior” may imply the programme is targeting recent graduates or junior staff when, in fact, this does not always represent the individuals selected for these positions and it is in the interests of SPC to promote inclusion of mid-career professionals as SPC also benefits from the knowledge and experience of them. Removing “junior” would ensure the title of the programme is more inclusive (e.g. “Pacific Islander Fisheries Professional”).

Continue to broaden the scope for PIJP placements to other areas within FAME

Several current and former PIJPs suggested that the work areas under the programme should be broadened. Areas suggested include fisheries economics and monitoring, evaluation and learning. SPC has already begun to take up this approach by opening the programme to oceanic fisheries and areas of coastal fisheries management and policy in 2017-2018.

Set the same start date for PIJPs or have multiple PIJPs at the same time

It is recommended that participants undertake the programme at the same time. “SPC should set the same start date for 3 or 4 PIJPs per year (each in a different section) and treat them as a cohort”. As proven by three PIJPs who started around the same period in 2017, this would greatly ease their adaptation and integration into the new working environment by providing an informal network of support.
This, however, can be difficult to achieve due to funding availability and the challenges accommodating the needs and interests of PIJPs and their home agencies in identifying the best time to move to Noumea and join the team. Where setting the same start date for PIJPs is not possible, SPC should consider overlapping PIJP terms so there is still a period of support between multiple PIJPs within FAME.

### 3.2 Individual workplans and learning outcomes

**Identify clear individual learning outcomes and objectives**

The evaluation found that the individual objectives, priorities and workplans of PIJPs were not always clear, although this had improved more recently. Some also experienced downtime in the beginning, whereas others experienced overload and difficulties prioritising tasks or felt lost at times. To clarify individual PIJP priorities and objectives, SPC supervisors should continue to support PIJPs to identify the skills and learning outcomes they would like to work toward during their time at SPC.

**Develop holistic workplans**

Upon the arrival of PIJPs, both the participants and their supervisors can develop a workplan and prioritise objectives in line with the needs of the participant and their supervisor. In developing workplans, PIJPs and SPC staff also noted the importance of considering a holistic workplan. This may include a specific project/s, experience in multiple technical areas, as well as soft skills. One PIJP suggested “putting the whole package together – data, analysis, policy [would be] very good for us”.6

As a professional development programme, it is crucial for SPC to ensure that each PIJP workplan fits participants’ needs to grow professionally, even in aspects indirectly related to fisheries, such as soft skills that may be important for their work (e.g. public speaking, task management, leadership skills or learning how to coordinate with stakeholders). SPC staff suggested that future PIJPs could do an end-of-term presentation to SPC staff on a project or subject on which they worked during their stay, or another presentation during their time at SPC (e.g. a regional meeting).

In considering SPC needs in the workplan development, one PIJP supervisor added that understanding the social context and background PIJPs bring could also be helpful in identifying work tasks since “… existing networks and connections, if a PIJP has a connection, may be used to help SPC build bridges with certain organisations”.

**Identify learning opportunities at the start**

Related to recommendations 5 and 6, it is recommended that opportunities to fulfil participants’ learning and training needs be identified at the start since it is recommended. This could include learning events, training attachments with other fisheries agencies or short courses. Former PIJPs interviewed suggested three ways to formalise learning opportunities:

- A period of general training at the start of the term (i.e. a week or two in each of FAME’s sections) to allow the PIJP to gain an overview of FAME’s work before starting in a specific section or on a specific project. This could be part of the orientation process.

- Partner with other institutions, such as Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), PNA, Ministry for Primary Industries of New Zealand (MPI) or other partners, to send PIJPs on training attachments that are relevant to individual learning outcomes, as has occurred with recent CFP PIJPs.

- A certificate of completion and/or a reference outlining the PIJP’s accomplishments at SPC may be beneficial to the PIJPs and serve as motivation for successful completion of the programme.

**Improve ongoing mentoring and workplan adaptation**

SPC should assign the responsibility of supervising PIJPs to staff who are available to provide mentoring and support. Supervising staff could be supported in their management of PIJPs, including involvement in the recruitment processes, input into the start date, and any support they may require in developing mentoring and leadership skills themselves. Regular meetings between PIJPs and their respective supervisors should also take place to allow for feedback, follow-up and adjustments of workplans and priorities.

---

6 One of the more recently recruited PIJPs was able to do this informally.
3.3 Logistics for moving to Noumea

Formalise a checklist for relocation to Noumea

Arriving in a new country with a new language, laws and processes may cause PIJPs to feel lost. A checklist to ease the arrival process for participants could be beneficial and should include administrative procedures for visas, banks and mobile and internet connectivity. Before sending PIJPs on duty travel, it is also important to consider that visas take time and may be difficult or costly to obtain.

Compare benefits/allowances between PIJPs and other international staff and consider covering key additional costs

Factors, such as moving costs (baggage, plane tickets), childcare, and support for accompanying adults, may deter some qualified applicants (e.g. primary carers of children) who encounter additional barriers to participation from applying to PIJP roles. To ensure equitable opportunities among applicants, SPC should consider offering the benefits outlined below to PIJPs.

- **Increased baggage allowance**: Given the expressed concerns about the limited amount of personal baggage for a one-year posting, SPC should consider covering additional costs for extra luggage during travel to and from Noumea. Along with the costs associated with extra baggage, limited luggage space means that PIJPs incur additional costs purchasing household items for their year in Noumea.

- **Additional costs for participants with dependents**: PIJPs arriving in Noumea with dependents have additional needs and expenses. Costs related to dependents, such as airfares, may disproportionately affect women with children. Thus, it is important to investigate this further from an equity perspective to ensure there are no additional barriers to the participation of women in the programme.

3.4 PIJP alumni

Establish an ongoing PIJP network

PIJPs felt they had shared a unique experience with one another and expressed an interest in maintaining contact with each other as well as with SPC staff. One suggested establishing an online group for PIJPs, but acknowledged challenges to manage and maintain ongoing engagement, as learned by the SPC Land Resources Division in developing a similar online engagement space.

Utilise PIJP alumni more in FAME’s work

It was suggested that SPC could continue to draw on PIJP skills and experience, even after their terms have ended, for requests at short notice or for south-south exchange models to deliver assistance.

Continued evaluation

FAME should continue to conduct evaluations for continuous programme improvement and potentially examine other aspects of the programme (e.g. term length, inclusion of the perspectives of fisheries agencies).

---

7 More on this engagement space, ‘PAFPNET’, can be found at: http://pafpnet.spc.int/
4. Conclusion

The evaluation highlights that the PIJP Programme has been broadly successful, providing a positive experience for PIJPs, building capacity and professional development, and contributing to SPC’s work. Of the PIJPs who were interviewed, 10 out of 11 spoke positively about their experiences and expressed their gratitude for the opportunity.

PIJP alumni spoke positively about applying knowledge learned at SPC in their current professions. The most positive outcome of the programme related to increased confidence among PIJPs in their ability to deliver technical work and to face challenges presented in new work environments.

“Understanding all this gives one a sense … openness to respect and appreciate life in general.”

“I want to thank SPC … Whatever I will do back home, I will do it with what I learned here.”

Key strengths of the programme include:

- providing a development opportunity for a number of Pacific Island fisheries professionals;
- bringing additional support to SPC’s work, including valuable knowledge from within the region;
- contributing to the learning and professional development of PIJPs, including soft skills;
- creating or reinforcing a positive view of SPC among programme participants; and
- creating an awareness among PIJPs of the challenges in delivering regional services.

Some weaknesses include:

- gaps in institutional and logistical support for PIJPs;
- occasional mismatch between PIJP expectations and their experience;
- ambiguity about the purpose of the PIJP role; and
- inadequacies in PIJP work planning.

Most of the early challenges in terms of support provided to PIJPs on arrival and work planning seem to have been addressed as the programme has evolved. The current evaluation highlights additional opportunities to continue improving the programme into the future and to build on its impact and effectiveness.
Annex A - Topic areas for interviews

Experience
1. Process for application and selection
2. Recruitment process – travel/logistics
3. Expectations at the start
4. Settling in Noumea/SPC
   • Living arrangements, housing etc.
   • Work arrangements - SPC processes and procedures
5. Development of work programme
   • Work area
   • Specific project
6. Delivery/implementation of work programme
   • Balance of support/independence
   • Fieldwork
   • Final product/Report
7. End-of-term arrangements
8. Return to home agency

Learning and impact
9. Learning – The degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and commitment based on their participation in the PJP Programme
10. Behaviour – The degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job
11. Results – The degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and support

Overall
12. Challenges
13. Best and worst aspects
14. Suggestions for future/improvements
### Annex B – Advertised areas of focus for selected PIJP roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Focal area</th>
<th>Key responsibilities/functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2013 | Reef Fisheries Science | - Assessing coastal living marine resources to inform management  
- Capacity development  
- Provide input to information materials |
| 2015 | Reef Fisheries Science and Management | - Assessing coastal living marine resources and resources status to inform management  
- Providing practical assistance to SPC member countries and territories in the design of appropriate awareness-raising and educational information  
- Assisting with section administration and communication |
| 2016 | Oceanic Fisheries | Any aspect of OFP's work programme:  
- Stock assessment and modelling  
- Fisheries and ecosystem monitoring and analysis  
- Data management |
| 2017 | Fisheries Management and Policy | - Assisting national and sub-national governments to develop, review or update coastal fisheries and/or aquaculture management plans and policies  
- Collaboration with other work areas within and across SPC sections, programmes and divisions, and other regional organisations  
- Section administration and communication |
| 2017 | Oceanic Fisheries Programme | **Stock Assessment & Modelling.**  
- Analytical work related to the development and/or implementation of national fisheries management plans for tuna and related species  
- National bio-economic modelling  
- Development of interactive stock assessment training models for use in workshops  

**Fisheries and Ecosystem Monitoring & Analysis.**  
- Observer programme assessment, management and training  
- Longline e-monitoring implementation and analysis  
- Tuna biological studies  
- Ecosystem monitoring and analysis  

**Data Management.**  
- Development of software tools to assess data quality  
- Application development  
- Data summaries and analysis in response to member requests  
- Participation as an instructor in capacity-building workshops  
- Various aspects of observer data management, including data auditing, national database development and maintenance, data registration and summaries and analyses of observer data |
Evaluation of the Pacific Islander Junior Professionals Programme

August 2018

When I was there I was busy all the time; every sunrise I’d look forward to going to work.’

“Before I found it hard to write. After SPC, I’m more confident; I’ll write that Report’

Former PIJPs on their experience at SPC