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Fisheries Training Section

Coastal Fisheries Programme
Marine Resources Division
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Fisheries Training Section

This paper provides an overview of the activities carried out by the Fisheries Training Section since HOF 1, in August 1999. Its aim is to facilitate discussions with meeting delegates, either in the plenary or more informally, in order to receive feedback on the Section's past and current work as well as to prioritise our future inputs in the development of the region's fisheries sector.

Introduction

During the reporting period, the staffing level of the Section has remained unchanged. The Section consists of three full-time staff: Michel Blanc (Fisheries Training Adviser – FTA), Terii Luciani (Fisheries Training Specialist - FTS), and Christine Bury, Project Assistant - PA/FTS). An additional position, the Fisheries Information and Training Associate (FITA), is shared with the Information Section. The current incumbent of that position is James Uan, the Fisheries Training Officer of the Kiribati Fisheries Division.

The Section's operational budget continues to be provided by the governments of Australia and France. The positions of FETA and PA/FTS are funded by Australia, while the FTS and FITA posts are funded by France.

Objectives

The objectives of the Section were reviewed and redefined at the 1992 RTMF. These objectives continue to guide the Section staff in their work. They can be summarised as follows:

Co-ordination of fisheries training

Act as a vehicle for enhancing the transfer of fisheries-related skills and knowledge to Pacific Island national by co-ordinating fisheries training opportunities and promoting the exchange of relevant information on fisheries training;

Fisheries training planning

Assist Pacific Island countries to plan and implement training programmes in the fisheries sector, and to make best use of available training opportunities;

Implementation of training activities

Develop and implement training programmes not readily available through established institutions, in particular, vocational and hands-on training in areas such as enterprise management, safety at sea, seafood quality management and aquaculture.

Overview of 1999-2001 activities

The Section's current work programme is based on the above objectives. The recommendations made at the 26th RTMF in 1996 have resulted in an increased interaction with the commercial fishing sector of Pacific Island countries and territories. Since HOF 1, several new training activities have targeted industrial fisheries enterprises as well as small-scale fishing operators. The Section has also continued to work closely with fisheries administrations and national fisheries training institutions. Our training initiatives may be implemented at regional level (workshops, seminars or training courses) or in-country level. Activities also include the organisation of individual training attachments as well as the development of resource materials in support of training initiatives.

Co-ordination of fisheries training

Over the last few years, the Section has developed and co-ordinated a network of fisheries training providers via the Fisheries Training Directory and the SIG bulletin on Fisheries Education and Training.

The **Fisheries Training Directory** database lists programmes and institutions of interest to Pacific Island fisheries personnel. This database is maintained and kept up-to-date by H  l  ne Lecomte (Secretary/Director of Marine Resources Division). A hard copy of the Directory is printed and distributed at regular intervals. The latest version was printed this month and is available to the meeting participants.

The Section's **bulletin on Fisheries Education and Training** is one of eight Special Interest Group bulletins initiated by the Information Section. It is published twice a year and its aim is to link national and regional training institutions, training users and the private sector. Over the years, the bulletin has become a popular means for advertising and reporting the training initiatives for the region's fisheries personnel.

As part of its co-ordination role, the Section also maintains a database on Pacific Island fisheries personnel and a website which contains resource materials, training advertisements and reports.

Planning of fisheries training

The assessment of countries' training needs and the development of strategies to meet those needs is an important function of the Training Section. The assessment of our clients' training needs is done on an ongoing basis, using the Section's network of fisheries contacts, during country visits, regional meetings and through daily correspondence. Sectoral training needs can also be quantified using questionnaire surveys sent via email or surface mail.

The Section's most recent work in this area includes:

Fishing vessel certification

Consultation with maritime authorities and training institutions takes place at the annual regional meeting organised by the Suva-based SPC Maritime Programme. The recent introduction of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) convention (SCTW-95) has resulted in a need to develop a new certification structure and modify the format and content of courses for seafarers. While the certification requirements for the bigger merchant vessels need to follow IMO guidelines, countries have the flexibility to put in place, for their fishing fleets, a legislation and certification structure that reflects local vessel designs and, types and areas of operation. After due consultation with maritime and fisheries authorities in the region, the Section has produced a series of new courses and associated materials aimed at increasing the range of options available to countries for the development of their small-vessel legislation.

Early in 2000, the teaching materials for the Restricted Class6 master/engineer certificate were distributed to national training institutions. The course has, since then, been made statutory and is delivered in several countries including Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Cook Islands and FSM.

Other courses for fishing vessel crew, previously developed by the Section, continue to be offered in the region. During the reporting period, the Section assisted with the initial pre-sea safety and fishing course in FSM (December 1999) and the first Qualified Fishing Deckhand in Fiji (October 2000).

Training of fishing vessel engineers

The lack of qualified and experienced engineers is considered by many as a major constraint to the growth of regional fishing industries. The Section is thus still considering the development of a suitable and cost-effective programme that would train marine engineers to the level required for the manning of large offshore fishing vessels. To that effect, a training need assessment questionnaire was distributed, in May 2001, to most commercial fishing companies in the Pacific. Meanwhile, consultations are taking place with training institutions on their interest and possible strategies for a programme aimed at building a regional pool of skilled and qualified fishing vessel engineers. A concept paper was also forwarded to an aid donor in June 2001, with the hope that, if funding can be secured, a pilot training programme will be tendered to training institutions in 2002.

Safety at sea campaign

In 1995, following an FAO survey of safety at sea issues in Pacific Island countries, the Section launched an awareness campaign as a strategy to reduce the rate of small-vessel incidents in the region. Initially targeting small fishing vessel operators and the public, the Section has produced between 1995 and 1999, a series of awareness materials that most participants to this meeting would be familiar with (posters, stickers, safety check lists, workshop materials, videos, booklets, etc).

From 1999, the safety at sea campaign has also targeted the crew of larger fishing vessels through the new initiatives. Recent safety at sea materials include a training video on safety aboard large fishing vessels (Rambo Goes Deep-sea – 2000), a Basic Sea Safety Certificate (2000), the translation of posters and check lists in Vanuatu pidgin (2000), and a poster on the dangers of alcohol at sea to respond to a request from Niue (2000).

In March, Section staff attended the annual regional maritime meeting organised by the SPC Maritime Programme (meeting of the Association of Pacific Island Training Institutions and Maritime Authorities – APIMTIMA). At the meeting, the Section co-ordinated a workshop on **Safety Management Systems (SMS)** and their potential relevancy for the Pacific. Under a SMS a vessel operator takes everyday safety procedures, writes them down in a manual and then train all crews to follow these procedures. By keeping daily records of safety procedures, the operator ensures that the vessel is safe throughout the year and not just on ‘survey day’. While SMS are only made mandatory by the International Maritime Organisation for trading vessels of more than 500 gross tons, it is believed that fishing companies using such systems would significantly increase the safety and profitability of their operations by making crew more safety conscious and reducing the risk of mechanical breakdowns. The meeting recommended that SPC continue to promote the introduction of SMS in the region. As a result, a strategy was developed and includes the production and wide distribution of SMS materials to the fishing sector (leaflet, model SMS manuals to suit the operation of various classes of fishing vessels). This work, which is a follow-up the Section’s safety at sea campaign, will take place during the second half of 2001.

Implementation of training activities

Funding

Specific training activities are funded from various sources including the governments of New Zealand, Australia, France, Taiwan/ROC, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Foundation and the UNDP.

While the preparation of funding proposals may appear time consuming, it is a worthwhile activity since most of the proposals submitted during the reporting period have been approved by aid donors. The Section is however still seeking funding for the fishing vessel engineer training programme.

Regional training

From October to December 2000, the Section and the Australian Fisheries Academy, with funding from AusAID, organised a pilot **Traineeship Programme for Pacific Island Fishers**. The course format was similar to that of the successful Wild Catch Traineeship Programme initiated by AFA during the mid-90's. Six carefully selected commercial fishing deckhands from the Pacific attended four weeks of shore training at AFA campuses in Adelaide and Port-Lincoln prior to getting an invaluable two-month practical experience onboard Australian commercial fishing vessels. AusAID has agreed to finance a similar programme in 2001, this time for eight fishing deckhands.

The **enterprise management training programme** initiated by the Section and the New Zealand School of Fisheries in 1997 has continued to receive donor support during the 1999-2001 period. Recent courses include a third regional course for fisheries enterprise managers, in October 1999 (36 managers trained since 1997), a second regional course on vessel operation management for commercial skippers, in April 2000 (24 skippers trained since 1998), a second regional course for women managers of seafood businesses, in November 2000 (24 women trained since 1999). Funding is secured from NZODA for a course targeting trainers of women engaged in small-scale post-harvest activities (November 2001) and is being sought from Taiwan/ROC for a third skippers' course.

During the 1999-2001 period, the Section has organised the 21st and 22nd **SPC/Nelson Fisheries Officers course**. Since its inception in 1979, 267 extension officers from 21 countries and territories have been through that training programme. This year, eleven trainees, including two female fisheries officers, have studied at the NZ School of Fisheries from February 12 to June 15 before attending the practical fishing module in Noumea. This course continues to meet the needs of national fisheries administration but its future is constrained by a possible donor fatigue. The Section will however try to secure funding for the 2002 course.

With funding from NZODA, a pilot **study tour of the New Zealand Fishing Industry** was organised in May 2001 for five senior fisheries personnel. The two-week study tour exposed the participants to New Zealand's approach to the co-management of its commercial fisheries resources. Of particular interest to participants were the interactions between the Ministry of Fisheries and the various stakeholders. The Section intends to further promote co-management principles in the Pacific. A manual on the co-management of commercial fisheries resource, written by the Samoa Fisheries Division with SPC's inputs, will be published by the Section by the end of 2001.

National training

The Section has continued to be actively involved with the organisation of national **workshops on tuna handling and grading**. During the reporting period, Section staff have run workshops in American Samoa (tuna handling, 40 trainees, September 1999), Fiji (tataki production, 15 trainees, October 2000), Samoa (tuna grading, 14 trainees, December 2000). Following a request from the Fisheries Division, an additional workshop took place in Samoa in April. A tuna filleter from Tahiti trained the staff of local fish export companies in tuna loining techniques. It is worth noting that as a result of this training and the tuna grading workshop run in December 2000, local companies have diversified the marketing of their tunas, with a sharp increase in exports of fresh chilled sashimi-grade yellowfin and big-eye tunas as well as albacore tuna loins.

Without a dedicated post-harvest programme, SPC relies on ad-hoc interventions from other CFP Sections to meet the member countries' requests in this area. In recent years, the Training Section has played an increasing role in the delivery of **HACCP training** through the funding and organisation of consultancies, courses or training attachments. Starting in October 2000, the Section has helped setting up the PNG National Fisheries Authority as the competent body for monitoring PNG exports of seafood products. Using AusAID funds, two consultants were hired to train NFA's seafood safety audit and inspection officers and, as part of training, audit a large tuna cannery in Madang. As a follow-up to the initial training, the same NFA staff were further trained in auditing techniques for tuna canneries in May 2001, and one staff was sponsored to attend a Low Acid Canned Food course in New Zealand, in July. In Fiji, some seafood companies have approached the Section for the organisation of a USFDA/HACCP workshop for local seafood quality control personnel. Once the official request is received, Section staff will finalise arrangements for the workshop, scheduled in September 2001.

With funding assistance from France, a **boat building training project** was started in May, at the Santo boatyard in Vanuatu. A consultant/tutor from the New Caledonia School of Fisheries was hired to introduce a new vessel design and teach the local boat builders the West System construction technique. The first part of the training took place in May/June and was four week in duration. The second part, of two weeks, is scheduled for August.

In 1999, funding was secured from Taiwan/ROC to run a couple of **seaweed farming workshops**. The first workshop was run in Vanuatu, in May 2000, and targeted Fisheries Department extension officers. As a result of the workshop, a survey of potential farming sites was done and grow-out trials undertaken. The excellent results obtained during farming trials, the potential growth of this type of aquaculture (number of potential sites), the low-technology involved and the presence of a market are factors that make seaweed farming a potential success story in Vanuatu. A second national workshop, in Tonga, is scheduled for August 2001.

Training attachments

The Section continues to organise attachments as a means of meeting individual training needs. From August 1999 to July 1999, ten training attachments have been organised and funded by the Training Section. Although short in duration (because of funding constraints), the attachments have covered a wide range of topics: marine engineering, vessel crew certification, seafood safety, aquaculture and staff development.

Resource materials

Resource materials are produced either in connection with a specific training project or, at the request of a member country. During the reporting period, the following materials have been developed:

- ✓ The "Rambo Goes Deep-Sea" training video, as part of the Section's safety-at-sea campaign
- ✓ A computer software to measure the profitability of tuna longliners, as part of the training materials for the regional courses targeting commercial fishing skippers
- ✓ Curriculum and teaching materials for the Restricted Class 6 master/engineer certificate, as part of the Section's involvement in vessel crew certification
- ✓ A manual on skipjack filleting for tataki production, as a reference material for a workshop in Fiji
- ✓ Two fact sheets on Vanuatu Fisheries Department and deep bottom fishing, at the request of Vanuatu
- ✓ Safety-at-sea check list posters, stickers and laminated cards in Vanuatu pidgin, at the request of Vanuatu
- ✓ A poster on the dangers of alcohol at sea in Niuean and English, at the request of Niue

In the coming months, the Section will produce and distribute awareness materials on Safety Management Systems for fishing companies as well as a manual on the co-management of commercial fisheries in collaboration with the Samoa Fisheries Division.

Conclusion

The role of the Training Section has traditionally been to meet member countries' needs, as they arise, often in areas not covered by established national or regional training institutions. Making use of a comprehensive network of training providers and recipients and, enjoying an ongoing financial support from aid donors, the Section continues to play an important role in fisheries development for the region and to be active in wide range of training areas.

It is hoped that this paper will have provided participants with a better understanding on the types assistance they may receive from the Section. We also look forward to some discussions, either in the plenary or outside the meeting, on emerging training needs and areas that will require future involvement.