

Working towards improving educational and training programmes for marine resource management

Leigh-Anne Buliruarua,¹ Jokim Kitolelei,¹ Cherie Morris¹ and Rusila Savou¹

The Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme is a multi-partnership programme funded by the European Union (EU) and the Government of Sweden.² PEUMP is implemented by the University of the South Pacific (USP), Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program. In addition, these agencies work closely with several international and regional non-governmental organisations such as the Locally Marine Managed Areas network, World Wildlife Fund, International Union for Conservation of Nature, and Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association. USP is implementing the capacity building component of the programme (Key Result Area 6 or KRA6) through education, training, research and development. This key result area is targeted at major stakeholder groups involved in fisheries and marine resource management in USP's 12 member countries as well as Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea. Through PEUMP, USP aims to:

- build the capacity of Pacific Islanders in fisheries and marine management;
- increase employability opportunities for graduates;
- maximise linkages with existing regional bodies and institutions involved in fisheries and maritime education and professional development; and
- include gender and social inclusion, and human rights-based approaches into the fisheries sector.

To inform the implementation of KRA6, a training needs and gaps analysis was conducted, and included the collation of information on existing courses and programmes in all 15 (Pacific) African, Caribbean and Pacific (PACP) countries, interviews of key stakeholders to identify education and training needs, consideration of gender and social inclusion and human rights-based approaches for training and education needs, identification of amendments to existing and new courses and programmes, and identified delivery mechanisms and institutions.

The analysis was undertaken in three ways: a literature review, online survey and face-to-face interviews. The latter provided for the collection of additional views and checking for consistency with results obtained from the online survey. In total, 305 people were invited to participate in the online survey, with 89 of these providing responses. One hundred people participated in face-to-face interviews.

The key findings of the training needs and gaps analysis indicated that resource economics, marine biology and ecology, and the development of fisheries policies and management plans were also identified as priority needs. In addition to these more technical fields, a range of general cross-cutting skills were also identified. Among these, communication, writing skills and problem solving were ranked highly, while skills covering effective engagement with stakeholders, data interpretation and visualisation, gender and social inclusion and human rights-based approaches were also considered important. Several key recommendations for USP on the delivery of training and education to meet these identified needs including, making greater use of colleges and universities in other PACP countries.

To ensure the effective implementation of KRA6, it will be necessary to introduce specific topics in programmes and courses, and modifying the way in which the development and delivery of curriculums and courses is conducted in PACP countries. Continuing professional development through accredited technical and vocational education training institutions, and short courses for those already working in the fisheries sector, has also been identified as key requirement. It was also recommended that the main PEUMP implementing agencies and partners play a strong role in supporting the implementation of KRA 6. Overall, a high level of commitment, sustained by adequate funding and strong leadership, are critical for the achievement of KRA 6.

The challenge is for everyone to work together to enhance the employability and upskilling of Pacific Islanders for the sake of sustaining future economic and food security benefits from our marine resources.

The full training needs and gaps analysis report can be accessed at: <https://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=22869>



¹ Institute of Marine Resources, Faculty of Science, Technology & Environment, The University of the South Pacific.

² See : https://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Brochures/Anon_18_PEUMP_Leaflet.pdf