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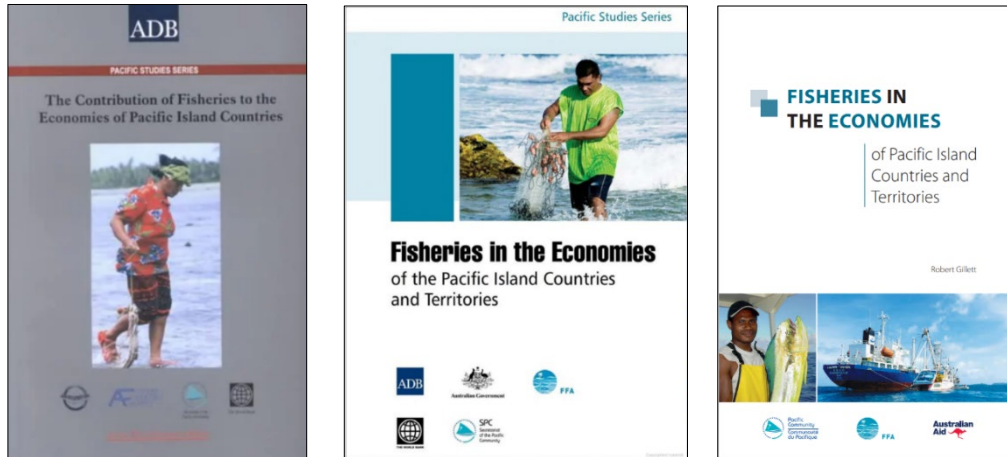
Information paper 4

## A study of the benefits from fisheries in the region

*Merelesita Fong and Robert E. Gillett*

## Introduction

1. In 2001, 2008 and 2016, the Pacific Community (SPC) and numerous regional agencies and donors supported studies that brought together various types of information on the benefits from fisheries to Pacific Island countries and territories. This work, known as the “Benefish” studies, was written up into a series of three books:



2. Each book has a chapter for each Pacific Island country and territory covering the following topics:
  - Recent annual fishery harvests: values and volumes covering the contribution of six fishery production categories;
  - fishing contribution to gross domestic product: the current official fishing contribution, how it is calculated, and a production approach recalculated based on annual harvest levels obtained during the study;
  - fishery exports: amounts, types, and the ratio to all exports;
  - government revenue from the fisheries sector: access fees and other revenue;
  - fisheries employment; and
  - fisheries contribution to nutrition.
3. The following fisheries sub-sectors are covered:
  - Coastal commercial
  - Coastal subsistence
  - Locally-based offshore
  - Foreign-based offshore
  - Freshwater
  - Aquaculture

4. A digital copy of the 2016 book is available at: Gillett R.E. 2016. Fisheries in the economies of Pacific Island countries and territories. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 684 p. <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/pvyuo>
5. This paper provides a brief update on the fourth Benefish study, the progress made and plans moving forward.

## The fourth Benefish book

6. Following requests from the countries and territories to SPC at various regional meetings, SPC is supporting an update of the Benefish work. This fourth study is similar to the previous Benefish studies, but with a few changes:
  - A Pacific Islander has been recruited to work with the main consultant, with the idea that the person will learn how the study is carried out and will hopefully be able to undertake similar work in the future; and
  - the content of the new book will be enhanced by the addition of information on the impacts of COVID and climate change on fisheries in the region.

## Progress to date

7. Work started on the new Benefish study in August 2022. A literature search resulted in a collection of almost 2,000 relatively new documents on fisheries in SPC member countries and territories. Trips have been undertaken to all Pacific Island countries and territories, except those where COVID restrictions were still in place as of September 2022, or where travel logistics were difficult. For the non-visited countries and territories, local consultants were engaged to collect the information. The information and data collection began in mid-September 2022 and was completed in late January 2023.
8. In addition to working with government fisheries agencies in each country, the Benefish team spent considerable time with the staff of the statistics offices in each country or territory. This was to learn how those offices deal with the fisheries sector in estimating Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and to collect other types of information related to fisheries, such as fisheries exports, fisheries employment, and the fisheries contribution to government revenue.
9. Having collected a large amount of information on fisheries in each country and territory, the Benefish team is currently organising that information into country chapters under the headings of current production of the various fisheries sub-sectors, and estimation of the fishing contribution to GDP, exports, government revenue, employment, and nutrition.

## Work in the near future

10. On completion of the 22 country and territory chapters, the next task will be to compare the various topics covered across all countries and territories, such as comparing fisheries production in the various sub-sectors. This is where many of the interesting findings emerge and certain features of fisheries in the region become clear. Examples of this from past Benefish studies include:

- Two French territories were responsible for more than 93% of the value of all aquaculture production in the region in 2014.
  - Annual reports from government fishery agencies are an important tool for improving the quality of fisheries governance.
  - Coastal fisheries production had not increased significantly in the 15-year period 1999–2014, despite increasing fishing effort.
  - The 2014 tuna catch in Kiribati was 40.7% of the regional total, and was valued at about USD 1 billion.
  - In 2014, 52.7% of all employment in the region that is directly related to the tuna industry was in Papua New Guinea.
11. It is expected that most of the writing of the new Benefish book will be completed by mid-April 2023. Editing, layout, printing and distribution should take a few months with the document becoming available in mid-2023.