

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Seventh Heads of Fisheries Meeting

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Information Paper 2

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**Review of outcomes of the informal consultation with
Heads of Fisheries in May 2010
and the Heads of Fisheries 6 in February 2009**

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Introduction

This paper reviews the outcomes of the last two meetings of SPC Heads of Fisheries: the informal consultation held in Honiara in May 2010 and the last full HoF meeting in Noumea in February 2009.

Notes on progress against the HoF recommendations are highlighted against each output in a box like this. All unboxed text is from the original outcomes papers.

Outcomes from the informal Heads of Fisheries meeting, Honiara, 6th May 2010

1. The meeting was attended by: Vanuatu, PNG, Tuvalu, Tonga, Tokelau, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, NZ, Fiji, FSM, Niue (chair) as well as SPC and FFA.
2. **MEETING TIMING AND REGULARITY** - Members agreed that a formal HOF will be held every two years, earlier in the year to allow incorporation of members needs into the SPC work plan. Next year's meeting is to be held in the first half of March 2011 in Noumea. In the alternating years, an informal HOF meeting would be held in conjunction with the FFC meeting. The outcomes of both formal and informal HOF meetings would be presented to the FFC meeting each year.

Ongoing: This schedule is proceeding as planned. Outcomes of HoF #7 will be provided to FFC in May of this year and a 'mini-HoF' will be held in conjunction with FFC in 2012.

3. **CITES:** SPC agreed to provide information and advice to countries that were not a party to the CITES Convention to enable them to meet obligations towards meeting CITES requirements when exporting to CITES countries, particularly as related to aquarium trade commodities.

Ongoing: Information provided on request.

4. **DEEP WATER FISHERIES:** Members expressed concern over the lack of resources available for assessment and scientific advice in relation to the management of deep water (bottom fish) resources. SPC indicated that it will make this a high priority.

Ongoing: A consultancy on the status of snapper management in the region was completed in late 2009. SPC has provided support for a New Caledonian MSc student and continues to assist a Tongan PhD student undertaking research on snapper resources. Proposals have been submitted to the French Pacific Fund (mainly for New Caledonia) and to AusAID for work in four more Pacific Island countries.

5. **2010 WORK PLAN:** The meeting noted the proposed 2010 work plan for the OFP and CFP based on activities identified in joint country strategies, with several members to provide priorities for their country in CFP activities.

Done: Implementation of the 2010 work plan was largely as envisaged and is detailed in the 2010 annual report.

6. **OBSERVER DATA AND PROGRAMMES:**

- a. SPC indicated that while it is attempting to address the resourcing/funding requirements needed to undertake observer data entry, ultimately the Commission needs to devote greater resources to this task. SPC acknowledged the interest of members for developing a strategic approach that ultimately would have member countries entering their own observer data, however this may need to be developed once the current data entry workload has been resourced and quality assurance maintained.

Ongoing: Additional resources for data entry have been allocated and the indicative budget for WCPFC provides for some inputs into observer data management and quality control from 2012 onwards, subject to confirmation.

- b. Regarding observer training, SPC indicated that it saw the training of observer trainers and debriefers as a key component for the future of the regional observer programmes to build capacity of the members to meet the programmes demands.

Ongoing: A joint FFA/SPC proposal to the New Zealand Aid programme, which has been under discussion for some 12 months, seems likely to be approved very soon. This will provide resources for training of trainers and debriefers among other things. A workshop for debriefers will be held in early March.

- c. **BIOSECURITY:** SPC indicated that under an EDF10 proposal that would hopefully start implementation in 2011, there will be an increase in capacity for member support on aquaculture enterprise development and biosecurity. Trade facilitation could also be covered if a project proposed to AusAID is approved for funding.

Ongoing: The EDF10 proposal “Trade Facilitation and Product Diversification “ is progressing through the system. A project on post-harvest and trade facilitation has been approved by AusAID and an officer is under recruitment. A project on aquatic animal health and biosecurity has recently been proposed.

7. **DUPLICATION OF WORK** – SPC reassured members regarding its commitment to working closely with other regional agencies (FFA especially) to ensure there is no duplication of activities being delivered.

Ongoing: The FFA/SPC annual colloquium was held again in the first week of February 2011 to harmonise working arrangements for the year. FFA and other CROP agencies have been invited to participate in SPC Joint Country Strategies to identify joint projects at the national level.

8. **AQUARIUM TRADE** – SPC is preparing a centralised export database so as to assist members to monitor aquarium trade and is committed to providing advice to ensure members develop their aquarium trade based on best practice.

Ongoing: Basic structure of the database has been developed, but work continues on a web-based interface. Meanwhile recent work has included a review of an aquarium exports project in PNG, as well as an economic evaluation for Nauru.

9. **AD-HOC ADVICE PROVISION:** SPC reiterated its commitment to increasing national level scientific resources to service ad hoc advice requests in future, but noted that very large sub-regional requests (requiring considerable resources) would probably need to be considered under annual work plans.

Ongoing: SPC will strengthen participation at meetings of sub-regional groups (subject to invitation) to better identify upcoming requirements.

10. **PROJECT PROPOSALS UPDATE** – SPC outlined three current proposals for donor funding:
- a. AUSAID – coastal fisheries work in mariculture and live fish/aquarium trade; FFA liason position (OFP); Export facilitation
 - b. NZAID – observer programme funding (OFP)
 - c. GTZ German Aid – Climate change project.

Done (in that proposals approved): implementation over next 3-4 years.

11. **FUTURE OF FISHERIES** – SPC agreed that the Future of Fisheries Summary Report should stress the importance of good governance, and refer to progress already achieved. The report was then (on that proviso) adopted by the meeting.

Done: summary report approved by FFC Ministerial, Forum Leaders and CRGA. Widely reported by international media. Reports distributed and video available at this meeting. Translation of soundtrack into major P.I. languages in progress.

12. NATIONAL LEVEL ADVICE PROVISION:

- a. **ISSUE-SPECIFIC NATIONAL REPORT (ISNR) PRIORITISATION** – The meeting agreed that a regular item will be included in the annual HOF agenda to allow discussion and prioritisation of issues to be covered in the ISNRs. This will include pre-submission of ideas by members for ISNR topics to SPC prior to the HOF, SPC compiling and circulating those ideas for consideration by members, and subsequent discussion and prioritisation of topics to be covered via the ISNRs over the next 12 months.

Ongoing: For discussion at this meeting.

- b. **ONLINE ADVICE/INFO STORAGE** – There was general support among members for SPC to resource and implement a new online system for the storage of national level data summaries, scientific information and advice that had previously been provided via the hardcopy NTFSRs. This information would now be stored, in an easily and regularly updateable format, on country specific and password protected webpages hosted within the SPC-OFP website. Countries would be encouraged to play an active role in defining and managing the content of their webpages.

Ongoing: Website design consultancies in progress.

- c. **INDICATIVE YIELDS** – members indicated that they would like additional time to consider the implications of SPC providing “indicative yields” analyses to countries, and how the provision of such analyses and associated advice should move forward in future. SPC indicated that it could provide a more comprehensive paper on this issue at the next HOF meeting in 2011, to assist countries consideration of this matter.

Ongoing: SPC will work with individual countries to meet their requirements in this area.

13. **PROVISION OF ROP DATA TO WCPFC** – SPC presented a proposal for the consideration of members, ultimately seeking endorsement for SPC to provide ROP data on their behalf to the WCPFC Secretariat. A decision on this item was deferred to allow members time to seek clarification regarding a number of issues and to give them further time to consider its implications. SPC noted that the WCPFC Secretariat is seeking access to these data as soon as possible so that they can meet their reporting obligations to SC, TCC and the WCPFC annual session.

Done: Most countries currently providing observers to the ROP have authorized the submission of suitably filtered data to WCPFC. The transmission of data to SPC is a problem in some cases causing a backlog for data entry.

Outcomes from the 6th Heads of Fisheries meeting, Noumea, 10-13th February 2009

The sixth SPC Heads of Fisheries (HoF) Meeting took place at SPC Headquarters in Noumea, from 10th to 13th February 2009. It was chaired on behalf of Palau by Ms Nannette D. Malsol.

HoF is a regional meeting of the heads of SPC member country and territory fisheries departments, or their deputies, covering the entire range of interests for which they have responsibility and on which SPC Marine Resources Division (MRD) provides advice and assistance. As such it plays a unique role in providing strategic guidance to both the Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP) and the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) of MRD.

The following outcomes constitute the main points of consensus agreement among delegates that the meeting felt necessary to document, either to guide the management of the MRD work programme, to draw to the attention of other regional agencies and development partners, or to signal agreement on issues that require attention by members themselves. It is understood that this information will be used to guide the development of the MRD Strategic Plan but that prioritisation will be inevitable and not all the desired activities may be realised.

SPC Heads of Fisheries:

Strategic initiatives

- responded favourably to the overview of CFP and OFP activities and the proposed work plans for 2009, and looks forward to the MRD Review,

Done: The finding of the review included the conclusions that:

- the programmes remain effective;
- SPC is the only regional organisation providing real leadership on many fisheries issues; and
- Demand for services remains very high

The review did identify some shortcomings at the strategic and operational level and made 20 recommendations for improvement. The Division accepts nearly all of these recommendations. Changes which have already become effective include a restructuring of the Coastal Fisheries Programme into three functional sections, use of objectives-oriented project planning in the strategic plan and new projects, recruitment of expertise in economics and post-harvest areas of coastal fisheries, etc.

the revised MRD Strategic Plan

Done: A new Strategic plan for the period 2010-2013 was completed in 2009, incorporating the objectives and results developed by HOF6, as well as major recommendations of the review. The objectives and results were further considered by FFC meeting, and endorsed by FF Ministers. The final draft of the plan was approved by CRGA 39, and printing and distribution were completed before the end of 2009.

and the study with FFA on the Future of Pacific Fisheries,

Done: see above

- encouraged further integration of SPC services, within and between fisheries programmes, and with other SPC divisions, including through Joint Country Strategies and assistance with national strategic plans.

Ongoing. The Fisheries Programmes continue to participate actively in JCS missions, and a number of crosscutting initiatives have been undertaken in areas such as climate change and food security.

- encouraged collaboration between SPC, FFA, WCPFC and other regional agencies and international initiatives, particularly where the geographical range of stocks extends beyond the SPC statistical area (e.g. CTI, IATTC),

Ongoing. SPC and FFA continue to meet annually to agree on work and joint projects (see above). The WCPFC service agreement was renewed, now for an extended three-year period (2010-2012), and additional WCPFC funding secured to fund service delivery. OFP staff have continued to work closely with IATTC on issues of mutual interest, particularly in bigeye tuna tagging in the Central Pacific, data sharing and stock assessment methodology. OFP is currently attempting to build on existing strong links with fisheries agencies in Indonesia and Philippines to engage more effectively with the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) in the area of tuna research.

- noted the need for strategic policy advice, including economic advice, with respect to coastal and nearshore fisheries, to be targeted at the specific needs and situations of members, and the importance of such information to guide the provision of technical assistance.

Ongoing. With the recruitment of a new Coastal Fisheries Management and Science Adviser, capacity in this area has been enhanced. A Fisheries Development Officer (economics) started work in February 2011.

Project management

- voiced concern on the dependence of MRD on project funding, leading to gaps in service delivery in between large projects,

Ongoing. SPC has launched an organisation-wide effort to increase sustainable sources of funding, and HoF is invited to consider priorities outlined in WP4 .

- voiced further concern that with a dominance of project funding, work priorities may not be responsive to all members and some members may be excluded from project activities,

This remains a concern, with much new funding tied to ACP member countries.

- nonetheless supported the EDF10 SCICOFISH proposals and the general concept of the SMACFish project outlined for ACP countries, noting the strong interest of the French territories in being integrated into these activities through OCT funding, and of other members through additional funding streams,

Done: SciCOFish and DevFish 2 projects are operational. SmacFish was not successful, as funding was fully committed to other projects, but may be revived if additional EDF10 funds become available. The OCT group have proposed the *Integre* project, which includes marine conservation components and is expected to be implemented by SPC, with a complementary ACP project currently in the design phase.

Information and communication

- appreciated the work of MRD in the area of fisheries information,

Coastal fisheries

- noted the need for ongoing assistance with coastal fishery monitoring, including surveys, resource inventories and assessment of stocks, with such research well targeted towards management needs,

Ongoing: This is the focus of the coastal component of the SciCOFish project and three positions have been filled (Reef Fisheries Information Officer, Fisheries Scientist (finfish), Fisheries Scientist (invertebrates)), with assistance available from late 2010.

- requested ongoing assistance with management of coastal resources through an appropriate mix of community-based approaches and national management plans, including reviews of legislation

Ongoing: Some assistance already provided – CBFM workshops, Beche de Mer plans, reviews of legislation. This is the focus of work under the coastal component of the SciCOFish project.

- recognized the work in advising on the implementation of EAFM in coastal fisheries, noting that fisheries departments should incorporate ecosystem principles into their existing management systems

Ongoing: Guidelines for implementing EAF in community-based management have been developed by SPC/FAO/TNC and these have been distributed. CEAFM workshops have been completed in a number of countries.

- requested that the CFP work programme give more consideration to subsistence, artisanal and sport fishing,

Ongoing: Some success in developing sport fishing for bonefish in Aitutaki (Cook Is.) and Nonouti (Kiribati); work on coastal FADS continues to support artisanal and subsistence fishing.

- expressed interest in the manufacture of fish silage as a means to fully utilize fish products, integrate with agriculture and respect the environment.

Ongoing: A project has been established in Niue; SPC providing advice in New Caledonia to a private sector operator.

- requested further information on safety at sea and alternative boat propulsion

Ongoing -Sea Safety bilingual bulletin produced annually
- “Think SAFETY at Sea” water resistant cards showing outboard engine fuel consumption figures in litres/trip ready for distribution
- DevFish project provided 4-stroke outboard motor for trials in Samoan Alia and further work on energy efficiency planned under DevFish2.

- requested ongoing technical support, capacity building, knowledge transfer and development of designs for shallow-water, deep-sea and sub-surface FADs,

Ongoing – Major FAD projects undertaken in Tokelau, Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu, RMI, Solomons Islands (in progress).

- requested further assistance in dealing with market access issues for products from both aquaculture and wild fisheries, such as HACCP, EU and OIE requirements, including assistance with developing Competent Authorities

Ongoing – CITES workshop for clams held in 2009 covering corals and non-detrimental findings in May 2010. Funding for a full-time market access specialist has been secured from AusAID. The DevFish 2 project includes funding for short-term work in this area.

Aquaculture and biosecurity

- recognized the importance of effectively reporting regional aquaculture statistics,

Ongoing: - SPC Report “A review of aquaculture in the Pacific Islands 1998-2007: tracking a decade of progress through official and provisional statistics” was printed and circulated in early 2010.

- noted that advice from SPC must be responsive to the particular needs of members, whether in technical or legislative areas or in enterprise development,

Ongoing: The EDF10 project on trade diversification includes an aquaculture component which will assist with enterprise development. SPC is also providing assistance with the review of aquaculture legislation in Fiji at present.

- noted the importance of effectively managing biosecurity risks to maintain opportunities for exports, avoid adverse effects of imports, meet international obligations, and approved in principle the development of a Regional Aquatic Biosecurity Programme.

This remains a gap in our work programme, although some assistance has been provided with import risk assessments for Tilapia in Solomon Islands. Concept note recently submitted to AusAID.

Ciguatera

- noted the threat to human health and livelihoods posed by ciguatera fish poisoning and encouraged MRD to research, collaborate with other organisations to share information and build capacity to monitor, manage and mitigate this problem

Ongoing: SPC together with IRD staff investigated an incident of ciguatera-like poisoning in Vanuatu caused by clams; training was provided for field testing for ciguatera for one Pacific Island fisheries officer.

Food security and climate change

- welcomed the studies on food security and climate change, and accepted the need to safeguard food security and build resilience to climate change by appropriate allocation of tuna resources at an international level, by reserving a proportion of national tuna catch for domestic needs, by deployment of nearshore FADs and through development of aquaculture

Ongoing: SPC secured funding from AusAID to develop a programme for monitoring the impact of climate change on coastal fisheries and a workshop to design the system has been held. FADs and aquaculture development remain core components of SPC's work programme.

Coral Reef Initiative for the South Pacific (CRISP)

- recognized the work of CRISP and the expectation that SPC would seek additional donor support for continuation of these activities,

Done: Some additional funding has been secured from FFEM and AFD but the future of the project is uncertain. Funding to develop the lessons learned from CRISP has been requested from FFEM.

Deep water resources

- noted that fisheries for deep water snappers were important for both food security and income for many members, that these resources were not well covered in the past work plans of MRD, and that the future work plan should determine how to best serve members who need technical advice and assistance in managing these resources,

Ongoing: see above

Oceanic fisheries

- recognised with appreciation the expanded work being undertaken by OFP in support of WCPFC, noting that while this collaboration is desirable and beneficial to members, this extra work puts a considerable burden upon OFP and the cost is not being fully recovered from WCPFC at this stage,
- requested that MRD further evaluate the extent to which funding from, WCPFC is adequate to meet the demands upon it from both the WCPFC and members,

Done: Additional funding was secured from WCPFC at the end of 2009. New Caledonia has also provided funds to assist with WCPFC Regional Observer Programme data entry.

- requested ongoing assistance in meeting national obligations to WCPFC with regard to fishery monitoring, data provision and the implementation of management measures,

Ongoing: Support for observer training continues and will be expanded (see below), 2 tuna data workshops focussing on WCPFC requirements have been held. TUFMAN system with WCPFC reporting module is being implemented progressively in the region.

- voiced its concern on the stock status of bigeye and yellowfin tuna and recognised that profitability of longline fisheries for these species would be unlikely to improve unless stock declines are first halted and then reversed,

Ongoing: Regional assessments conducted in 2009 and 2010. An analysis of the impact of WCPFC CMM-2008-01 on bigeye overfishing was conducted and reported to 2009 sessions. Work in support for the development of a proposed new CMM in 2011 will be a priority.

- recognized the demands upon SPC and FFA arising from commitments to expand national and regional observer programmes,
- endorsed the need for training of trainers to effectively utilize recently endorsed PIRFO training and certification standards and further collaboration in training among the different observer programmes,

Ongoing: Training of trainers remains a high priority. National trainers are now working in PNG and Solomons. PNG has assisted in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to implement national training. Additional focus will be placed in future on trainer training and certification and on debriefer training (see above).

- encouraged greater regional cooperation in the deployment of observers on purse seiners operating under bilateral access agreements, to make the most efficient use of the available pool of observers and to provide opportunities to all countries to contribute observers to a coordinated effort to achieve 100% coverage of purse seine fleets,
- recognized that the need to rapidly increase observer numbers for compliance purposes may justify shorter training for fisheries monitors as an interim measure, with more thorough competency-based training for fisheries observers being expanded to 4 weeks,

Done: An observer 'cadet' course was implemented and 150 participants passed this programme. This was instrumental in enabling 100% observer coverage to be met in Aug-Sep 2009. Training has now reverted to the full programme, and previously trained 'cadets' given the opportunity to upgrade to full observer status.

- noted that the cost of observer training is a very significant component of the total cost of running observer programmes and that there is an urgent need for the mechanisms for recovering these costs to be fully explored,

Ongoing: FFA have proposed an observer business plan for member countries, based on cost recovery. In the meantime, additional resources have been requested from NZAid to boost regional capacity to assist members strengthen their national observer programmes.

- supported the recommendations to augment OFP staffing to better respond to the increasing requirements of SPC members for data management and scientific services,

Done/ongoing: Additional funding has been secured from EDF10 (10 positions, although some other posts will be lost over this period) WCPFC (2 positions) AusAID (1 position) and NZAid (5 observer posts).

- suggested that OFP should fully explore cost-effective solutions to improve the efficiency of observer data entry, including data entry being carried out in member countries, while retaining overall responsibility for ensuring data quality through effective auditing,

Ongoing: As noted above, funding support from New Caledonia has made Noumea the best option for WCPFC observer data entry; but more data entry in member countries will also be pursued.

- recognized the ongoing need for training in fish stock assessment, ecological risk assessment and ecosystem science, and encouraged OFP to identify a consistent source of funding for this training that would also allow for multiple participants from each member country/territory, and to explore how to better monitor and evaluate its success,

Done: Funding for 2009 and 2010 stock assessment workshops secured from UN Law of the Sea Office (administered by FAO). Longer term funding still sought. Accreditation of the course with a tertiary training institution to be discussed at this meeting. A study to identify long-term capacity building options in fisheries is being planned as part of the new GEF-funded Oceanic Fisheries management Project.

- recognized that the provision of country-level advice to members on the status of their tuna fisheries was core business of OFP, that the needs of members have increased dramatically with the development of the WCPFC, and cannot be fully met with current levels of resourcing, but nonetheless welcomed the initiative to seek further resources for more frequent communications with members on specific issues,

Ongoing: Additional resources now secured and new ways of providing advice agreed. Topics of issue specific reports to be discussed at this meeting.

- looked forward to enhanced modelling and analysis of tuna fisheries at the scale of members' EEZ's, as well as the proposed analysis of the effects of ocean MPAs and of climate change on fisheries resources.

Ongoing: First projections of EEZ scale models using SEAPODYM have been carried out for Albacore with promising results. Modelling of climate change impacts have been carried out for two species (Skipjack and Bigeye) with further work in progress.