

**Informal SPC/FFA Consultation
with Heads of Fisheries
6 May 2010**

Honiara, Solomon Islands



Progress Report on the

HoF6 Meeting Outputs

Notes on progress against the 2009 recommendations are highlighted against each output in a box like this. All unboxed text is from the original 2009 outcomes paper

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 became effective at the beginning of 2010 include a restructuring of the Coastal Fisheries Programme into three functional sections, and a change of name to Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division.

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: the SPC/FFA joint project has been completed and the final report is now ready for consideration by this meeting. A video presentation will be prepared for the Forum leaders and wider distribution after the Forum meeting.

- 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 held a technical consultation in January to firm up agreement on collaboration, including a joint funding proposal to NZAid to enhance regional capacity to support national observer programmes. 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. No post has yet been created to provide economic advice, but some consultancy funding for work in this area has been built into upcoming projects.

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 the first meeting of a sub-committee of CRGA to progress this issue has already been held.

- 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 has been approved and the contributions agreement signed; DevFish 2 (led by FFA but with SPC component) has been approved and the signature of the contributions agreements is pending; SmacFish was not successful, as funding was fully committed to other projects, but may be revived if one of these can be funded from other sources. The OCT group have proposed the *Integre* project, which includes marine conservation components and is expected to be implemented by SPC, but does not directly match the ACP projects.

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 advertised (Reef Fisheries Information Officer, Fisheries Scientist (finfish), Fisheries Scientist (invertebrates)), so assistance will be available in the second half of 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, review of legislation in Samoa and currently Fiji. This will be 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 are being printed and will be distributed shortly. CBFM workshops have been completed in Kiribati, Kosrae and Pohnpei.

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

Ongoing: Feasibility studies have been carried out on the bonefishing potential of Aitutaki (Cook Is.) and Nonouti (Kiribati)

- 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; the operation in New Caledonia will be relocated from Lifou to Noumea to take advantage of better supplies of fish waste.

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

Ongoing -Sea Safety bilingual bulletin Number 5 published in May 2009 – Number 6 to be released early May 2010
- “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.

- 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.

- 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 and another CITES workshop covering corals and non-detrimental findings will be held in May 2010. A further workshop on OIE requirements will be held later this year in coordination with PIFS. Funding for a full-time market access specialist has been requested 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” has just been printed and circulated.

- 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.

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: Additional funding has been secured from FFEM and AFD, and is expected under the OCT project for EDF10. Further funding support will be sought as necessary.

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: A consultancy on the status of snapper management in the region was completed in late 2009. SPC will support a Tongan student undertaking research on snappers at the University of Canterbury.

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 (USD150,000 per year) 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 for bigeye, yellowfin and South Pacific albacore tuna were conducted in 2009. An analysis of the impact of WCPFC CMM-2008-01 on bigeye overfishing was conducted and reported to WCPFC Scientific Committee and the Annual Session.

- 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.

- 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. Future training will revert to the full programme, and previously trained 'cadets' will be 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 (1 position) and requested from 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, as well as accreditation of the course with a tertiary training institution. A major 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. This will be a topic for discussion at the 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 planned.