

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

**THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Noumea, 13–16 October 2008)

OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR 2008

WORK PROGRAMMES – DIVISIONAL OVERVIEW PRESENTATION

AGENDA ITEM 2.3 – MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION 2008 REPORT

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

1. This paper provides an introduction to the work of the three programmes within the SPC Marine Resources Division (Coastal Fisheries, Oceanic Fisheries, and Maritime) during 2007/8. It summarises the main emerging issues within the three subsectors that are likely to be of interest to CRGA and provides pointers to more comprehensive information.

RECOMMENDATION

2. CRGA is invited to:
 - i. note the challenges being faced by the Oceanic Fisheries Programme in continuing to provide the scientific support required by SPC members as more sophisticated tuna fisheries management regimes are adopted;
 - ii. note the challenges being faced by the Coastal Fisheries Programme in continuing to provide the scientific support required by SPC members as project funding support is discontinued, and to note the financing requirements implicit in the Apia Policy, the Aquaculture Action Plan, and the Regional Aquatic Biosecurity Capacity-Building Project;
 - iii. support the augmentation of longer-term programme funding support for the core business of the SPC Marine Resources Division programmes; and
 - iv. endorse the terms of reference for the Future of Fisheries Study.
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MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION OVERVIEW

Divisional purpose, structure and resources

1. The division currently consists of three programmes (Oceanic Fisheries, Coastal Fisheries, Maritime) in two thematic areas (Fisheries and Maritime). Each of these programmes is approximately halfway through its official strategic programme plan period, and these plans will need to be reviewed shortly and directions assessed. The two fisheries programme plans are due to run until the end of 2009 and their review will take into account the results of the 'Study on the Future of Fisheries' ordered by CRGA 37 (see later). The maritime programme plan is due to run until the end of 2010, and should not be affected by the move of the programme to a new division (see later).
2. The goal of the division is to contribute to the achievement of the regionally shared vision of 'A healthy ocean that sustains the livelihoods and aspirations of Pacific Island communities¹'. The current goals and objectives of the division are expressed through its constituent programme strategic plans as follows:

3. *Coastal Fisheries Programme (2006-9)²*

Goal: To significantly assist SPC members in their commitment to apply the Ecosystem Approach to coastal fisheries and aquaculture by 2010.

To help Pacific Community members achieve this goal, the Coastal Fisheries Programme will focus on three objectives for the four-year period from January 2006 to December 2009:

- Objective 1: Assisting governments and administrations in the development of scientifically-informed and socially-achievable coastal ecosystem management systems including coastal living resource components of national ocean policies.
- Objective 2: Consolidating a regional support framework for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable aquaculture planning, research and development by Pacific Island governments and private enterprises.
- Objective 3: Assisting governments and administrations in the development and management of domestic nearshore commercial fisheries within a sustainable ecosystem context.

4. *Oceanic Fisheries Programme (2006-9)³*

Goal: Fisheries exploiting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and related species are managed for economic and ecological sustainability using the best available scientific information.

¹ Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy, approved by Pacific Island Forum Leaders in 2002 (see http://www.spc.int/piocean/forum/Info_papers/5_Ocean_Policy_plain_text_.pdf)

² The CFP Strategic Plan is at <http://www.spc.int/mrd/org/cfp-stratplan-2006-9-1.pdf>

³ The OFP Strategic Plan is at <http://www.spc.int/mrd/org/ofp-stratplan-2006-8-1.pdf>

- Objective 1: Regional and national fisheries management authorities have access to high-quality scientific information and advice on the status of, and fishery impacts on, stocks targeted or otherwise impacted by regional oceanic fisheries.
- Objective 2: Regional and national fisheries management authorities have access to accurate and comprehensive scientific data on fisheries targeting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and other oceanic species.
- Objective 3: Improved understanding of pelagic ecosystems in the western and central Pacific Ocean, with a focus on the western tropical Pacific.

5. *Regional Maritime Programme (2006-10)*⁴

Goal: Safe and secure shipping, clean seas, and improved social and economic well-being of seafaring communities within the Pacific Islands region.

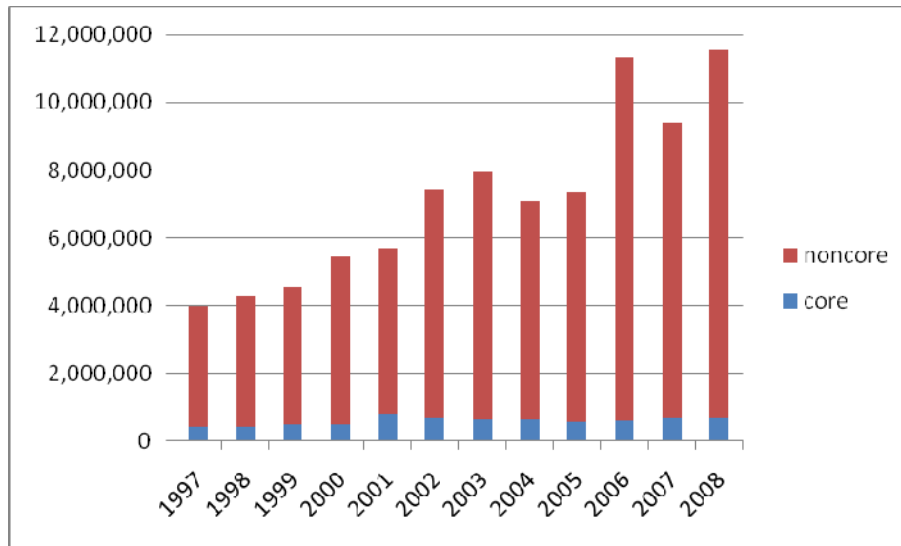
- Objective 1: Effective national policy and regulatory frameworks and strong maritime institutions.
- Objective 2: Human resource capacity strengthened.
- Objective 3: Strong professional networks in the Pacific maritime sector.
- Objective 4: National, regional and international recognition of Pacific maritime needs and priorities.

6. The activities that contributed to the achievement of these objectives over the period since the last divisional overview was prepared for CRGA in 2007 are listed in Annex 1. Annex 2 is a subset of Annex 1 and classifies national activities by country and territory.

7. The lists of activities in these annexes provide another way of looking at what we do, and do not replace the structured, output-oriented programme reports and forward workplans that will be published towards the end of the programme-year on 31 December. Previous programme plan reports and annual workplans can be viewed at <http://www.spc.int/mrd/org.htm>

⁴The RMP strategic plan is at http://www.spc.int/mrd/org/RMP_stratplan-2006-10.pdf

Divisional Finance



Trend in overall divisional budget by year (CFP units)

8. The budget for the division has almost tripled since its establishment as a corporate entity in 1997, following the SPC 50th Anniversary Conference. The core component of the divisional budget has increased in amount during this period, largely in line with the increase in CROP salary costs at the programme and divisional manager level, but the core contribution has dropped from 12% to just over 6% of the total divisional budget because of the significant increase in the value of the non-core projects and programmes implemented by the division. Currently, member country assessed contributions support the Director and the three Programme Managers, plus the Divisional Secretary. The vast majority of the work of the division is made possible by programme and project funds.

Year	Divisional office		Oceanic Fisheries		Coastal Fisheries		Maritime	
	core	noncore	core	noncore	core	noncore	core	noncore
1997	156,400	0	90,700	2,086,800	180,300	1,484,511	0	0
1998	171,700	0	87,600	1,963,460	150,800	1,399,414	0	487,100
1999	206,500	0	94,200	2,072,560	195,600	1,372,375	13,000	616,300
2000	151,600	0	94,200	2,398,456	198,800	2,156,570	67,700	368,570
2001	176,500	73,500	89,700	2,210,300	79,950	1,870,050	453,600	746,400
2002	211,800	88,200	125,190	3,084,810	112,750	2,637,250	240,000	960,000
2003	216,000	84,000	133,476	3,044,524	130,788	2,983,212	141,750	1,208,250
2004	249,900	100,100	120,398	3,133,602	144,196	2,628,804	121,128	599,872
2005	248,000	0	79,940	2,775,060	179,418	3,338,582	58,160	668,840
2006	229,700	65,000	135,000	4,812,100	133,800	4,556,900	108,400	1,300,800
2007	270,900	0	144,300	3,512,000	138,400	3,932,000	109,000	1,305,600
2008	277,500	0	152,600	5,079,300	139,500	3,961,400	121,500	1,803,900

Breakdown of divisional budgets by source, programme and year (CFP units)

9. It would be instructive to analyse the increase in travel costs over the last few years, since a significant proportion of the budget of a regional organisation is consumed by staff, workshop and meeting travel.
10. The budget for the division for 2009 (see CRGA paper 7.6) is 10 263 700 CFP units pending CRGA approval.

Divisional staffing

11. The staff of the division has almost doubled since its establishment in 1997.

	Divisional office		Oceanic Fisheries		Coastal Fisheries		Maritime		Total
	internatl	local	internatl	local	internatl	local	internatl	local	
1997	1	1	17	5	8	4	2	1	39
1998	1	1	17	5	13	4	2	1	44
1999	1	1	14	5	12	4	2	1	40
2000	1	1	15	5	12	4	2	1	41
2001	1	1	12	5	14	3	2	1	39
2002	1	1	16	7	16	5	3	1	50
2003	1	1	14	8	20	5	3	2	54
2004	1	1	15	10	21	5	3	2	58
2005	1	1	15	10	23	5	6	1	62
2006	1	1	16	11	24	5	6	5	69
2007	1	1	17	10	23	5	6	5	68
2008	1	1	20	12	23	4	7	5	73

Breakdown of division staff numbers, by year, programme, and recruitment catchment

12. As well as an increase in the number of all staff, the proportion of Pacific Island staff recruited to internationally advertised posts has increased from 17% to 37% since 1997. The small proportion of women in internationally advertised grades has however remained more or less constant.
13. These figures do not include the Worldfish staff who have been based in an office at SPC headquarters for the past few years. This has been a hosting arrangement with full cost-recovery, and Worldfish staff do not fall under the SPC Corporate Plan. The Worldfish office itself will move to Fiji in 2009. Neither does this table include SPC-supported fisheries staff funded under cost-sharing arrangements and based in government offices of member countries and territories, such as port-samplers. The single staff member of the French Development Agency-funded *Initiative for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Coral Reefs in the South Pacific* (CRISP) programme was taken on to the SPC staff complement recently.

Future of Fisheries study

14. CRGA 36 in 2007:

'Endorsed the proposal for FFA and SPC to undertake a joint study on the 'Future of Pacific Fisheries'. This study will map out options to:

- a) *harness the greatest sustainable contributions of tuna to national and regional economic growth;*
- b) *provide access to the fish needed for food security to 2030;*
- c) *optimise the contributions of coastal fisheries to livelihoods and food security; and*

Requested the SPC and FFA secretariats to share with their respective membership the terms of reference of the study including the study methodology, cost, implications and time frame, for their inputs and endorsement prior to it being implemented’.

15. A draft set of TORs was developed collaboratively by the Directors-General of SPC and FFA and was put before the FFA membership in May⁵. However, it could not be endorsed at that meeting, since the chance to submit suggestions for revised wording was requested by one member for the purpose of ensuring that the study was clearly separated into two sequential parts, to avoid any possibility that regional institutional political considerations might influence the study of the fisheries sector itself. Those revisions have been integrated into the text and are being put before the membership of SPC for endorsement at Annex 3.

New divisional arrangements

16. The proposed new corporate structure for SPC to accommodate the expansion of SPC over the last decade (see CRGA Paper 5.3) is based on sectoral themes. Despite being in the same division since 1998, SPC’s maritime and fisheries programmes have little in common. Maritime deals with legal and IMO standards compliance issues for larger vessels, ports and commerce, and is primarily concerned with transport and safety, whilst SPC fisheries deals with science, small-scale fishing vessels (which are not covered by IMO), and fish-farming, and is largely concerned with natural resource management and food security. The main interaction between SPC maritime and regional fisheries affairs actually occurs with FFA, which deals with oceangoing fishing vessel compliance issues.
17. The new structure moves the Regional Maritime Programme to a new division focused on Transport, Infrastructure and Security, and keeps the Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries Programmes together in the current division. From the point of view of the Fisheries Programmes this will involve no real change, except perhaps in their collective name. For the Regional Maritime Programme, an amalgamation with certain technical functions of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is envisaged. PIFS and SPC have been consulting to see whether greater efficiencies and synergies could be achieved. The PIFS Aviation work programme component and SPC RMP already work closely together.

⁵ http://www.spc.int/mrd/ministers/2008/MIN4WP16_FFA-SPC-Future-Fisheries-TOR.pdf

Highlights of 2008 programme work

Regional Maritime Programme

18. Maritime security continued to feature strongly in the 2007/2008 period. In May 2008, SPC RMP and Australia's Office of Transport Security (OTS) jointly organised a first-ever regional conference on emerging maritime security issues in the Pacific, attended by over 60 participants from Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs), regional organisations and Pacific Rim countries. SPC RMP and OTS also completed a joint study in January 2008 on security risks relating to cruise shipping in the Pacific. Cruise ships coming into the Pacific are increasingly linked to illegal activities such as drug smuggling. Bigger cruise ships and more frequent calls at Pacific ports mean additional responsibilities for port authorities in terms of stepping up security measures. In March 2008, SPC RMP and the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) completed a joint study on security risks concerned with ocean-going pleasure craft in the Pacific.
19. Monitoring and compliance: RMP continues to assist countries to maintain compliance with the STCW-95 ('White List') and ISPS Code requirements through free-of cost compliance audits and advice. During August 2007 to July 2008, seven initial and four close-out audits (STCW-95, ISPS Code for ports and designated authorities) were completed in five PICTs –Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. In addition, in-country assistance was provided to Vanuatu in September 2007 to advise, conduct audits and conduct security drills and exercises for port facility security officers. RMP also assisted Consort Shipping in Fiji with their ship security plan in January 2008. In August 2007, RMP underwent their second Business Excellence audit. Audit findings revealed good progress since the initial audit in 2006. RMP is planning to introduce Business Excellence audits for interested PICTs by the end of 2008.
20. Small island states shipping: RMP commenced a shipping commodity project in May 2008, which focuses on improving intra-regional sea trade in the Pacific Islands region. The project entails collection and analysis of trade data from PICs, specifying the main sources of imports and exports and all forms of commodities, including cement, timber, aggregates and food. The trade data will be linked to shipping routes to determine viable intra-regional shipping services as well as cheaper import and export options for PICs. It is an anticipated win-win situation for both exporting and importing PICs, with the greatest benefit likely to be enjoyed by small island states (SISs) which depend heavily on imports transported by sea. The outcome of the study will hold implications for PICs considering the current global crisis on rising food and fuel prices. RMP also undertook a mission to Tokelau (maritime administration based in Apia, Samoa) in February 2008 to assist the administration in developing office procedures with standardised templates, a national maritime shipping policy, shipping legislation and regulations, operating procedures for safe ship-to-shore transfer of passengers and cargo in Tokelau and a mentoring programme for staff. A month later, RMP hosted a maritime administrator's secondment for two Tokelau maritime administration staff in Suva. At a regional level, RMP organised a ship management training course targeting shipowners from SIS.

21. Work of regional maritime associations: RMP maintains the Secretariat for four maritime associations, namely the Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA), Pacific International Maritime Law Association (PIMLA), Pacific Countries Ports Association (PCPA) and Pacific Women in Maritime Association (PacWIMA). During the 2007/2008 period, annual general meetings were held for members of PacMA, PCPA and PIMLA. PacMA audit subcommittee members were part of the audit teams conducting seven initial and four close-out audits (STCW-95, ISPS Code for ports and designated authorities) completed in five PICTs during August 2007 to July 2008. The PacMA Maritime Safety subcommittee embarked on developing a system for reporting maritime accidents and incidents involving PICTs. Some of the experienced PacMA, PIMLA and PCPA members were resource persons at the first-ever Pacific Maritime Security Conference, jointly organised by SPC RMP and Australia's Office of Transport Security in May 2008. PIMLA provided legal advice and in-country assistance to three PICTs (Vanuatu, Niue and Tokelau) by drafting and updating maritime policies, legislation and regulations. PIMLA members also convened for a review of the generic Pacific Islands Maritime Laws (PIMLaws) in 2007 and conducted a maritime policy drafting workshop in July 2008 for other lawyers in the Pacific. The PCPA Training Committee commenced a review of the Pacific Port Worker Training Standards in August 2007. PacWIMA was most active in PNG with several awareness sessions on maritime careers, small boat sea safety, sexually transmitted diseases and marine environmental protection.

Coastal Fisheries Programme

22. Status Report: Nearshore and reef fisheries and aquaculture – In May 2008 the latest regional report on the status of coastal fisheries and aquaculture was presented by SPC to FFA Fisheries Ministers. The full report can be found on the SPC website⁶. At this stage, it is an outline report, based on the best currently available scientific information coming out of the coastal components of the EU-funded Pacific Regional Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries Development Programme (PROCFish and CoFish). This programme has completed baseline data collection and is now analysing the data and getting this back to the 17 participating countries and territories for management and future monitoring purposes.
23. Coastal fisheries are complex – usually involving upward of 100 fin-fish species and dozens of invertebrates, and comparatively little investment has been made in understanding, or even monitoring them. We are only just at the stage of developing baselines for future assessment, and it will be several project cycles before we are in a position to deliver the kind of comprehensive opinions about the status of coastal fisheries across the region that we can provide for tuna fisheries.
24. Pacific Island societies are unusually dependent on fisheries for their dietary protein compared to other regions, and subsistence access to reef and nearshore pelagic fisheries is one of the primary reasons for the generally good nutritional status of coastal Pacific Island people. Fish consumption averaged across the countries of the region is in the order of 65 kg per head per year (ranging from a low of 17 to a high of 110 kg), compared to around 8 kg in Africa and around 25 kg in North America. The overall global average consumption of fish per capita per annum is around 16 kg.

⁶ <http://www.spc.int/mrd/ministers/2008/MIN4WP03-coastal-fisheries-status-annex-a.pdf>

25. These Pacific island food-fish are mainly caught locally from coastal and nearshore fisheries. However, the risks to this supply are growing. Human populations are increasing overall (estimated to increase 50% by 2030), and this increase is disproportionately concentrated in island capital and near fishing grounds, which are also impacted by urban runoff. The need to sustain families through paid employment rather than through subsistence agriculture and fishing is weakening traditional mechanisms of resource husbandry.
26. The risk to food security is a gradually increasing, and is a medium to long-term worry in most places as the gap widens between the growing needs (nutritional and livelihood) of increasing populations and the production capacity of natural coastal fisheries ecosystems. This capacity will reduce if overfishing and pollution are significant.
27. There are also much more immediate coastal fishery worries. These are mainly in the fully commercialised coastal fisheries, particularly export fisheries, some of which are already suffering severe overexploitation. In fact, particularly vulnerable resources – such as the larger species of giant clam – are hovering on the verge of extinction. Most of these coastal export fisheries are the focus of, or are in need of, specific, immediate management action, either to conserve their biological status or recover their potential value. In some cases, this action could involve collaboration between different islands and countries – a regionally harmonised level of information-sharing and decision-making.
28. Action has been undertaken, or is being encouraged, on all of these fronts by CFP. Examples include:
 - development of technical and policy foundations for freshwater aquaculture;
 - support for domestication of commercial tuna fisheries and development of artisanal tuna fishing, including via coastal, tethered fish aggregation devices (FADs);
 - development of coastal fisheries management plans using community and ecosystem approaches;
 - provision of science-based information to support strong action by countries on some coastal export fisheries, such as national moratoriums on bêche-de-mer exports to allow stock recovery, and short open seasons for trochus fisheries with tight monitoring to ensure commercial benefits will continue over the long term;
 - development of ideas for regional cooperation on managing coastal export fisheries and marketing coordination for export products.
29. All of these activities are built on the bedrock of ongoing CFP regional training, and information and resource assessment programmes. There is also a special stream of regional activities aimed specifically at economic and livelihood development in coastal fields that are amenable to such development, particularly nearshore pelagic fisheries and mariculture.

30. Development of domestic tuna fishing operations is being encouraged and supported through the EU-funded joint FFA/SPC 'Development of tuna fisheries in the Pacific-ACP States (DEVFISH) project', as well as other ongoing programme-funded CFP activities. Tuna fishing associations are being strengthened or established under the SPC component of DEVFISH, to encourage greater stakeholder participation in the formulation and operation of domestic tuna fishery development plans, promoted by the FFA component. However, the current economic climate with higher fuel and transportation costs and somewhat stagnant fish prices is slowing progress, especially for domestic longline operations that rely on export markets in Japan and the US.
31. Recent regional agreements on coastal fisheries: During the course of this reporting period, there have been two significant coastal fisheries agreements endorsed by SPC and FFA members: the Pacific Islands Regional Coastal Fisheries Management Policy, with its associated strategic actions, and the SPC Aquaculture Action Plan.
32. The Pacific Islands Regional Coastal Fisheries Management Policy and strategic actions (2008–2013, Apia Policy)⁷ was developed in a workshop setting at a special Heads of Fisheries meeting in Apia, and outlines the agreed elements of a community-based, ecosystem-aware approach to the management of coastal fisheries across the region.
33. The Apia Policy is one of SPC's responses to the expectations of Forum Leaders expressed in the Vava'u Declaration on Sustainable Fisheries, which placed priority on the development and management of coastal fisheries to support food security, sustainable livelihoods and economic growth for current and future generations of Pacific Islanders. The policy also emphasises the need to manage coastal fisheries on an ecosystem basis, with conventional fisheries management needing to be broadened to include the coastal systems that support fisheries. Management systems must therefore involve a wider range of government agencies and stakeholders.
34. The Regional Aquaculture Action Plan⁸ is an update of the previous Aquaculture Plan. It outlines a set of aquaculture priorities to be addressed at the regional level, without constraining individual national aquaculture developments. The commodity development plan lays a foundation for providing new livelihoods in remote coastal communities, and improving food security for inland communities and urban populations.
35. Aquatic Biosecurity Programme: Following continued requests from SPC members, both individually and collectively, including from CRGA, CFP continues to seek more comprehensive capacity-building support for Pacific Island authorities in this increasingly-critical area (not only for protection of island aquatic ecosystems, but also to prevent unnecessary procedural impediments to Pacific Island coastal fisheries exports). In the meantime, we continue to provide ad-hoc advisory and training support where possible, using existing budgetary resources, while new funding sources are being explored.

⁷ www.spc.int/mrd/ministers/2008/MIN4WP14_Coastal+Fisheries+Management+Policies.pdf

⁸ www.spc.int/mrd/ministers/2008/MIN4WP15_Regional+Aquaculture+Strategy_Attachment.pdf

36. Future directions and resourcing of CFP: CFP is entering a transition period with several major projects coming to an end in 2009, creating a potential gap in SPC's ability to provide an adequate level of service to members in these fields. Financing for the CFP work-programme has been substantially rationalised over the course of the last decade, but there remain areas to address, particularly the continued reliance on fixed-term project funding to finance scientific support services in coastal fisheries.
37. The work programme is funded through three mechanisms⁹, depending on the type of activity. The small amount allocated from the SPC core budget supports the Programme Manager, and fixed-term project funding is devoted to one-off 'non mission-critical', 'rapid response', or 'incremental' activities, while the main, ongoing core business of CFP programmes is supported by programme funding.
38. The core business of the Coastal Fisheries Programme is refined from time to time during the course of reviews and strategic plan development and assessment and can be summarised as follows:
- a. Development and training assistance in nearshore, small- and medium-scale fisheries;
 - b. Assistance, advisory services and training in coastal and reef fisheries management plan development and operation;
 - c. Scientific assessment, database establishment, advisory and training support for Pacific Island coastal fisheries ecosystem managers and scientists;
 - d. Development, research, national planning and training assistance in aquaculture;
 - e. Maintenance of a regional repository of qualitative and quantitative information on Pacific Island fisheries and aquaculture, linked to a comprehensive response and reporting service
39. At the moment, there is no programme funding support for **item (c)** on this list of CFP core business, nor for the quantitative components of **item (e)**. Historically, project funding has proven relatively generous in the coastal fisheries science area, so programme funding was channelled to less attention-getting, but equally essential parts of the CFP work programme, particularly those connected with sustainable development. But this is a tenuous situation when project cycles do not intersect, as will happen in the near future. For example, EU EDF 8 funding will finish in February 2009, and EDF 9 funding by mid 2009. If none of our plans come to fruition, SPC's coastal fisheries science capacity will be reduced from eight staff in 2008 to one staff member by mid 2009.

⁹ There is also a fourth mechanism – earning money through corporate consultancies and providing services – but this is difficult to balance against the priority need to provide services to member countries. It is possible in certain work areas where the needs of members and service-receivers coincide, such as with the provision of certain scientific services by OFP to WCPFC, but this is generally not an option in CFP work areas.

40. A basic service in these areas could be maintained by the redistribution of programme funds from other areas – by dropping certain staff and creating posts with other specialisations. But if key areas of the CFP work programme are not to be impacted **or lost**, an additional quantum of programme funding is needed from 2009 for certain posts and activities that are currently supported by project funding. Future fixed-term projects can then be devoted to true fixed-term activities rather than being used to accomplish core business.
41. Specific details can be found in a paper on the future direction and funding implications for CFP¹⁰ that has been drafted for the upcoming donor discussions with Australia and New Zealand. The CFP will also be developing its new strategic plan during 2009 for the period 2010–2014. This will commence early in the year with a Heads of Fisheries meeting proposed in February 2009.

Oceanic Fisheries Programme

42. Status of oceanic fisheries¹¹: The total catch of tunas in the WCPFC area in 2007 increased to an estimated 2.4 million mt, the highest annual catch recorded, and more than 120,000 mt higher than the previous record in 2006. During 2007, the purse seine fishery accounted for an estimated 1,739,859 mt (73% of the total catch, and a record for this fishery), with pole-and-line taking an estimated 214,935 mt (9%), the longline fishery an estimated 232,388 mt (10%), and the remainder (8%) taken by troll gear and a variety of artisanal gears, mostly in eastern Indonesia and the Philippines. The Convention Area tuna catch for 2007 represented 84% of the total Pacific Ocean catch of 2.8 million mt, and 55% of the global tuna catch (the provisional estimate for 2007 is just under 4.4 million mt).
43. The most recent assessments of the status of major tuna stocks indicate that: (i) Overfishing of **bigeye tuna** is continuing and the stock continues to decline. The 4th Session of the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC4) recommended a minimum 30% reduction in fishing mortality from the average levels of 2003–2006. (ii) Yellowfin tuna is at least fully exploited, and there is a significant probability that overfishing is occurring. SC4 reiterated previous advice that fishing mortality should be reduced. (iii) Skipjack tuna catches continue to increase, to a record 1.7 million mt in 2007. Such high catches are considered to be sustainable unless recruitment falls persistently below the long-term average. (iv) While the catch of South Pacific albacore has increased strongly over recent years, assessments continue to indicate that overfishing of the stock is unlikely to be occurring. However, there is considerable uncertainty in the assessment, and as a result SC4 recommended that catches and fishing mortality do not increase beyond present levels. OFP is currently conducting intensive biological research on albacore to reduce the uncertainty in the assessment.
44. OFP work programme: The OFP work programme in 2008 continued to focus on its key objectives as described earlier in this paper, with activities at both the national and regional levels through engagement with the fisheries administrations of SPC members, through the FFA and through WCPFC.

¹⁰ <http://www.spc.int/mrd/ministers/2008/CFP-futures-2008-draft3.pdf>

¹¹ OFP presented 28 working and information papers to the 4th session of the WCPFC Scientific Committee in August in Port Moresby – see <http://www.wcpfc.int/sc4/index.htm>. The following paragraphs summarise some of the information contained in these papers.

45. A particular focus of the programme's work in 2008 continued to be the implementation of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme (PTTP), an SPC initiative with endorsement from the Pacific Forum Leaders and Pacific Plan. The PTTP is an ambitious research programme that will provide critical new information on tuna population dynamics and exploitation patterns in the western and central Pacific Ocean. Phase 1 of the programme (focusing on PNG and Solomon Islands) was completed in April 2008 and greatly exceeded its operational targets. Phase 2 is now in progress, with a five-month tagging cruise through the waters of Micronesia, Philippines and Indonesia currently underway and a first central Pacific cruise through Kiribati and adjacent waters successfully completed. Phase 2 has an estimated budget of USD 9.8 million over five years. With major contributions announced by the government of New Zealand and the European Community over the past year, total contributions of USD 6.4 million have now been confirmed. The Secretariat continues to seek funding to complete the PTTP. Further details of the work to date are given in Annex 1.
46. In addition to the direct provision of scientific services to SPC members, OFP continues to conduct national capacity building activities for SPC members in the key areas of fishery monitoring and data management, observer and port sampling training, and training in tuna stock assessment interpretation and application at the national level. Many of these activities are noted under Annexes 1 and 2.
47. Future directions and resourcing of OFP: The implementation of WCPFC since 2005 has been a major development in the management of tuna fisheries in the Pacific Islands region. WCPFC is developing its procedures and work programmes, and, since 2005, has begun to implement conservation and management measures that directly affect many SPC members.
48. The advent of WCPFC has impacted on OFP in several ways. The long history of involvement of OFP in the coordination of data collection, and the compilation, dissemination and management of regional tuna fisheries data, made it a natural candidate to provide data management services to WCPFC. Similarly, OFP has developed stock assessment methodology and supporting data analyses over the past decade that have enabled it to conduct comprehensive assessments of the four major tuna stocks since around 2000. The experience and expertise developed within the programme resulted in WCPFC requesting OFP to provide stock assessment services to the Commission in support of management decision-making.
49. As a result, OFP has, with the approval and strong support of SPC members, provided data management and stock assessment services to WCPFC since 2005. WCPFC has provided funding to support this work; however, the funds provided are conservatively estimated to comprise about 50% of the actual costs of overall service provision. The sharing of costs of these scientific services between WCPFC and SPC members has been considered appropriate because OFP involvement in regional stock assessment and data management enhances our ability to provide services to SPC members at the national level and in sub-regional groupings such as FFA.

50. All SPC members are also members of WCPFC and have obligations regarding the collection and provision of fisheries data from their national fleets and the implementation of conservation and management measures for the tuna fisheries that occur in their EEZs. These new obligations have stimulated a strong demand for technical capacity building in fishery monitoring, national data management, stock assessment interpretation and the evaluation of management options. OFP has responded to the best of its ability, given available resources, but is now struggling to keep up with the demand.
51. FFA has taken strong new initiatives, supported by major increases in their funding base, in coordinating the positions of their members in the development of management proposals for both national implementation and for wider consideration by WCPFC. These initiatives have created an additional demand for scientific support by OFP through provision of National Tuna Fishery Status Reports, data summaries and analyses of management options. Until recently (with support from AusAID for a new Fishery Scientist position), OFP has not received additional resources to meet this demand.
52. Against this background of increased demand for scientific services from OFP, the stock assessments conducted by the programme have, for the past several years, indicated worsening stock status for two of the four main tuna species, bigeye and yellowfin tuna. On the basis of these assessments, WCPFC has begun to consider complex management measures to address the situation. In addition, some FFA members (the PNA group) have independently developed a suite of measures for their EEZs. The status of bigeye and yellowfin tuna has raised the stakes considerably in the management of the fisheries and has attracted considerable international attention. As a result, there is an ever increasing demand for more comprehensive and detailed stock assessments and associated analysis of management options from OFP.
53. In addition to increased management scrutiny on target species, the impacts of tuna fisheries on non-target species are now receiving greater attention, both at WCPFC and national levels. SPC members require advice and capacity building in such areas as non-target species monitoring and assessment and by-catch mitigation. This is likely to be a growth area of OFP in the coming years with increased pressure on WCPFC and SPC member governments by environmental NGOs and the general public to adequately address issues relating to non-target species impacts of tuna fisheries.
54. The combined effect of these demands has left OFP considerably under-resourced to carry out its 'core business', which may be summarised as:
 - a. management of the regional tuna fisheries database, including (but not restricted to) provision of data management services to WCPFC;
 - b. capacity building in national fishery monitoring and data management, including assistance to SPC members in reporting tuna fisheries data to WCPFC;
 - c. conduct of regional stock assessments and associated management options and management strategy evaluation. This incorporates, but is not restricted to, the stock assessment services carried out for WCPFC;

- d. provision of scientific advice to SPC members for the development and implementation of ecosystem-based tuna fishery management plans;
 - e. capacity building in stock assessment aimed at enabling national fisheries staff to understand and interpret regional tuna stock assessments to enhance the quality of their participation in WCPFC and to use regional stock assessment information in national tuna fisheries management; and
 - f. conduct of biological and ecological research to support stock assessment and national-level scientific advice, in particular the impacts of tuna fisheries on non-target species and the impact of the environment, including climate change, on tuna stocks and fisheries.
55. There will be an ongoing need for the centralised provision of these core services. This is largely because the regional nature of highly migratory fish resources demands a regionally coordinated approach to much of the science, fishery monitoring and data management. It is to be hoped that capacity-building efforts will result in a gradual development and retention of skills and experience in national fisheries administrations to the point where there is sufficient in-house expertise to internalise much of the training required to deal with staff turnover. At this point, the OFP role is expected to shift from the present training focus to more of a quality control and data auditing role.
56. OFP has evolved over the past 20 years to meet the changing needs of SPC members as regional tuna fisheries have developed and management structures have been put in place. This evolution is expected to continue over the next 5-10 years as the process of formalised international management of regional tuna fisheries develops. Currently, OFP meets the ongoing scientific support needs of SPC members, its core business, through a combination of programme and project funding. There is a need to convert project-funded positions involved in the core business of the OFP to more secure programme funding. This should be done in a staged way linked to the termination of existing projects. OFP also requires additional capacity to meet the ever-increasing demand for scientific support as national obligations increase and more sophisticated fisheries management is introduced. The overall increase required in annual programme-funded support to OFP is estimated to be¹²:

	<u>Additional funds required</u>	
	<u>From 2009</u> <u>(CFP units)</u>	<u>From 2011</u> <u>(CFP units)</u>
OFP Programme Management Unit	117,000	177,000
Stock Assessment & Modelling	270,000	385,000
Statistics & Monitoring	220,000	670,000
Ecosystem Monitoring & Assessment	0	270,000
TOTAL	607,000	1,502,000

¹² Further details of the basis for these estimates are available from the OFP Manager on request.

57. Project funding would then focus on supporting fixed-term needs for biological and ecosystem-related information, special projects in stock assessment and statistics and monitoring, and on providing additional operational funding to support the programme's core business activities.

5 September 2008

ANNEXES

- Annex 1 – Notable activities and outputs under each objective (for the period August 2007 to July 2008)
- Annex 2 – Notable country-specific activities (for the period August 2007 to July 2008)
- Annex 3 – ‘Forecasting the future of Pacific Island Fisheries’ – Terms of reference for a joint FFA/SPC Study