SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

NINETEENTH REGIONAL TECHNCIAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 3 - 7 August 1987)

SPC/FFA COMPUTER TRAINING COURSE

(Paper prepared jointly by the SPC and FFA Secretariats)

1.   The purpose of this paper is to present for discussion a proposal for the development of a programme in computer training for fisheries workers.

2.   The use of micro computers by fisheries departments of the region is increasing rapidly and is being encouraged by the donation of computer equipment by aid agencies including FFA and USAID. The principal use for the equipment is the storage and analysis of fisheries statistical data: however, as many departments now possess several computers they are also using them for general purposes, including word and data processing and, in some countries, communication.

3.   In conjunction with this increased use of computers is a need for staff who can operate them efficiently and fisheries departments have been making enquiries about the availability of training in this area. Both FFA and SPC have responded to this need. SPC has run a two-week Fisheries Statistics Training course with a one-week follow-up course and also a two-week Stock Assessment course all of which were heavily computer-oriented. It has also assisted several countries set up their computer and statistical systems and arranged attachments to the TBAP for individual fisheries officers. The FFA, as well as organising the selection and supply of hardware, has similarily helped with the setting up of equipment and with attachments has also arranged training for selected fisheries officers at courses in Australia.

4.   In addition to this training there is a variety of computer training courses available in several countries in the region through technical colleges and private courses.

5.   Not withstanding these initiatives and opportunities, requests for computer training continue to be received by both SPC and FFA.

6.   In mid-1987 an informal questionaire survey of computer training requirements was carried out among SPC member Fisheries Departments by the SPC Fisheries Training Officer. Only 8 countries have so far responded to the questionaire, but these responses all indicated the need for computer training at basic, intermediate and advanced levels, as shown in Table 1. In addition, all 8 countries indicated that they wished to see the subject raised for discussion at this meeting.

7.   Sending trainees to computer training courses outside the region is expensive and it is considered that with the large amount of expertise which exists within the FFA and SPC, better and more cost-effective training can be designed specifically for fisheries departments and can be conducted at a regional venue. For the same amount of funding a greater number of people could receive more appropriate specialised training making use of regional resources.

8.   It is proposed that FFA and SPC combine resources to develop and organise a regional training programme in the use of computers in fisheries departments. Such training would not pre-empt the continuing practice of attaching staff for short periods to FFA and the TBAP of the SPC to get on-the-job experience or for officers from these organisations to assist with in-country advice and training. It would, however, within a relatively short period of time aim to advance the computer capabilities of fisheries department staff and place them in a position where they will be better able to respond to attachments and further training.

9.   The meeting is requested to firstly comment on the need for, and appropriate levels of, computer training for fisheries departments. If considered appropriate, the meeting is invited to endorse the joint SPC/FFA approach, and to request FFA member states represented at the meeting to convey this endorsement to the FFA.

Table 1

SUMMARY OF COMPUTER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

COUNTRY	HARDWARE	SOFTWARE	NO. OF WORDPROCESSING	INTRODUCTORY AWARENESS	ADVANCED SOFTWARE	PROGRAMING	REPAIRS	DISCUSSION AT RTMF
FIJI	1 IBM, 7 IBM 1 HP9863	Lotus 123, FANTASY DB 3+, SPSS Wordstar	2	NIL	NIL	3	2 (Simple)	Yes
VANUATU	APRICOT (1) VECTRA (8)	DB 2, MS Basic Lotus 123 Statpac Wordstar	3	3	3	1	1	Yes
TUVALU	VECTRA, HP, NEC Portable 2 MACINTOSH +	Too many to list	5	5	1	2	1	Yes
MARIANAS	APPLE HE EPSON IBM	Lotus 123 DB 2,3 DB Master	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	Yes
SOLOMONS	2 x HP 87, 1 x HP 85, 4 x HP 150 II, 1 x HP 110	Visicalc, Lotus 123 D Base II, Var. W. Processing	5	NIL	6	2	NIL	Yes
PNG	1 x IBM, 3 VECTAS, 3 or 4 VECTAS to come	Executive memo maker MS Word DB2 & 2+ Lotus 123 Wordstar	7	15	10	5	0	Yes
KIRIBATI	HP 150, HP 85B 2 HP Portables	Various for HP	1	NIL	NIL	1	1	Yes
TONGA	1 IBM PC x 2	DOS & Basic DBase II + III Elefan Spreadsheet	3	3	2	NIL	1	Yes