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(Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 6–9 October 2009)

DIVISIONAL REPORTS FOR 2009

AGENDA ITEM 3.2.2 – MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION REVIEW

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

Summary

1. This paper provides the response by SPC to the independent review of the Marine Resources Division that was undertaken at the beginning of 2009.

Recommendations

2. CRGA is invited to:
 - i. Note the findings of the review, and the actions being undertaken to address the recommendations.
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REVIEW OF THE MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION**FEBRUARY TO MAY 2009****Response by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)****Background**

3. An independent review of the Marine Resources Division (MRD)¹ was undertaken in 2009. The review team consisted of Mr Robert Lindley (Team Leader) and Dr Leon Zann with the support of Patricia Sachs-Cornish (SPC Strategic Engagement Policy and Planning Facility). The purpose of the review was to assess the performance of MRD and, where needed, to assist in the development of more effective programmes and strategic programme plans (SPPs) to meet the needs and aspirations of the Pacific Islands countries and territories (PICTs) in relation to their marine resources. The review was also required to make recommendations on the revision of the operational management framework to implement these programmes and SPPs through best practise delivery of services to PICTs. This paper presents SPC's formal response to the review findings and recommendations.

Overview of fisheries in the Pacific

4. Fisheries are one of the few renewable resources that PICTs have at their disposal for food security, livelihoods and economic growth. As Pacific Island populations grow, the future of these resources will depend on how well we are able to balance increasing demands with the limits to the capacity of freshwater, coastal and oceanic fish stocks to sustain the harvests needed to meet those needs.
5. 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. 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 (it is estimated that the population of the region will increase by 50 per cent by 2030), and this increase is disproportionately concentrated in island capitals. The need to sustain families through paid employment rather than through subsistence agriculture and fishing is weakening traditional mechanisms of resource husbandry.
6. 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 be reduced if overfishing and pollution are significant.
7. There are also much more immediate coastal fishery problems. 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 on the verge of extinction. Most of these coastal export fisheries are the focus of, or are in need of, 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 PICTs – through information-sharing and regional agreements.

¹ The Regional Maritime Programme (RMP), which is part of MRD, was not part of this review.

8. The region's oceanic fisheries have seen a rapid and sustained expansion. The total catch of tunas in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (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. The Convention Area tuna catch for 2007 represented 84 per cent of the total Pacific Ocean catch of 2.8 million mt, and 55 per cent of the global tuna catch (the provisional estimate for 2007 is just under 4.4 million mt). 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; (ii) **yellowfin tuna** is at least fully exploited, and there is a significant probability that overfishing is occurring; (iii) while 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; and (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, although localised depletion can threaten the economic viability of some domestic fisheries.

The role of the Marine Resources Division

9. SPC's Marine Resources Division (MRD), is headquartered in Noumea and includes the Coastal Fisheries and Oceanic Fisheries programmes. The goals of the two programmes are 'SPC members are significantly assisted in their commitment to apply the ecosystem approach to coastal fisheries and aquaculture by 2010,' and '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,' respectively.
10. Within the Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP), the Fisheries Information Section specialises in compiling, producing and delivering non-statistical information across the whole range of Pacific Island fisheries to national and territorial fisheries services in response to specific needs. The Nearshore Fisheries Development and Training Section assists members to develop domestic commercial fisheries capacity within a sustainable ecosystem context, while the Reef Fisheries Observatory provides scientific assessments of coastal resources. The Coastal Fisheries Management Section assists in the development of socially achievable coastal ecosystem management systems. The development of a regional support framework for sustainable aquaculture planning, research and development is the role of the Aquaculture Section.
11. The Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP), through its Fisheries Stock Assessment and Modelling Section helps to ensure that regional and national fisheries management authorities have access to high-quality scientific information and advice on the status of their oceanic fisheries stocks. The Ecosystem Monitoring and Analysis Section helps to improve the understanding of pelagic ecosystems in the western and central Pacific Ocean, by collecting and analysing information on the biological characteristics of oceanic species and their environment. Ensuring that regional and national fisheries management authorities have access to accurate and comprehensive data on fisheries targeting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and other oceanic species is a core function of the Statistics and Monitoring Section.

MRD resources

12. At the time of the review, MRD had a staff complement of 60 persons (44 professional, 10 technical and 6 administrative), with an annual operating budget of 8,500,000 CFP units. The senior positions of Director and Programme Manager are funded through SPC's core budget while the remainder of staff and MRDs activities are largely financed through non-core funding. Present major financial supporters to the operations of MRD include the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid), the European Union, the MacArthur Foundation, New Zealand, France, WCPFC and the Global Environment Facility.

Review findings

13. During the course of the review, which included visits to a number of PICTs, the review team consulted extensively with a wide range of stakeholders. They included SPC staff in both Noumea and Suva, as well as government, non-governmental organisation (NGO), private sector and donor agency staff engaged in marine resources/fisheries activities. The main review findings were as follows:
 - a. The programmes remain effective.
 - b. SPC is moving forward with the increased use of Joint Country Strategies (JCSs) for management purposes with positive results.
 - c. It would be beneficial to include OFP and CFP in one strategic plan as the very broad objectives of the two programmes are the same and there are opportunities to share support services.
 - d. There are some shortcomings at the strategic level in that the implications of implementing some of the recent plans and strategies put forward do not seem to be fully incorporated in the SPP.
 - e. Some operational level shortcomings were found in the failure to adequately link activities and outputs to the objectives.
 - f. SPC is the only organisation in the Pacific providing real leadership on many fisheries issues.
 - g. Demand for SPC services remains very high, and a series of changes are needed to ensure that the service provided by MRD is adjusted to reflect the changing needs and challenges facing PICTs.
 - h. Caution needs to be exercised in implementing SPC's decentralisation policy for MRD.

Future strategic directions

14. Although the OFP and CFP strategic plans 2006–2009 were flexible frameworks for action, the review suggested a number of changes, including a consolidated strategic programme for MRD. These suggestions represent a more crystallised MRD work plan with emphasis on fully incorporating recent regional plans and policies within any proposed future framework. These changes in future direction concern:
 - a. improving linkages between objectives and outputs in the SPP;
 - b. continued MRD support to capacity building and capacity supplementation in areas such as fisheries science;
 - c. adopting a developing approach to respond to changing needs in fisheries;
 - d. ensuring that the MRD programme continues to strengthen strategic partnerships that draw on the strengths and resources of all stakeholders; and
 - e. reviewing staff qualifications and roles in line with MRD taking a more proactive regional role.

Review response

15. SPC agrees with the overall findings and the majority of review recommendations. Some of the recommendations are already being addressed. It is noted, however, that funding and resource constraints may limit full implementation of a number of recommendations in the short to medium term.

Section 1: Planning and management in MRD***Recommendation 1***

That the MRD adopt a structure that is far more objective oriented. A suitable model may be the SPC Land Resources Division (LRD), based in Suva. In this model, the sections are all subordinate and service the objectives of LRD. With modifications, this model should prove suitable for MRD.

SPC response – Recommendation partly accepted

16. A more objective oriented structure will be adopted for CFP with a section addressing each work area. CFP would then replicate the successful OFP structure. It is considered desirable to retain the ‘two-programme’ structure, in view of the different emphases of the programmes; however, it is recognised that work on some issues requires collaboration between sections in the different programmes, which is already happening.

Recommendation 2

That the MRD employ a more strongly objective oriented project planning approach to the preparation of the 2010–2013 SPP.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

17. This has been reflected in the draft 2010–2013 SPP.

Recommendation 3

That the Fisheries Management Section be merged with the Reef Fisheries Observatory into a single broader section (called, for example, the ‘Coastal Fisheries Science and Management Section’).

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

18. They will be formally merged at the start of 2010, and a new Coastal Fisheries Management Adviser has been recruited to head the section.

Recommendation 4

That in establishing the new structure to allow the division to become more objective oriented, a formal support section be established to provide a range of services to the technical sections of the MRD.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

19. MRD will be establishing a single support section for both OFP and CFP which will initially handle the information role of the division. Additional functions will be developed over time if funding permits.

Recommendation 5

This review notes that it is important to create a sense of ownership by the member countries in MRD activities, and that the tools exist in the planning process, the Joint Country Strategy Papers (JCSPs), the regional offices and the Information Section to make sure it happens. The JCSPs should be used far more actively by MRD to guide interventions in individual countries.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted**Recommendation 6**

That a longer planning horizon be adopted for MRD. This will assist funding agencies' planning, as well as helping ensure that future funding is secured for essential project activities that will result from the adoption of the Apia Policy, the Aquaculture Management Plan and the Regional Biosecurity Project. It should also help in planning to address important food security and climate change issues. Twenty-year and ten-year outline plans could be prepared and consolidated regularly in the current three-year SPPs.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

20. While SPC accepts the recommendation, it should be recognised that the funding horizon of all partners does not extend much beyond 3–4 years. The JCS process also only results in a 4–5 year plan. SPC and the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) have launched the 'Future of Fisheries Study' to provide a broad strategic overview of issues and requirements forecast over the next 25 years.

Recommendation 7

That the country-by-country approach to implementing projects and programmes be encouraged, particularly within CFP. It reduces costs and concentrates resources on countries and areas where there is greatest likelihood of success. Recognition should be given to the fact that the 'one size fits all' regional approach is frequently wasteful of resources.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

21. Such an approach has been adopted since the establishment of JCSs.

Recommendation 8

That MRD, through the JCSPs, assess the capacity of the PICT fisheries departments and divisions to absorb and benefit from its services, and, should the capacity of the division or department be lacking, MRD should modify the implementation schedule and scope of involvement to reflect the capabilities of the recipient country.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

22. This approach is being adopted progressively as the JCS process develops, although the understanding of members will be necessary.

Section 2: Coastal Fisheries Programme**Recommendation 9**

That CFP seek funds to undertake an external and objective study of Pacific Island aquaculture so as to identify the most rewarding strategies for the Aquaculture Section to focus on in the future. This should be based on a rigorous economic evaluation, carried out by an experienced economist.

SPC response – Recommendation partly accepted

23. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recently announced plans to conduct such a study, and MRD will engage fully with this study if it takes place. If not, MRD will consider commissioning such a study, noting, however, that it may be more beneficial to have economic expertise within the programme to enable such analysis and reviews to be undertaken in-house and on a continuing basis, rather than as a one-off study.

Recommendation 10

That the Training Officer currently in the Nearshore Fisheries and Training Section be transferred to the proposed Support Section and take on the administrative and coordination responsibilities for training for all the sections of MRD.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted in principle

24. The Training Adviser position has been discontinued due to lack of funding. If new funding can be secured, the support section for MRD will include a position for the administration and coordination of training for all sections.

Recommendation 11

That MRD seek to retain two scientific positions (and one support position) to maintain the initiative and history of the PROCFish Project. In seeking funding, MRD should highlight the importance to CFP of maintaining continuity in the provision of coastal fisheries management and science services, which will otherwise be adversely affected by the delay in implementing the two planned projects to be funded by the European Development Fund (EDF).

SPC response – Recommendation accepted in principle

25. Due to funding constraints, implementation of this recommendation will have to be deferred to mid-2010 when it is hoped that the first EDF10 project will start.

Recommendation 12

That, when funds permit, the CFP Information Section undertake a brief study (in a suitable PICT) to assess its success in distributing materials and information to its intended audience. There may be lessons to be learned from the Regional Maritime Programme (RMP).

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

26. It should be noted that distribution of newsletters, etc. does not differ greatly between CFP and RMP – hard copies are mailed to an extensive address list. Only publications such as posters are circulated through fisheries administration contacts due to the very high costs of individually mailing thousands of cardboard tubes. Information is also available on the MRD website; however, it is agreed that such a study would be useful and in any case efforts will be made to improve the accessibility of information to stakeholders.

Section 3: CRISP***Recommendation 13***

That MRD continue to accommodate CRISP, but not try to fully integrate its activities into its own.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

27. The CRISP coordination unit is now within MRD and reports to the Director. Some CRISP activities complement the work of CFP and OFP.

Section 4: Oceanic Fisheries Programme***Recommendation 14***

That OFP's scientific advice and technical reports should be subject to greater external scientific peer review.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

28. While SPC agrees with the need for greater scientific peer review, this would be best organised by WCPFC for greater independence.

Recommendation 15

That the issue of potential conflicts of interest amongst SPC/WCPFC/FFA/PICT national fisheries be considered by SPC senior management, and if necessary, be addressed by a small reference group representing all interests.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

29. This issue was considered at the Forum Fisheries Committee meeting in May 2009, where representatives expressed the view that the work for these different stakeholders is complementary, and that no conflict is perceived. MRD will keep the matter under review, however, and will seek further guidance from members if necessary. Greater external peer review (recommended above) should also allay concern over conflict of interest in the conduct of OFP work.

Section 5: Staff and staffing in CFP***Recommendation 16***

That CFP alter the skills composition of its staff to meet the changing needs of the PICTS. All staff terms of reference (TORs) should be updated, and effort should be made through the existing process of triennial staff reviews and other processes to ensure that persons with appropriate skills are appointed to each position.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

30. Job descriptions are reviewed for positions advertised under the six-year rule and the rigorous recruitment process enables SPC to ensure the person with the most appropriate skills is appointed.

Recommendation 17

That an economist be available to all CFP sections so that projects and programmes receive appropriate economic oversight. This could be achieved in a number of ways, including recruiting an economist to sit in the proposed support section, ensuring that one of the senior staff (possibly the Programme Manager) has a background in economics or hiring short-term staff as required.

SPC response – Recommendation accepted in principle

31. This recommendation is being implemented, subject to funding availability. The hiring of short-term staff is the most likely solution in the immediate future.

Section 6: Decentralisation***Recommendation 18***

That MRD in Noumea first deal with its priority issues (e.g. adopting the new structure, adapting to funding constraints) before beginning to emphasise the policy of decentralisation. Only once these issues have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Director of MRD and SPC management should MRD operationalise the decentralisation policy, including placing staff in the regional offices. This may be one to two years away.

SPC response – Recommendation noted

32. The recommendation is noted but it should be recognised that a commitment has already been made to place one staff member in Pohnpei: an Observer Training Coordinator, foreseen in 2010 under EDF10 project funding. The transfer of one aquaculture post to Fiji is also under consideration.

Section 7: SPC as an organisation***Recommendation 19***

That communication, coordination and collaboration within MRD and SPC generally be improved. MRD, through the new Director, will in time address CFP and OFP issues, but SPC management will need to address the larger corporate imperative of cross-cutting cooperation between divisions and their sections through their regular executive meetings.

SPC response – Recommendation noted

33. SPC's Executive Management Team is working toward addressing the larger corporate imperatives of cross-cutting cooperation between divisions and their sections. Executive meetings are held monthly.

Recommendation 20

That SPC, in coordination with other agencies of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP), assess ways of better developing capacity in PICTs. For oceanic fisheries, this would involve methods of building regional capacity in oceanic fisheries science and management, particularly the use and interpretation of the results of stock assessments. For coastal fisheries, this would involve enhancing capacity in management and technical issues, as well as administrative matters and good governance. (Note: This is a recommendation for SPC, not MRD directly.)

SPC response – Recommendation accepted

34. OFP already conducts regular training for PICT fisheries staff in interpreting the oceanic fishery stock assessments, and this will continue. Developing the capacity of Pacific Islanders to conduct these assessments as members of the OFP team is a longer-term process which will require their placement at international centres of excellence in this field, followed by extended attachments with OFP. Funding is not currently available for this. More general capacity building in fisheries departments is already on the agenda and a training needs assessment in Tonga earlier in 2009

focused on this area with a request from Palau for an institutional review to be addressed soon.

Annex 1 – Executive summary – 2009 review of the Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries programmes report

35. The purpose of this review is to assess the performance of the Marine Resources Division (MRD) of the SPC over the last four years. Additionally the review is intended to (a) help SPC to develop more effective Programmes and Strategic Programme Plans to allow Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to maximise the sustainable contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to economic growth, food security and livelihoods and (b) assess and recommend changes to MRD functions, management, staffing, methods of service delivery and structure to support the revised Programmes.
36. This summary sets out the main recommendations and observations of the Review. The recommendations in the summary are not in the same order as they appear in the main text but are cross referenced to where they appear in the text.
37. The review is generally very positive and notes the high level of satisfaction with the MRD and its activities demonstrated at the HOF meeting in early 2009, and reported from interviews during country visits. The recommendations concentrate on management changes within MRD which will be necessary if the Programmes are to remain effective and to attract adequate funding in the future. The SPC is already moving forward on many of these recommendations and some of them, such as the increased use of Joint Country Strategy Papers for management purposes, are already showing positive results.
38. Current funding constraints are acknowledged and regretted. With the expansion of activities being undertaken by both OFP and CFP in response to recent changes in strategy (such as the inclusion of programmes covering food security, global climate change and the environmental approach to fisheries management), it will be necessary to secure continued and increasing long term funding commitments if the needs of the PICTs are to be adequately addressed.
39. The Marine Resources Division is divided into two Core Programmes, each with a Programme Manager and each reporting separately to the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations and the biennial Heads of Fisheries meetings. A new Director of MRD has recently been appointed. He takes over at a time of rapid change in the MRD, which is responding to a series of challenges, changes in programme emphasis, and some uncertainties over funding.
40. The management of MRD will need to be more proactive in future. In particular, the CFP has suffered some “mission drift” although it has managed to maintain enough cohesiveness to address the current SPP satisfactorily. Nevertheless, it must change considerably to face the challenges ahead. By contrast, the OFP has remained very focused on its objectives.

Planning and Management in MRD

41. SPC has changed its strategy in recent years to accommodate emerging challenges such as food security and global climate change. MRD must become more objective and outcome orientated, not programme and project orientated as it is now, to be able to respond adequately to these new challenges.
42. **RECOMMENDATION 1:** That MRD adopts a structure that is far more objective-orientated. A suitable model may be the SPC Land Resources Division, based in Suva.

In this model, the Sections are all subordinate and service the objectives of the LRD. With modifications this model should prove suitable for MRD. (Para 337)

43. The LRD model is a flatter organizational structure than that presently used by MRD, and is based around seven thematic areas, with support from three support sections. It also places great emphasis on communication with, and ownership of the programmes by, the stakeholders. By contrast, MRD is a smaller organisation and will only have one support section, and possibly four thematic areas.
44. The MRD Strategic Plan gives overall indicators for each of the outputs and these are incorporated into the workplan(s). However, despite the plethora of project reports it is very difficult to relate the overall objectives through the indicators to the actual activities of the MRD. Therefore it is very difficult to measure “success” in some of the MRD’s activities.
45. **RECOMMENDATION 2:** That the MRD employs a more strongly Objective Orientated Project Planning approach to the preparation of the 2010-2013 SPP. (Para 143) 2009 SPC MRD Review Page 2.
46. It would be appropriate if the current close linkages between the Fisheries Management Section and the Reef Fisheries Section were more formalized. This could be done by incorporating the two into a single broader Section.
47. **RECOMMENDATION 3:** That the Fisheries Management Section be merged with the Reef Fish Section into a single broader Section (called, for example, the “Coastal Fisheries Science and Management Section”). (Para 184)
48. A realignment of the support functions within the CFP is necessary. We believe there is merit in establishing a formal Support Section within the MRD. This section should include the training section, currently under Nearshore Development, to look after all the training of all the Sections of the Division as well as other staff as required such as an economist. The existing Information Section, with its staff compliment restored, would form the core of the support section and provide publication and information support to all the Sections, as well as covering publicity.
49. **RECOMMENDATION 4:** That in establishing a new structure to allow the Division to become more objective orientated, a formal Support Section be established to provide a range of services to the technical sections of the MRD. (Para 361)
50. Sustainability of programme outcomes depends on the target group’s ability to ensure the benefits of the activities undertaken continue after the project, programme or activity is completed. To that extent, the recipients, administrations, individuals and communities will need to claim a much greater degree of ownership over the CFP’s initiatives.
51. This review notes that it is important to create a greater sense of ownership by the member countries in MRD’s activities, and that the tools exist in the planning process, the JCSPs, Regional Offices and in the Information Section to make sure it happens. (Para 317)
52. Joint country strategies (JCS) are an important innovation by SPC, offering a valuable opportunity to examine the specific needs and capacity to absorb of each PICT, away from the all encompassing forums of the HoF and other international meetings. Greater use should be made of JCSPs as a tool to focus the initiatives of MRD, and in

particular CFP, more closely in the individual PICTs. The SEEPF is already prioritising the JCSPs.

53. **RECOMMENDATION 5:** That the Joint Country Strategy Papers are used far more actively by the MRD to guide interventions in individual countries. (Para 321)
54. CFP project funding seems to be somewhat under-planned, with little post-project succession planning and rather an ad-hoc approach generally. Part of the reason for this is that the SPP period is only four years. A much longer planning horizon should be adopted to enable MRD to predict needs further ahead. The upcoming Future of Fisheries Study will be useful in this regard.
55. **RECOMMENDATION 6:** A longer planning horizon should be adopted for the MRD. This will assist funding agencies' planning, as well as helping ensure that future funding is secured for essential project activities that will eventuate from the adoption of the Apia Policy, the Aquaculture Management Plan and the Regional Bio-security Project. Twenty year and 10 year outline plans could be prepared and consolidated regularly in the current three year SPPs. (Para 357)
56. Both the OFP and CFP produce a Strategic Programme Plan to guide their activities (the most recent being 2006-9). It would be of benefit if the two Programmes (Oceanic and Coastal) could be included in one SPP, since the very broad objectives of both Programmes are the same. This would present a more coherent picture of the overarching aims of the Division. The SPP would "diverge" lower down as the sub-objectives, activities and indicators were detailed. (Para 88)
57. The Aquaculture Section has made an effort to ensure project and programmes are applicable to each country. The section has been more proactive in this area than others in CFP and the remaining Sections should be encouraged to adopt a similar approach.
58. **RECOMMENDATION 7:** The country by country approach to implementing projects and programmes should be encouraged, particularly within the CFP. It reduces costs and concentrates resources on countries and areas where there is greatest likelihood of success. Recognition should be given to the fact that the "one size fits all" regional approach is frequently wasteful of resources. (Para 160)
59. The best way to apply the country by country approach is with the cooperation of the countries involved, and the mechanism for this lies in better, more focused preparation of the Joint Country Strategy Papers. Similarly there is wastage in MRD implementing programmes and projects in countries that do not have the capacity to absorb and benefit from the services provided. SPC is emphasizing the JCSPs far more than previously and it is already beginning to show results in better planning.
60. **RECOMMENDATION 8:** That MRD, through the JCSPs, assess the capacity of the country fisheries departments and divisions to absorb and benefit from its services. Should the capacity of the division or department be lacking, MRD should modify the implementation schedule and scope of involvement to reflect the capabilities of the recipient country. (Para 304)
61. A possible model for capacity building exists in the SPC. The LRD has had quite a good experience with funding staff positions in national agriculture departments through projects. The incoming Director of MRD may consider establishing a similar scheme by including it in upcoming projects where appropriate. (Para 301)

62. During the review process, the RMP in Fiji was noted to have a very comprehensive database that guides its Programmes and records all of its activities. It is an extremely useful management tool for the RMP.
63. The incoming director of MRD may consider it appropriate to look at the RMP's database system and assess whether the MRD should adopt something similar. We note however that current funding constraints may preclude the immediate adoption of such a system. (Para 263)
64. There was considerable concern expressed during consultations that very many people are attending very many meetings and conferences and this has a serious opportunity cost.
65. It will be up to the incoming Director to ensure that in future all travel to meetings, symposia and the like by staff is fully justified against tangible benefits to the PICTs. (Para 147)

Recommendations specific to Programmes and Sections

Coastal Fisheries Programme

Aquaculture Section

66. A concern expressed several times during the review process was that the outputs in establishing environmentally and economically sustainable enterprises in aquaculture have not translated into commercial successes. The reviewers recognise that commercial aquaculture must be based on sound economic principles.
67. **RECOMMENDATION 9:** This review recommends that the CFP seek funds to undertake an external and objective study of Pacific island aquaculture so as to identify the most rewarding strategies for the Aquaculture section to focus on in the future. This should be based on a rigorous economic evaluation, carried out by an experienced economist. (Para 152)
68. The study would not be a review of the Aquaculture Section per se. Rather, the intention is to better plan future activities, and address, inter alia, issues such as entry points and things to avoid, the role of subsidies in aquaculture and the role of government and the private sector.
69. There has been a suggestion that one of the two Aquaculture Officers move to Fiji given its position as one of the most suitable countries in the region for aquaculture. Applying this reasoning, the Director MRD may also like to consider moving the whole Aquaculture section to Fiji, after an assessment of its ramifications, though it is not a priority.
70. In addition, it was suggested to the Review Team that the Aquaculture Section be incorporated into the Land Resources Division of SPC, based in Suva, however this seems premature. (Para 157 & 158)

Nearshore Fisheries Development and Training Section

71. The Nearshore Fisheries Development and Training Section has two Programme funded Development Officers and an Adviser, all based in Nouméa. It seems appropriate that instead of retaining one of the full time development officers in

Nouméa, the funding could be more appropriately diverted to hiring in occasional expertise when needed in areas currently not covered by in house expertise.

72. One Programme-funded Fisheries Development Officer based in Nouméa should suffice to address the Section's needs. External expertise could be bought in to satisfy additional requirements as needed, and other, more flexible ways of providing staff to the section should be explored, particularly during the present short term funding problems being experienced by the Division. (Para 172)
73. The Fisheries Training Officer currently works in the Nearshore Development and Training Section. The review considers that the MRD should have one Training Officer, who is responsible for administering, organizing and coordination all training in the MRD.
74. **RECOMMENDATION 10:** That the Training Officer currently in the Nearshore Fisheries and Training Section be transferred to the proposed Support Section and take on the administrative and coordination responsibilities for training for all the Sections of MRD. (Para 175)

Reef Fisheries Section

75. The PROCFish/C project is finishing in mid 2009. There is a great danger that if funding cannot be found to retain at least one professional position, (and preferably two positions) post-project then the project history, including the databases, will gradually degrade. If that occurs, it will be very difficult to recover should the ACP EDF 10 projects currently being proposed not eventuate till late 2010 or early 2011.
76. **RECOMMENDATION 11:** That the MRD seek to retain two scientific positions (and one support position) to maintain the initiative and history of the PROCFish project. In seeking funding, MRD should highlight the importance to the CFP of maintaining continuity in the provision of coastal fisheries management and scientific services, which will otherwise be adversely affected by the delay in implementing the two planned EDF funded scientific projects. (Para 204)

Information Section

77. The ability of PICT Government Departments and Divisions to effectively disseminate information provided to them by the Information Section amongst their own staff, the private sector and civil society (NGOs) is in many cases very weak.
78. **RECOMMENDATION 12:** That, when funds permit, the CFP Information Section undertake a brief study (in a suitable country) to assess their success in distributing materials and information to its intended audience. There may be lessons to be learned from the RMP. (Para 224)

The CRISP Project

79. In 2008, the CRISP Project was attached to the CFP. There is no doubt that CRISP will not integrate well with CFP. If it is pushed into a forced marriage there would have to be significant changes and serious and undesirable upheavals to both CRISP and CFP will eventuate. It would also divert management resources away from more important activities.
80. **RECOMMENDATION 13:** That MRD continues to accommodate CRISP, but does not try to fully integrate its activities into its own. (Para 236).

81. If funding for a new CRISP project becomes available, the project should, from its inception, adopt the planning, administrative and financial systems, objectives, discipline, work practices and ethos of the SPC, with no exceptions.

Oceanic Fisheries Programme

82. OFP is a world-leader in oceanic fisheries science. A detailed analysis of the cost/benefits of oceanic fisheries science and monitoring would be useful to place realistic dollar valuations on OFP's advice.
83. MRAG (2008) recommended greater external scientific peer review of OFP advice and technical reports be undertaken. Peer review could be extended to OFP's other advice and technical reports to PICTs, such as the National Tuna Fishery Status Reports, a number of which are produced every year.
84. **RECOMMENDATION 14:** That OFP's scientific advice and technical reports be subject to greater external scientific peer review. (Para 252)
85. We note that the WCPFC already externally review the reports and information provided to them by the OFP.
86. This review has noted a less than ideal awareness amongst PICT fisheries managers and decision makers about the use and limitations of fisheries models and statistics. While this is being addressed through the regular stock assessment workshops, the limitations need to be more widely known amongst decision makers, and the OFP might consider it appropriate to examine further avenues to do this. (Para 254)
87. There is a perception that OFP may serve 'too many masters', and there are potential conflicts of interest among SPC, WCPFC, FFA, PICT national fisheries, and foreign fishing nations regarding advice and confidential fisheries data.
88. **RECOMMENDATION 15:** That the issue of potential conflicts of interest amongst SPC/WCPFC/FFA/PICT national fisheries agencies are considered by SPC senior management, and if necessary, be addressed by a small reference group representing all interests. (Para 277)
89. OFP mainly uses short-term, training workshops for capacity development within PICT Fisheries Departments. The Statistics and Monitoring Section undertake a major training programme with FFA in observers and port sampling. While this has been highly regarded, concern has been expressed about the increasing demand on OFP's limited resources.
90. Given the limited SPC/FFA resources to meet current training demand, alternative approaches being developed by OFP to meeting regional needs are supported. Notwithstanding, OFP should ensure that standards are maintained in externally serviced courses. (Para 293)

Staff and Staffing in CFP

91. Due to the changes in objectives and the way of doing work in the Division, the skills mix needed to deliver services to the PICTs is also changing. CFP needs a tightly focused, but well rounded (skills wise) cadre of staff.

92. **RECOMMENDATION 16:** That the CFP alter the skills composition of its staff to meet the changing needs of PICTs. All staff TORs should be updated, and effort made through the existing process of triennial staff reviews and other processes to ensure persons with appropriate skills are appointed to each position. (Para 341)
93. There has been a lack of economic oversight in the CFP's activities for many years and this has been commented upon in previous reviews.
94. **RECOMMENDATION 17:** That an economist is available to all sections of the CFP so that projects and programmes receive appropriate economic oversight. This could be achieved in a number of ways including recruiting an economist to sit in the proposed Support Section, ensuring that one of the senior staff (possibly the Programme Manager) has a background in economics or hiring in short term expertise as required. (Para 363)
95. Senior CFP staff have commented that they are already stretched and it will be impossible, with fewer Programme staff, to maintain services, particularly the very important provision of advice on an *ad hoc* basis.
96. To maintain a reasonable service to the PICTs in the long term, each Section of the CFP should be staffed with no fewer than one adviser and one officer as professional Programme funded staff. Generally, other professional staff in the development sections would be project funded. The reviewers understand current funding problems preclude doing this immediately. (Para 368).

Decentralisation

97. While it is Corporate Policy to decentralize, the immediate placement of fisheries officers in the four existing or planned Regional Offices will be difficult, even though a commitment has been made to place someone in Pohnpei.
98. **RECOMMENDATION 18:** That MRD in Nouméa first deal with its priority issues (e.g. adopting the new structure, adapting to funding constraints) before beginning to emphasize the policy of decentralisation. Only once these issues have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Director of MRD and the SPC Secretariat should MRD operationalise the decentralisation policy, including placing staff in the Regional Offices. This may be 1 to 2 years away. (Para 134)

Recommendations for the SPC

99. During the review it was revealed that SPC Sections within a few seconds walking distance of each other at the Nouméa HQ rarely support each other's activities. This is not all MRD's responsibility given other Sections have as much responsibility to address cross cutting issues as MRD.
100. **RECOMMENDATION 19:** That communication, coordination and collaboration within MRD and SPC generally should be improved. MRD through the new Director will, in time, address CFP and OFP issues, but SPC management will need to address the larger corporate imperative of cross cutting cooperation between Divisions and their Sections through their regular executive meetings. (Para 347)
101. Long-term capacity building in oceanic fisheries in PICTs was a major priority of the Vava'u Declaration. This will require a strategic approach by SPC, FFA, USP and long-term commitments in human and financial resources by each country and development agencies.

102. **RECOMMENDATION 20:** That the SPC, in coordination with other CROP agencies, assess ways of better developing capacity in PICTs. For oceanic fisheries, this would involve methods of building of regional capacity in oceanic fisheries science and management, particularly the use and interpretation of the results of stock assessments. For coastal fisheries this would involve enhancing capacity in management and technical issues, as well as administrative matters and good governance. (Note: This is a recommendation for SPC, not MRD directly). (Para 309)
103. The reviewers have been asked to suggest another name for the MRD.
104. **Fisheries Resources Division (FRD)** covers the activities and fits well with the other divisional names in SPC. **Small Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture Division (SSFAD)** has also been suggested but the reviewers prefer **Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division (FAME)** which covers the expanding role of the MRD and also has a beguiling appeal. (Para 371).