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Priority adaptations to climate change for fisheries and aquaculture in Solomon Islands: reducing risks and capitalising on opportunities

Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), SPC and AusAID

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Background

Fisheries and aquaculture are vital to the development goals of the Pacific Islands region. Nowhere else in the world do so many countries and territories depend as heavily on the benefits derived from catching or growing fish and shellfish. Industrial fish processing operations and fishing fleets account for a substantial proportion of gross domestic product in several countries and territories. Licence fees from distant water fishing nations also make even more significant contributions to government revenue, especially for small island states. In addition, fisheries and aquaculture provide jobs and other opportunities to earn income

Fish is also a cornerstone of food security in the region. Fish consumption is at least 2–4 times greater than the global average in more than half of all 22 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). In rural areas, fish often makes up 50–90% of dietary animal protein and most of the fish consumed (60–90%) comes from subsistence fishing.

Licence fees from distant water fishing nations fishing within the exclusive economic Zone of Solomon Islands are estimated to make up >4% per cent of government revenue in Solomon Islands, and fishing for tuna by national fleets and canning of tuna contribute ~5% of GDP. National annual per capita consumption of fresh fish is estimated to be about 30 kg per person per year. Sixty per cent of surveyed households in Solomon Islands derived their first or second source of income from catching or selling fish and the annual catch coastal fish catch is estimated to be around 18,250 tonnes, comprised of 14,675 tonnes of finfish and 3,575 tonnes of invertebrates. Rural households in Solomon Islands also benefit from both freshwater and coastal aquaculture.

To maintain or improve the important contributions made by fisheries and aquaculture in the face of the many drivers affecting the sector, PICTs are implementing the plans required to (1) optimise the economic benefits derived from tuna fisheries, (2) provide sufficient fish for the food security for rapidly growing populations, and (3) identify the number of livelihoods that can be sustained from coastal fisheries and aquaculture.

Climate variability and climate change are among these drivers and climate change is expected to progressively increase in significance. SPC has co-ordinated a comprehensive assessment of the vulnerability of tropical Pacific fisheries and aquaculture to climate change¹ to assist PICTs to understand how climate change may affect their plans to maintain or improve the benefits they derive from fisheries and aquaculture. In addition, FAO has produced a global overview of the current scientific knowledge and adaptation and mitigation options for the sector². Recently, SPC and FAO have summarised the priority adaptations to climate change for Pacific fisheries and aquaculture³.

¹ Available at <http://cdn.spc.int/climate-change/fisheries/assessment/>

² Available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0994e/i0994e00.htm>

³ Available at http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Meetings/13_SPC_FAO_climate_workshop_Proceedings.pdf

MFMR is organising this workshop to help stakeholders in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors to use this information to identify priority adaptation actions to climate change with the ultimate aim of building resilience and flexibility at the community and enterprise levels.

Objectives of the Workshop

The objectives of the workshop are to provide government departments, non government organisations, communities, enterprises and their development partners with a sound understanding of (1) the main projected effects of existing climate variability, global warming and carbon dioxide emissions on the ecosystems supporting fisheries and aquaculture; (2) the consequences for current and future production, food security and livelihoods; and (3) the actions required to reduce the risks and capitalise on the opportunities.

An interactive format will allow participants to work closely to:

- understand the direct and indirect effects of climate change and ocean acidification on fisheries production and aquaculture;
- identify the implications of the projected changes to fisheries and aquaculture for economic development, food security and livelihoods; and
- choose and prioritise the adaptations and policies needed to build the resilience of enterprises and communities to the projected threats and to equip them to take advantage of the potential opportunities.

Expected Outputs

Participants will leave the workshop with (1) an increased awareness of climate change implications for fisheries and aquaculture in Solomon Islands; (2) knowledge of the tools to better understand the vulnerabilities of enterprises and communities to these changes; and (3) clear ideas about the planning and actions needed to assist the sector adapt to climate variability and climate change (including the risk of climate-induced natural disasters).

Programme for Solomon Islands Workshop on Climate Change, Fisheries and Aquaculture	
Thursday 18 April 2013	
08h30	Registration and tea/coffee
Session 1: Welcome and introduction	
09h00	Welcome, opening remarks by MFMR and prayer
09h15	Overview of fisheries in Solomon Islands – Rosalie Masu
09h35	Overview of aquaculture in Solomon Islands – Alex Meloty
09h50	Objectives and structure of the workshop – Johann Bell
COFFEE & TEA: 10h00 – 10h20	
Session 2: Understanding the projected changes to surface climate and Pacific Ocean	
10h20	Observed and projected changes to surface climate – Johann Bell
10h40	Observed and projected changes to the ocean – Johann Bell
11h00	Breakout groups to discuss projected changes to surface climate and the ocean
Session 3: Understanding projected changes to coastal fisheries	
11h40	Projected changes to coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses - Johanna Johnson
12h00	Projected changes to coastal fisheries – Johanna Johnson
LUNCH: 12h20 – 13h30	
13h30	Breakout groups to discuss coastal fish habitats and stocks
Session 4: Understanding projected changes to tuna	
14h10	Projected changes to tuna food webs and stocks – Johann Bell
14h30	Breakout groups to discuss effects on food webs for tuna
COFFEE & TEA: 15h10 – 15h30	
Session 5: Understanding projected changes to freshwater fisheries and aquaculture	
15h30	Projected changes to freshwater habitats and fisheries – Johann Bell
15h50	Projected changes to aquaculture production – Johann Bell
16h10	Breakout groups to discuss freshwater fisheries and aquaculture production
16h50	End of Day 1

Friday 19 April 2013	
Session 6: Implications, adaptations and suggested policies	
09h00	Implications, adaptations and policies for food security – Johann Bell
09h20	Breakout discussion groups
09h50	Implications, adaptations and policies for economic development – Johann Bell
10h10	Breakout discussion groups
COFFEE & TEA: 10h40 – 11h00	
11h00	Working groups to identify priority adaptations
LUNCH: 12h30 – 13h30	
Session 7: Communication and integrating with national strategic plans	
13h30	Localising vulnerability assessments – Johanna Johnson
13h50	National Action Plans – MECDM (TBA)
14h10	Breakout groups to discuss local assessments and National Action Plans
COFFEE & TEA: 15h00 – 15h20	
15h20	Finalising the outputs of the workshop
16h00	End of workshop