

And... action!

When movies are our allies for capacity building and awareness raising

Some call it “infotainment”, but the value of videos and podcasts to share knowledge can sometimes be overlooked as we seek to develop more ways of monitoring and assessing user interactions and progress with learning materials. Sure, the online learning platforms with all of their flashy features and expert content have amazing benefits if well-developed, but there is something closer to “the real deal” in watching someone you might know, and trust, explaining a subject with their characteristic flair in full flow. Feeling that there is a human connection can make the subject a little more accessible, perhaps. So, in an effort to increase the impact on learning, staff of the Pacific Community’s Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division have been combining entertaining video content with other training tools within a training package. This can be particularly effective if the content is then shared through social media channels.

At the core of the work we do in FAME is our commitment to develop professional capacity in fisheries across the Pacific Islands region. Our capacity building and collaborative activities have flourished over the years through the cultivation of close professional and personal working relationships between our staff and SPC members. As the pandemic continues to restrict travel, we have had to revise our approach to delivering these fruitful activities; no longer able to benefit from the face-to-real-face interactions with

the social opportunities these provide, we have resorted to online video conferencing and other platforms for training. Knowing how important it is to have that real connection with people, some of our staff embarked on producing videos to enhance their knowledge sharing. While this is not new to FAME in general, to some of the teams it has been a novel and exciting way of communicating with their partners in the Pacific. And there is not a one-size fits all approach either.

Here, we take a short tour of some of the recent video knowledge products from a few FAME teams, considering how the content and purpose of each has influenced the widely different styles. Perhaps FAME staff are not going to be leaving SPC for the bright lights of Hollywood anytime soon, but their enthusiasm for bringing the human touch and a dose of humour back into the capacity building arena is a warm reminder of the personal connections we have all missed over the past 20 months.

The “How to” take a fish apart – biological sampling technique series

Demonstrating a practical activity, such as how to extract the otoliths from a yellowfin tuna, can be tricky when done remotely. You do not get the same opportunity to stop the trainer and ask the questions you normally would. Of course, you could read a standard operating procedure (SOP) manual and follow this to the letter, but even the best written SOP manual benefits from a visual demonstration for everyone to be able to access the knowledge. Considering the different learning styles of people is key to developing a comprehensive teaching package, which is why our experts develop materials using a range of resources, such as printable information sheets, presentations, exercises, quizzes, games and practical activities.



Caroline Sanchez demonstrating how to extract otoliths from a skipjack tuna.
(Image: T. Rasoloarimanana, ©SPC)



The series demonstrates how to collect biosamples at sea and in port. (Image: T. Rasoloarimanana, ©SPC)

As a way of reaching as many fisheries officers as possible, our senior fisheries technician, Caroline Sanchez, decided to put her knowledge on film and set out to make a series of videos to show exactly what is meant by phrases such as “place your drill at an angle of 45 degrees towards the opposite eye,” as this can be fairly tricky to follow if you have not done this before, so best to have a visual for this!

The objective of these step-by-step videos was to show fisheries officers how to collect samples for bioanalysis in an engaging and easy-to-follow format. These samples are curated by the [Pacific Marine Specimen Bank](#), and the analyses are vital to FAME’s work, particularly for understanding how marine ecosystems function. The information generated from these analyses feed directly into regional assessment models used to estimate stock status, so we rely on the collection of samples by our members at sea and in port. Anyone can access these videos, which are hosted on the SPC YouTube channel, and the easy-to-follow style means that you do not need to have a degree in marine biology in order to be able to follow them and collect good quality samples. To ensure that all of our partners are equipped with the know-how to collect fish otoliths, gonads, muscle, livers, stomachs and other body parts, these videos have adopted a firm, yet friendly, instructive style. The visuals are very graphic (not for the squeamish!) so the voiceover details can be clearly understood. The settings for the videos vary, accounting for at-sea or in-port sampling. The videos can be standalone instruction tools, but they

will also be included as part of a module in, for example, the Pacific Island Regional Fisheries Observer training on biological sampling.

Creating a friendly atmosphere to share know-how – the fish and tips series of videos

To address the growing need to provide alternative livelihood options to Pacific Island fishing communities, the coastal fisheries team is currently developing an information toolkit on nearshore fishing practices, focusing on the more resilient pelagic species. But how do you show someone how to troll with multiple lures or how to prepare your drop stone when you cannot sit in the same fishing boat? It is a challenge, but the team is up to it. In addition to a manual, complementary short videos are being produced in an easily accessible way to reach a wide audience. Here again, the easy-to-follow style has been adopted, also making use of the four following ingredients.

● Seasons

Considering that coastal communities have a range of backgrounds in terms of access to equipment and technical know-how, the videos are segmented into several seasons and short chapters (for example season 1 covers trolling, season 2 covers mid-water fishing). Why? So that users can skip the methods that they already know and go straight to the chapter they want.

● Visuals

Visuals make use of footage on shore to show the equipment needed and at sea to demonstrate how to use gear, and with underwater shots to visualize the gear in action.

● Repetition

The real-life footage is accompanied by recaps that include illustrations and diagrams of the materials and “how-to” components.

● People with a Pacific touch of humour

The essential element in this series is the relaxed atmosphere in which FAME coastal fisheries experts, Ian Bertram, William Sokimi, and Watisoni Lalavanua, share their skills and knowledge. The script was carefully crafted to ensure absolute clarity alongside some light, relevant humour in places to create a warm and friendly delivery style. While this is in no way near as good as being sat in a boat with the real William, Ian or Soni, it goes some way to recreating an informal and amicable practical instruction session with these well-known characters.

This project was produced with financial support from the European Union, the Government of Sweden, and the New Zealand Aid Programme. The contents of the videos do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, the Government of Sweden, or the Government of New Zealand.

Converting a high-level concept into a fun movie to hook your audience: The case of the Harvest Strategies

When Marino Wichman first came to SPC as a Pacific Island Fisheries Professional, he had no idea that he would be the star of a short “action” style movie about tuna harvest strategies in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). In fact, perhaps few people could have envisaged

that tuna harvest strategies could be the subject of an energetic and entertaining short film. This innovative approach to explaining a complex new concept and all of its unfamiliar terminology has been well received so far.

Having already run a number of in-country workshops across the region, team members were aware that they needed to expand their range of stakeholder engagement materials for the harvest strategy framework to support existing materials. While stakeholders understood the general idea of the harvest strategy, retaining the vocabulary around it could sometimes lead to confusion, especially when it was not always used consistently by the experts. The objective, therefore, was to come up with a script and video to raise awareness of the main components of a harvest strategy in a way that is accessible and relevant to Pacific Island countries and territories.

The concept for this video style came about when FAME’s management strategy evaluation team decided that perhaps a more dynamic, story-telling style would be more effective at engaging members than a traditional show-and-tell style. This approach has the added bonus of indulging in a touch of humour, with cameo appearances from well-known faces from around the region, already making what can be quite a dry subject more accessible. Filming started in February 2021 and was completed just before the confinement period started in New Caledonia in March (and in time for the lead, Marino, to finally return to the Cook Islands). Most of the filming took place in and around SPC, making use of a green screen for the “action scene” and the amateur (or aspiring!) acting skills of SPC staff and members.

The video is not meant as a standalone knowledge product, but as an awareness-raising tool that will complement existing materials and tools to promote a regional understanding of harvest strategies. Videos explaining each component in more detail are already in the planning phase, and the team would really welcome any feedback that viewers might have to help refine the content and the scripts.



Dealing with an overly enthusiastic student can be challenging!
(Image: A. Brécher, ©SPC)



William Sokimi shows how to make an inline sinker.
(Image: A. Brécher, ©SPC)

• SPC activities •

This work was supported by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) funded project “Pacific Tuna Management Strategy Evaluation”. You can check out the video on the SPC YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zM3B9DLmtZg>

A people-centred approach in a virtual world

While these three examples of informing through entertainment (or infotainment) have different angles, all three have a common objective to engage a specific audience, hold their interest, and deliver a key message. Whether this is through a simple, step-by-step demonstration by a trusted expert, a friendly dialogue between a novice and veteran fisher, or a lively adventure to understand a management strategy, all place people at the centre to try to recapture the human touch in training. And there are other examples of such

efforts within FAME’s outreach portfolio, such as involving real community members in advocacy campaigns to bring others onboard to work in a new way. Trust is central to capacity building. We are adapting, and we are looking to maintain and build on the personal connections that we have built over so many years with our stakeholders.

We would love to hear your feedback on these projects, so if you would like to provide your comments on any of the materials described here, or if you have ideas for future capacity building ventures using film, then please get in touch.



Setting up the action shots with a green screen and a palm frond.
(Image: T. Holley, ©SPC)



Marino Wichman interrogates Rob Scott about management objectives. Can you identify the random fisher behind them?
(Image: T. Holley, ©SPC)

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