Tautai Samoa Association Roadmap – A milestone for Samoa small-scale fisheries

Maria Sapatu-Kennar and Jeffrey Kinch[1]

Figure 1: Members of the Tautai Samoa Association with Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the ACEO Fisheries Division, and the FAO Sub Regional Coordinator for the Pacific

The Tautai Samoa Association consists of small-scale fishing fleet members across Samoa who use 'alia', a type of fishing catamaran. On 28 September 2023, its members gathered at the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) conference room in Apia, Samoa, to launch its roadmap.

The roadmap has been a long-standing activity for the Tautai Samoa Association that started in late 2021 and was funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The activities and interventions undertaken through this project are aligned with the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, which supports food security and sustainable small-scale rural fishing activities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project moved into a second phase in 2022, reflecting delays in the implementation of some activities due to the pandemic.

Milestone achievement

It was consequently a great day of celebration and an important milestone for the Association as well as MAF who worked closely to support the initiative to officially launch and kick start implementation of the roadmap.

As the Minister of MAF, Hon. La'aulialemalietoa Leuatea Polataivao Fosi Schmidt expressed it, "The Samoa Tautai Association takes ownership of this roadmap so as to guide their activities towards better management and sustainable fishing in our waters which is a great achievement for our

Figure 2: Covers of the Tautai Samoa Association Roadmap 2023–2026

[1] Main author for correspondence: Jeffrey.Kinch@fao.org

island nation. The roadmap will be a stepping stone of our further collaboration with the Association in tackling together upcoming challenges such as illegal fishing activities, depleting fish stocks, and climate change."

Seven strategies

The roadmap describes the intent of the Association to sustainably manage and develop its activities for the welfare of its members as well as to provide food security and economic growth for Samoa over the next four years from 2023 to 2026. It looks at seven strategies to achieve its overall goal of maintaining and strengthening the viability of Samoa's domestic fishing sector to provide long-term economic, social, ecological, and food security benefits to Samoa. These seven strategies are listed below.

- Building the capacity and knowledge of its members for the effective running of the Association which requires a range of different skills, and hence continued capacity-building is needed as well as having the members upskilled with new sustainable fishing technologies.

- Strengthening market access and develop mechanisms that would improve connectivity to domestic and overseas markets.
- Ensuring internal funding and stability and viability of the Association to support association activities, priorities, and long-term plans.
- Developing financial sustainability by diversifying sources of external funds to support the Association.
- Marketing the Association's brand and identity to establish recognition and expansion of the Association.
- Ensuring effective collaboration and coordination with the Government of Samoa and other key stakeholders.
- Promoting compliance and stimulating a sense of responsibility and voluntary compliance with Samoa's Fisheries Policies and Regulations.

The Association will implement its planned activities as detailed in the roadmap in the next four years and looks forward to further collaboration with MAF, FAO, the Pacific Community, other development partners and most importantly, new members of the Association.

Figure 3: Members of the Tautai Samoa Association from Savaii with FAO Samoa National Fisheries Consultant