
Report prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Evaluation of New Zealand's fisheries sector work in the Pacific

Synthesis report

15 August 2013

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Quality assurance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was provided by an independent external reviewer, **Crick Carleton** of Nautlius Consultants.

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1. Introduction

1.1 What we were commissioned to do

We were commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) to undertake a strategic evaluation of the New Zealand Aid Programme's support for Pacific fisheries. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide:

- A retrospective evaluation of the New Zealand Aid Programme's fisheries spending and Activities in the Pacific that were undertaken from 2003-2010, in particular an assessment of the impacts of the sector programme and whether it achieved its stated objectives.
- Advice and recommendations on what has worked well and what hasn't, including critical success factors, and lessons for the focus of future support, to assist the on-going and future New Zealand Aid Programme's support for Pacific fisheries Activities.

The Activities in scope of this evaluation were:

- New Zealand's support for the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the fisheries-related work of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). This included looking at project-specific efforts (the observer programme and the SPC tuna tagging work).
- Solomon Islands institutional strengthening (IS) through the Solomon Islands Marine Resources Organisational Strategy (SIMROS), MekemStrong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) programmes, plus the Solomon Islands rural livelihoods creation Activity.
- Cook Islands Marine Resources Institutional Strengthening (CIMRIS).

1.2 Our approach

We employed an Impact Assessment approach to this evaluation, guided by specific analytical frameworks for analysing the environmental, social, economic, financial and gender dimensions of the evaluation. This involved desk-based review of sector programme documentation provided by MFAT (including previous Activity-level evaluations) and of literature, collection and analysis of data (both desk-based and in-country), and semi-structured interviews.

In total, we interviewed 143 people, primarily in the Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Fiji, New Caledonia and New Zealand. We spoke to people from a range of organisations including:

- Pacific Island Country (PIC) government staff
- FFA
- SPC
- New Zealand industry
- Non-government organisations in New Zealand and in-country, and
- New Zealand government agencies (including MFAT and the Ministry for Primary Industries, as well as New Zealand Posts and High Commission staff).

We also interviewed direct beneficiaries of New Zealand's support, including clam growers in Solomon Islands.

1.3 Structure of this report

This synthesis report:

- Provides a summary of our approach
- Briefly summarises the strategic context for Pacific fisheries
- Outlines the components of the sector programme
- Presents our findings, and
- Sets out our advice and recommendations for the focus of future support.

The full documentation of our approach, analysis and recommendations is provided in our full report which is available on the MFAT and Sapere websites: *Evaluation of New Zealand's fisheries sector work in the Pacific: evaluation report*, 9 August 2013.

2. The strategic context

2.1 Introduction

This section provides a very brief overview of the Pacific fisheries context. It is intended to help locate the sector programme and its Activities within the broader regional context, and explain the role of the regional agencies (support for whom has dominated New Zealand's funding). More detail on the nature and status of oceanic and coastal fish stocks, as well as fisheries management arrangements, is provided in our full report.

2.2 The fisheries resource

Fisheries are an important source of revenue, food and employment for PICs. Pacific fisheries are also globally significant, with the western and central Pacific purse seine¹ fishery representing the largest tuna fishery in the world. The bulk of the purse seine catch – approximately 1.2 million tonnes per year – is taken from the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) member countries.

The tuna sector has been identified as one of the key drivers of growth in the Pacific, with catch from FFA members' waters having an estimated landed value of USD2.8b per annum. Approximately 11% of this value contributes to the GDP of PICs.²

¹ Purse seine refers to the type of gear used. Other main gear types for industrial tuna fishing are longline, pole-and-line and trolling.

² New Zealand Aid Programme (2012) *Sector priorities 2012-2015* (MFAT: Wellington, New Zealand), p.10.

Pacific fisheries comprise oceanic fisheries, coastal fisheries (inshore and reef) and aquaculture. Aquaculture is a small but growing sector, including species such as black pearls, seaweed and prawns. Coastal fisheries are an important source of nutrition; and commercially-traded species include bêche-de-mer (sea cucumber), aquarium fish and live reef fish. The oceanic fisheries comprise four main stocks of tuna,³ which dominate catch revenues.

Tuna is a highly migratory species, straddling both high seas and EEZs, including that of New Zealand. The migratory nature of the species poses particular issues for the management and governance of Pacific fisheries, as management and development in one country can affect stocks in another. By-catch in the purse seine and longline tuna fisheries includes sharks, turtles and sea birds (some of which are endangered).

2.3 Regional organisations are key

There are two key regional organisations active in the Pacific fisheries sector – FFA and SPC.

2.3.1 The Forum Fisheries Agency

The FFA was established in 1979, under the Convention of the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency, to facilitate regional cooperation for the sustainable management of tuna fisheries within member countries' EEZs. With a Secretariat based in Honiara, its 17 Pacific Island members are Australia, Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Its governing body is the Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC).

FFA provides expertise, technical assistance and other services to its members who make sovereign decisions about their tuna resources and participate in regional decision making on tuna management through agencies such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).⁴ Historically, its focus has been on fisheries management activities, though its involvement in development work has increased since around 2009.

2.3.2 Secretariat of the Pacific Community

The SPC was established in 1947 under the Canberra Agreement by the six 'participating governments' that then administered territories in the Pacific: Australia, France, New Zealand, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States (US). It now has 26 member countries including the 22 Pacific Island countries and territories and four of the original founding countries – the US, France, Australia and New Zealand. The Conference of the Pacific Community, which is held every two years, is the governing body of SPC. SPC headquarters are located in Noumea, with regional offices in Suva and FSM, and a country office in Honiara.

³ Bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack and albacore.

⁴ <http://www.ffa.int/about> Accessed 6/1/13.

SPC works across a number of areas covering public health, geoscience, agriculture, forestry, water resources, disaster management, fisheries, education, statistics, transport, energy, ICT, media, human rights, gender, youth and culture to help Pacific Island people achieve sustainable development.

SPC's Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Division (FAME) focuses on providing technical assistance and training, as well as technical services to support regional fisheries management. FAME also hosts the Coral Reef Initiatives for the Pacific (CRISP) programme.

The key distinction between the roles of SPC and the FFA is two-fold:

1. SPC provides services and advice relating to oceanic (tuna) fisheries science, while the FFA focuses on oceanic fisheries policy, management, development and compliance.
2. SPC provides coastal and aquaculture science, policy, management development and compliance services and advice; the FFA provides no advice or service in relation to coastal fisheries or aquaculture.

2.4 Varying country contexts and capacity

There is wide divergence between PICs in the value of fish in their EEZs, and in terms of their capability to manage their own fisheries:

- The in-scope countries range from micro-states (Cooks Islands, with 16,000 people) to reasonably-sized countries (Fiji, with a population of 852,000). This affects their domestic capacity to manage their resources and absorb donor funding.
- Some have enormous EEZs, particularly in relation to the size of their population, such as Kiribati with its 3,442 km² non-contiguous EEZ. This has implications for their degree of reliance on regional services, particularly for surveillance activities, and their interest in courting distant water fishing nations (DFWNs).
- They range in wealth, and include some extremely poor countries such as Solomon Islands with annual GNI per capita of just USD1,110.
- They vary in terms of the importance of tuna to their local economies – which is crucial in Kiribati and Solomon Islands, moderately important in Samoa and much less so in Cook Islands.

3. The sector programme and its costs

3.1 Strategic objectives of the sector programme

The strategic goals for both the sector programme, as well as the overall New Zealand aid programme have evolved over time. In 2009, the objectives for the aid programme as a whole moved from one of poverty alleviation (‘towards a safe and just world free of poverty’) to one with a more economic development focus: ‘support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world’.

In the early part of our evaluation period (2003-2004), the sector programme lacked explicit strategic direction. This reflects its origins as a collection of bilateral institutional strengthening programmes and support for regional agencies, rather than as a strategic sector-based programme.

In 2005, New Zealand developed an MFAT/NZAid/Ministry of Fisheries strategy for its engagement in Pacific fisheries. The overall goal in this strategy was the ‘sustainable development of Pacific fisheries resources’, and one of its intermediate outcomes was to ‘assist Pacific countries to develop their fisheries resources, contributing to poverty elimination in the Pacific’. We note that maximising sustainable returns from fisheries was also identified as a regional priority for the first three years of the regional Pacific Plan (2006-2008).

Since 2009, support for Pacific fisheries has been explicitly located within the overall New Zealand Aid Programme. The Pacific region is the core geographic focus of the overall Programme, and fisheries is identified as one of three sector foci. There are also four themes, and New Zealand’s sector programme of support for Pacific fisheries fits within the ‘investing in economic development’ theme.

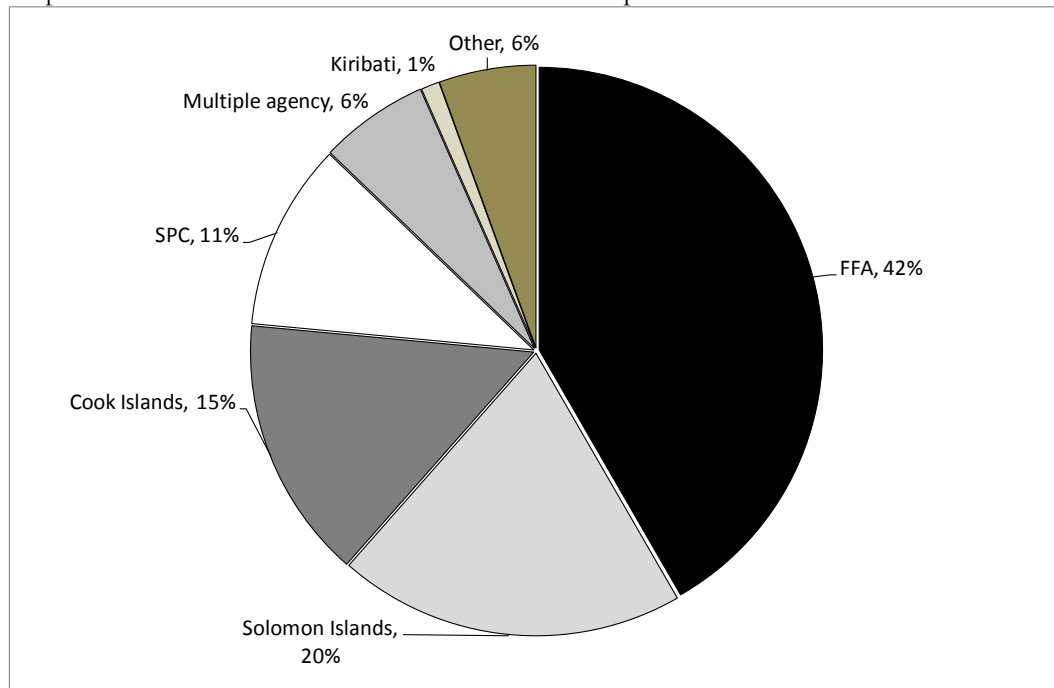
3.2 Total spend of \$60m

As part of our initial scoping work, we sought to assemble a description of the sector programme’s Activities. We had to construct this from a variety of sources, including ten years’ worth of sector programme documentation, financial data and interviews. The total sector programme spending took us some time to construct and we had to reconcile figures from different sources. This process altogether took a substantial amount of time, and illustrated to us that the sector programme has not been managed as a co-ordinated programme in any traditional sense.

Total spending was just under \$60 million in the period from 2003/04 to 2012/13.⁵ The focus of New Zealand’s Pacific fisheries aid has been support for the FFA (42% of total spend) , with other significant spending in the Solomon Islands (20%) and the Cook Islands (15%) plus the SPC tuna tagging programme (11%), and the FFA/SPC observer programme (6% – labelled as ‘Multiple agency’ in the figure below).

Figure 1 Funded countries/institutions 2003/04-2012/13

Proportion of total New Zealand Pacific fisheries aid spend



Source: MFAT financial data, Sapere analysis

3.3 Overview of Activities

3.3.1 FFA work programme support (\$24.6m)

New Zealand has contributed a combination of membership fees and programme funding to the FFA, as well as project-based funding for the regional observer training programme. New Zealand actively contributes to the governance of FFA, is represented on FFC Audit Committee and participates in FFA governing council meetings.

⁵ We report expenditure up to 2012/13 (i.e. beyond the evaluation period) so that there was no gap (no funds excluded) between historic and future expenditure in our analysis. Indicative future spending is presented in our full evaluation report.

3.3.2 Support for SPC's FAME work programme (\$6.3m)

Being one of the founding countries, New Zealand has a long-standing relationship with SPC. As with FFA, support has comprised country contributions as well as project-based funding for the tuna tagging programme.

3.3.3 Pacific fisheries observer programme (\$3.7m)

New Zealand's funding commitment for the joint FFA/SPC Pacific fisheries observer programme comprises \$4.8m over three years and is scheduled to end in mid-2014. As at 2012/13, \$3.7m of this funding had been spent.

3.3.4 Solomon Islands (\$11.7m)

New Zealand-funded fisheries projects in Solomon Islands have been running since at least 2005, and comprise the following.

- **Institutional strengthening – SIMROS and MSSIF.** The main focus has been on institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), involving two significant multi-year programmes (SIMROS and MSSIF) and including a new building for the Ministry.
- **WorldFish Rural Livelihood Creation.** WorldFish was funded for \$1.4m of effort over the five years from 2006 to 2010 to establish an ornamental marine product trade (mostly in clams and coral) for folks living in remote areas. While this project accounts for a modest proportion of total spend, we conducted a specific investigation of it in the field, as it is the only Activity to have specific economic development aims.
- **Rural livelihoods recovery.** There was also a shorter-term programme that funded nearly a thousand replacement canoes for people in Western Province who lost their livelihoods after the 2007 Tsunami, as well as some work to dig channels in reefs. As total spending was a modest \$376k, this did not feature in our interviews in-country as we did not consider it further in our evaluation.

3.3.5 Cook Islands (\$6.4m)

New Zealand funded an IS programme (CIMRIS) for the Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) from 2006 until 2010. There were six sets of activities pursued including building management capability in the MMR and strengthening existing institutions (chiefly the Ministry of Health and the National Environment Service) to take actions to improve lagoon water quality.

3.4 Sector programme management costs at least \$7.3m

The figures above are the direct financial costs tagged within the MFAT financial system as relating to fisheries. There is no standard accounting for programme overhead costs in MFAT. We have therefore made a simple effort to get a ballpark estimate of overhead costs by asking people involved in the sector programme from MFAT to tell us what proportion of their time they devoted to the fisheries sector programme in a normal week.

Based on the figures provided, we estimate that total programme management costs could be \$729k a year. Over ten years, this is around \$7.3m or around 13% of the total sector programme spend. On these estimates, programme management is an important part of the fisheries sector programme, consuming more than the total spend on institutional strengthening in the Cook Islands.

4. Summary of findings

This section summarises the main findings of our evaluation. The findings from our desk-based research and field work, and our analysis of these findings, are discussed in detail in our full report.

4.1 High quality advice and services from regional agencies

Support for the regional agencies (FFA and SPC) accounted for around 60% of spending over the evaluation period (around \$34m out of a total \$59m). We interviewed stakeholders in a selection of member countries, and encountered widespread views that these agencies' services and advice are of high quality and reflect the priorities of PICs. This finding is consistent with the conclusions of the recent independent reviews of these agencies. FFA was also widely acknowledged as assisting members to participate more actively and confidently in regional negotiations.

New Zealand's support for these agencies has contributed to the management and assessment of tuna stocks. FFA's support for tuna management measures (such as the development of Tuna Management Plans) has assisted PICs to increase their government revenues from licensing arrangements.

SPC's tuna stock assessments are regarded by stakeholders as being of a high standard, and are routinely subject to peer review. They show that stocks of two key tuna species are reaching sustainable limits. New Zealand's support for tuna tagging was considered instrumental in kick-starting this programme, which contributed to tuna stock assessments.

Project-specific funding for the regional observer programme has assisted in training observers to collect data that may be used in both scientific research and compliance enforcement, with improvements to compliance data management currently being investigated.

4.2 Mixed results from Institutional Strengthening programmes

Funding for the IS programmes comprised over a third of total support over the period (\$20.6m). New Zealand's support for these programmes has been appreciated by partner countries, with both being credited by some interviewees to a lift in organisational capability and reputation.

- In Solomon Islands, the programmes supported the development of tuna management policies and processes that led to a substantial increase in license fees. However, implementation of policy work in community-based fisheries management appears to have been hampered by lack of capacity and resources at the provincial level.
- In the Cook Islands, the IS support funded the development of oceanic plans and regulations, but otherwise focused largely on coastal water quality. It supported the development of foundational initiatives to manage the Takitumu lagoon, but water quality is yet to improve. The programme ultimately delivered little in the way of oceanic fisheries management outcomes, leading to some disappointment from local stakeholders.

Both programmes assisted with the introduction of corporate systems such as financial management and HR processes, but these have proven vulnerable to disruption at political and management levels. We found a number of factors that are critical to the on-going success of IS programmes, some of which are outside a donor's control, but others which can be managed more effectively (such as the selection process for in-country Technical Advisors, and the application of best practice IS principles).

4.3 Little in the way of direct economic development benefits

While PIC government revenues from license fees increased over the period, this is largely attributable to much broader foundational initiatives, in particular the work of the PNA and its Vessel Day Scheme, and assisted by the continued work of FFA. That said, support for IS programmes can assist individual countries in realising the gains from national-level implementation of these arrangements (i.e. through better management of the access of foreign vessels to their domestic oceanic fishery) – something which was evident in Solomon Islands.

Over the evaluation period, New Zealand directly supported one economic development Activity (rural livelihoods creation), providing \$1.4m over five years for a project to train villagers in Western Province in Solomon Islands to grow giant clams and coral for export to the US aquarium trade. For a variety of reasons which are expounded in our *Evaluation report*, this project, which was never economically viable, failed to achieve its objectives. It did, however, generate some unexpected spin-off benefits, and New Zealand's rapid commitment to Solomon Islands immediately after the ethnic tensions was widely recognised and appreciated.

We found a lack of up-front analysis and planning for on-going sustainability, including the donor exit strategy. This was particularly evident in the Solomon Islands rural livelihoods creation project, and we also heard concerns about the sustainability of the observer programme when New Zealand funding ceases in 2014. More rigorous ex ante project appraisal and application of project management disciplines would help avert these problems in future.

Individual staff members who benefit from strengthening become attractive to the regional agencies and other governments, and are often headhunted – though sometimes return home, bringing with them new skills and perspectives.

4.4 Lack of strategic coherence...

Historically, there has not been programme-level selection and prioritisation of Activities within the sector programme. This reflects its origins as a collection of bilateral IS programmes and support for regional agencies, rather than a strategic, sector-based programme. Support for the various Activities has evolved from various drivers, but appears to have been largely reactive. Some funding (such as support for Cook Islands) appears to reflect New Zealand's foreign policy goals as much as fisheries objectives.

Despite greater clarity in overall sector programme direction since 2009, we still found a lack of explicit intervention logic linking the composite Activities to the sector programme objectives. Stakeholders were generally unclear as to why particular Activities have been selected, why they are priorities for fisheries, and how they contribute to the sector programme-level objectives. This appeared to relate to the evaluation period as well as current day.

4.5 ... and co-ordinated sector programme management

In our view, New Zealand's support for Pacific fisheries has not been run as a formal, co-ordinated programme in any traditional sense. There is no overarching programme-level governance and decisions, including those relating to funding, appear to be made in an ad hoc fashion across different MFAT divisions. It seemed to us unnecessarily difficult to establish the full costs of the sector programme; and the costs of managing the sector programme have not been attributed or tracked at all.

4.6 Basic project cycle management also weak

Deficiencies in project cycle management were also apparent. Amongst the particular weaknesses we identified was a dearth of meaningful measurement of baselines and impacts, lack of adequate documentation and absence of a feedback loop from evaluation into the selection and design of future Activities. In addition, stakeholders expressed concerns with the high turnover of MFAT desk staff, and the lack of analytical depth and expertise in MFAT.

4.7 Mixed views on the tenor of New Zealand's engagement

New Zealand's contribution to improved governance of the regional agencies has been valuable, but lacks clarity on the end state. More broadly, New Zealand is acknowledged as having multiple roles in Pacific fisheries, which are generally perceived as being well managed. Though partner countries had mixed views on the tenor of New Zealand's engagement, with some considering New Zealand's attitude becoming a bit more '*big brother*'.

4.8 Scope to improve value for money

The services and advice provided by the regional agencies are viewed by members as representing good value for money. In our view, there are clear arguments for on-going regional provision of some services, particularly where there are obvious economies of scale and scope and a lack of national capacity (e.g. monitoring, control and surveillance). In light of this, and member countries' positive perceptions of the value of services from the regional agencies, we think the continued support by New Zealand for these agencies is entirely appropriate.

The IS efforts in Solomon Islands appear to have delivered better value for money than CIMRIS. The long-term 'residential' approach appears to have assisted in this regard, as well as a clearer focus on oceanic fisheries management. Value for money could be enhanced in future IS efforts by:

- Focusing on countries where there is sufficient national capacity to justify stand-alone national fisheries administrations, and
- Providing support at a lower intensity but over a longer time period, to ensure support is within the absorptive 'bandwidth' of the country, to minimise the gaps that open up when the support ends and to provide plenty of time for the benefits to be realised.

The Solomon Islands rural livelihoods creation project delivered poor value for money as it was not commercially viable and did not achieve its objectives. Value for money in economic development projects could be improved in the future by:

- Undertaking more robust ex ante project appraisal that includes supply chain analysis and considers the on-going operational requirements and costs, and
- Using this analysis to select development projects on the basis of social and economic viability (i.e. that are likely to succeed).

4.9 Gender considerations have not featured in the sector programme

Gender considerations have not featured in the sector programme. None of the Activities had an explicit objective to address gender issues and improve the quality of life for women in the Pacific, and we did not find evidence of local women being actively encouraged to participate in the development and governance of Activities. We did uncover a temptation to superficially brand projects that happened to involve women as 'gender projects'.

Employment opportunities for women in oceanic fisheries are primarily on-shore (canneries and loining factories), around which there are general concerns about employment conditions. Employment as observers on vessels reportedly poses safety and human rights issues for both men and women. There are also concerns that the presence of fishing crews encourages prostitution.

In coastal fisheries, we heard concerns that the ability of women to gather fish for food and to generate cash income is being impeded by a lack of basic facilities and reduced catch of coastal fish.

4.10 Coastal fisheries a significant gap

The sector programme has had an emphasis on fisheries management over development, and also on oceanic over coastal fisheries – largely as a result of the high proportion of spending on regional agencies. Over the evaluation period, coastal fisheries was a significant gap, both in New Zealand’s programme of funding, and in the work programmes of regional agencies.

A focus on oceanic fisheries translates into general revenues at the central government level (through increased license fees), whereas successful livelihoods development efforts are likely to have more direct benefits for locals. Many PIC communities are highly dependent on their coastal fisheries – both for food security and sustainable livelihoods as well as economic sectors such as tourism. The critical importance of coastal fisheries, combined with their fragility, suggests that greater priority on coastal fisheries management and sustainable development would be appropriate and timely.

5. Findings against DAC criteria

5.1 Research questions and focus areas

This section summarises our findings against the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for evaluating development assistance.⁶

The following table summarises our main research questions and shows how these align with the DAC criteria.

⁶ OECD Development Co-operation Directorate *Criteria for evaluating development assistance*.
<http://www.oecd.org/dac>

Table 1 Alignment of key research questions with DAC criteria

Key research question	DAC criterion
Has the sector programme been effective?	Impact Effectiveness Sustainability
Has the sector programme been relevant?	Relevance
Has the sector programme been efficient?	Efficiency
How has the sector programme contributed to equity?	Impact
Were the stated objectives and foci the right ones?	Relevance
Has the overall balance and modality of investment been appropriate?	Relevance

5.2 Impact

New Zealand’s support for the regional agencies (\$34m out of a total \$59m) has contributed to the management and assessment of tuna stocks. FFA’s support for tuna management measures (such as the development of Tuna Management Plans) has assisted Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to increase their government revenues from licensing arrangements.

SPC’s tuna stock assessments are regarded by stakeholders as being of a high standard, and are routinely subject to peer review. They show that stocks of two key tuna species are reaching sustainable limits. New Zealand’s support for tuna tagging was considered instrumental in kick-starting this programme, which contributed to tuna stock assessments.

Project-specific funding for the regional observer programme has assisted in training observers to collect data that may be used in both scientific research and compliance enforcement, with improvements to compliance data management currently being investigated.

The regional agencies have also assisted members to participate more actively and confidently in regional negotiations.

Funding for the two IS programmes comprised over a third of total support over the period (\$20.6m). Both programmes assisted with the introduction of corporate systems such as financial management and HR processes. SIMROS/MSSIF supported the development of tuna management policies and processes that led to a substantial increase in license fees. CIMRIS funded the development of oceanic plans and regulations, but otherwise focused largely on coastal water quality. It supported the development of foundational initiatives to manage the Takitumu lagoon, but water quality is yet to improve.

5.3 Effectiveness

Total funding for the regional agencies accounted for around 60% of total support. Evidence shows this has been money well spent, with the advice and services provided by these agencies being widely perceived as high quality. This finding is consistent with the conclusions of the recent independent reviews of these agencies.

New Zealand's support for IS programmes has been appreciated by partner countries, with both being credited by some interviewees to a lift in organisational capability and reputation.

- In Solomon Islands, the programme assisted with oceanic fisheries management, but implementation of policy work in community-based fisheries management appears to have been hampered by lack of capacity and resources at the provincial level.
- In the Cook Islands, the IS support ultimately delivered little in the way of oceanic fisheries management outcomes, leading to some disappointment from local stakeholders.

Over the evaluation period, New Zealand directly supported one economic development programme, providing \$1.4m over five years for a project to train villagers in Western Province in Solomon Islands to grow giant clams and coral for export to the US aquarium trade. This project was never commercially viable, and did not meet its stated development objectives. However it led to some positive spin-offs in the form of subsequent projects and New Zealand's commitment to Solomon Islands immediately after the ethnic tensions was widely recognised and appreciated.

5.4 Sustainability

We found a lack of up-front analysis and planning for on-going sustainability, including the donor exit strategy. This was particularly evident in the Solomon Islands rural livelihoods creation project, and we also heard concerns about the sustainability of the observer programme when New Zealand funding ceases in 2014. More rigorous ex ante project appraisal and application of project management disciplines would help avert these problems in future.

Individual staff members who benefit from strengthening become attractive to the regional agencies and other governments, and are often headhunted – though sometimes return home, bringing with them new skills and perspectives. And the corporate systems implemented through IS programmes have proven vulnerable to disruption at political and management levels. We found a number of factors that are critical to the on-going success of IS programmes, some of which are outside a donor's control, but others which can be managed more effectively (such as the selection process for in-country Technical Advisors, and the application of best practice IS principles).

5.5 Relevance

Historically, there does not appear to have been programme-level selection and prioritisation of Activities within the sector programme. This reflects its origins as a collection of bilateral IS programmes and support for regional agencies, rather than a strategic, sector-based programme. Stakeholders were generally unclear as to why particular Activities have been selected, why they are priorities for fisheries, and how they contribute to the sector programme-level objectives. Some funding (such as support for Cook Islands) appears to reflect New Zealand's foreign policy goals as much as fisheries objectives.

In terms of whose objectives are being met, PIC members consider that the services delivered through the work programmes of the regional agencies reflect their (PICs') priorities. Project-specific funding provided by donors through regional agencies and

bilateral IS programmes is considered by stakeholders to reflect donor objectives, whereas programme-based funding enables PICs to fund their own priorities.

We encountered some views that the flexibility provided under MSSIF allows more alignment to Solomon Islands priorities (than under SIMROS). We found that CIMRIS drifted away from its original objectives, leading to some views in the Cook Islands that there was ultimately a mis-match between expectations and what was delivered.

5.6 Efficiency

The services and advice provided by the regional agencies are viewed by members as representing good value for money. In our view, there are clear arguments for on-going regional provision of some services, particularly where there are obvious economies of scale and scope and a lack of national capacity (e.g. monitoring, control and surveillance). In light of this, and member countries' positive perceptions of the value of services from the regional agencies, we think the continued support by New Zealand for these agencies is entirely appropriate.

The IS efforts in Solomon Islands appear to have delivered better value for money than CIMRIS. The long-term 'residential' approach appears to have assisted in this regard, as well as a clearer focus on oceanic fisheries management. Value for money could be enhanced in future IS efforts by:

- Focusing on countries where there is sufficient national capacity to justify stand-alone national fisheries administrations, and
- Providing support at a lower intensity but over a longer time period, to ensure support is within the absorptive 'bandwidth' of the country, to minimise the gaps that open up when the support ends and to provide plenty of time for the benefits to be realised.

The Solomon Islands rural livelihoods creation project delivered poor value for money as it was not commercially viable and did not achieve its objectives. Value for money in economic development projects could be improved in the future by:

- Undertaking more robust ex ante project appraisal that includes supply chain analysis and considers the on-going operational requirements and costs, and
- Using this analysis to select development projects on the basis of social and economic viability (i.e. that are likely to succeed).

5.7 Human rights and gender issues

Gender considerations have not featured in the sector programme. None of the Activities had an explicit objective to address gender issues and improve the quality of life for women in the Pacific, and we did not find evidence of local women being actively encouraged to participate in the development and governance of Activities. We did uncover a temptation to superficially brand projects that happened to involve women as 'gender projects'.

Employment opportunities for women in oceanic fisheries are primarily on-shore (canneries and loining factories), around which there are general concerns about employment conditions. Employment as observers on vessels reportedly poses safety and human rights

issues for both men and women. There are also concerns that the presence of fishing crews encourages prostitution.

In coastal fisheries, we heard concerns that the ability of women to gather fish for food and to generate cash income is being impeded by a lack of basic facilities and reduced catch of coastal fish.

6. Recommendations

This section brings together the recommendations formulated in the previous chapter. Rather than list them in relative priority, we present them as a sequence of steps that MFAT would undertake in order to effect the internal changes necessary to improve the effectiveness of its Pacific fisheries support. While some changes, such as greater emphasis on coastal fisheries, are clearly of critical importance to the PICs themselves, we advise against making such changes in MFAT without the necessary management infrastructure to make coherent and deliberate evidence-based decisions.

Table 2 Recommendations

1 Run the sector programme as a programme	
1.1	Create a central oversight and decision-making group responsible for all fisheries-related aid
1.2	Assign a responsible owner to each Activity, who is required to attend governance meetings to report on progress
1.3	Standardise Activity-level reporting to the governance group e.g. on a one-page template
1.4	Attribute and track the full costs of the sector programme (i.e. including sector programme management costs)
1.5	Clearly document all decisions across the lifecycle of Activities
2 Pick a niche and design an investment portfolio	
2.1	Select a specialisation that translates New Zealand’s comparative advantage in fisheries management and governance into targeted development support
2.2	Undertake geographic and sectoral analysis across the region, using the descriptive statistics presented in this report, as well as data on the location and nature of other donors’ support
2.3	Match this analysis with the stated priorities and objectives of PICs and New Zealand’s investment niche, to make informed and deliberate choices about the geographic spread of support
2.4	Design an investment portfolio based on New Zealand’s niche, that reflects a deliberate mixture of likely successes and more difficult projects
2.5	Consider redressing the balance between support for oceanic and coastal fisheries, by boosting the proportion of funding directed at coastal fisheries management and sustainable development activities
2.6	Continue to support the regional agencies, through their existing governance arrangements
2.7	Focus support at the national level on building complementary national capacity, where there is sufficient scale to justify stand-alone fisheries administrations
2.7.1	Design institutional strengthening programmes to run as less intensive but over longer time frames
2.7.2	Investigate whether TA recruitment processes can be improved to make better use of New Zealand’s talent pool and achieve better matching of consultants to the local environment
2.7.3	Draw on the international best practice to design effective IS programmes that will meet local needs
3 Ensure the disciplined application of robust project management cycle processes	
3.1	Insist on more rigorous ex ante project appraisal
3.1.1	Select economic development projects for their viability and sustainability
3.1.2	Undertake robust economic supply chain analysis
3.1.3	Ensure whole-of-life project costing, that captures the on-going operational requirements of projects

3.1.4	Ensure that analysis of cross-cutting issues is built into the project appraisal and design stages
3.2	For time-bound Activities, plan the donor exit, and ensure this is built into project design and clearly understood by all parties and the plan adhered to
3.3	Ensure that material changes to project scope or design are appraised and explicitly agreed through formal change request procedures
4	Simplify and improve monitoring and reporting
4.1	Focus on metrics that matter: develop indicators that relate more directly to the investment and are more realistic in terms of attribution to outcomes
4.2	Commit to the quantitative measurement of key statistics and build this into standard project governance, including the establishment of baseline data before an Activity commences
4.3	Develop a dashboard to enable easy visualisation of progress
4.4	Ensure that a feedback loop from monitoring and evaluation is hard-wired into the sector programme governance processes
4.5	Provide feedback on results to partner countries and agencies
4.6	For reporting on support to regional agencies, leverage off the existing reporting frameworks of these agencies, and seek enhancements to these arrangements via participation within these agencies' existing governance arrangements
5	Build MFAT capacity to support and implement these system changes
5.1	Build MFAT capacity in economics and commercial analysis, as well as in participatory planning and community development
5.2	Help mitigate the impacts of staff turnover on partner countries through more effective handover processes, including better documentation