

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

TWENTY-SIXTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
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**PROPOSAL FOR A REGIONAL SET-UP OF AQUACULTURE SUPPORT
MECHANISM IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION**

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**PRESENT SITUATION IN AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE
REGION**

1. Having passed through a period of trial and error, it would appear that aquaculture is at long last being accepted as a realistic development option by many countries in the region.
2. A number of countries in the region have gained considerable "hands on" experience in running aquaculture projects, both in private and public sectors. This relatively new development has come about through the promotion of aquaculture practices which are based on the use of simple technology with minimal investment and management requirements. This approach is vital for the future growth of aquaculture. As private and government sectors become more experienced in basic aquaculture development practices, it is to be expected that further growth of the aquaculture sector will take place, particularly through diversification, with the main focus being in the area of commercial development.

3. It is also to be expected that with rapidly growing populations and with more countries moving towards market-based economies, aquaculture development and resource management will assume even greater importance to Pacific Island countries.
4. The importance of aquaculture development in other regions that are similar to the South Pacific such as the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean which have dense populations and where inland fish farming play an important role in the supply of food, should be noted.
5. There are some indications which suggest that some countries in the region have implemented aquaculture development projects at the subsistence and semi-commercial level in order to provide food and as a source of income. As coastal fisheries resources diminish, it is likely that aquaculture will emerge as a very real development option for many countries in the region.
6. On the other hand, the potential for the development of export-oriented aquaculture projects needs to be explored fully through more rigorous approaches towards research, development and marketing.
7. As a means of coastal fisheries resources management, it is envisaged that stock enhancement can be realised through the production of hatchery-reared juveniles and releasing these in the wild. However, current methodologies are still uncertain in terms of the survival of hatchery-reared seed stocks in the wild, with the exception of some sedentary species such as Trochus, green snail and giant clams.
8. Thus it can be said that aquaculture in the region is steadily developing in a general sense and that it may be opportune to look at new challenges in this field.
9. The FAO SPADP have been engaged in the provision of technical assistance to the region since December 1986 through to August 1992. There was a hiatus between August 1992 and May 1994 before the start of the current 5 year cycle of SPADP was initiated. A second phase for SPADP was requested by Pacific Island countries who felt that it was necessary to refine and verify the feasibility of technical projects started in the first phase of activities.

10. Apart from SPADP, there are no regional institutions at present that provide support or technical assistance in aquaculture. In order to coordinate and maintain the growing regional momentum in the general field of aquaculture, it is perhaps time that countries should consider what future arrangements might be put in place to continue the support for aquaculture, once the current 5-year SPADP programme concludes.

Proposed approach and timing

11. It is proposed that a new mechanism to support regional aquaculture development be implemented and that this arrangement be put in place before SPADP (Phase II) concludes in May, 1999. Whatever mechanism might be agreed, it is recommended that there be at least a 6 months overlap with the current SPADP so that a smooth transition of activities can be effected.

Activities	1996	1997	1998	1999
Draft design of the set-up	xx			
Approval of the draft design		x		
Funding arrangement		xxxxx		
Recruitment of staff			xxx	
Operation set-up			x	
RTMF 27			xxxxxxxxxxx	
SPADP (Phase II)		xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx		

Action to be taken

12. The meeting is invited to discuss the following:

- * the concept of establishing a regional mechanism to support aquaculture development in the region;
- * an implementing schedule for the regional mechanism, and
- * future requirements in support of regional aquaculture development.