

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

TWENTY-FIFTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 14–18 March 1994)

REPORT ON SPC COASTAL FISHERIES PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES
AUGUST 1992 – MARCH 1994
(Paper prepared by the Secretariat)

OVERVIEW

CAPTURE SECTION.....	Page 4
POST-HARVEST SECTION.....	Page 8
TRAINING SECTION.....	Page 13
RESOURCE ASSESSMENT SECTION.....	Page 16
INFORMATION SECTION.....	Page 20

OVERVIEW

1. Following a reorganisation at the beginning of 1993, the Coastal Fisheries Programme now comprises five (5) distinct sections: Capture, Post-harvest, Training, Resource Assessment and Information. These are further broken down into ten (10) principal projects or activity areas, as shown in Figure 1. In many cases, these projects or activity areas correspond directly to packages of extra-budgetary funding assistance being provided by (or sought from) a wide range of donors, including the Governments of Australia, the United Kingdom, France, New Zealand, the United States of America, Canada and Japan, as well as international bodies including the European Union (formerly the European Community), the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme.

2. 1993 expenditure by the Coastal Fisheries Programme was approximately 1.6 million CFP units, as follows:

Programme Management	164,686
Capture Section	468,145
Post-harvest Section	282,899
Training Section	377,441
Resource Assessment Section	213,036
Information Section	<u>98,745</u>
	1.604,952

3. These figures exclude an outstanding request to the European Union for Lomé IV funding to the Regional Post-harvest Fisheries Centre, which is discussed in more detail below.

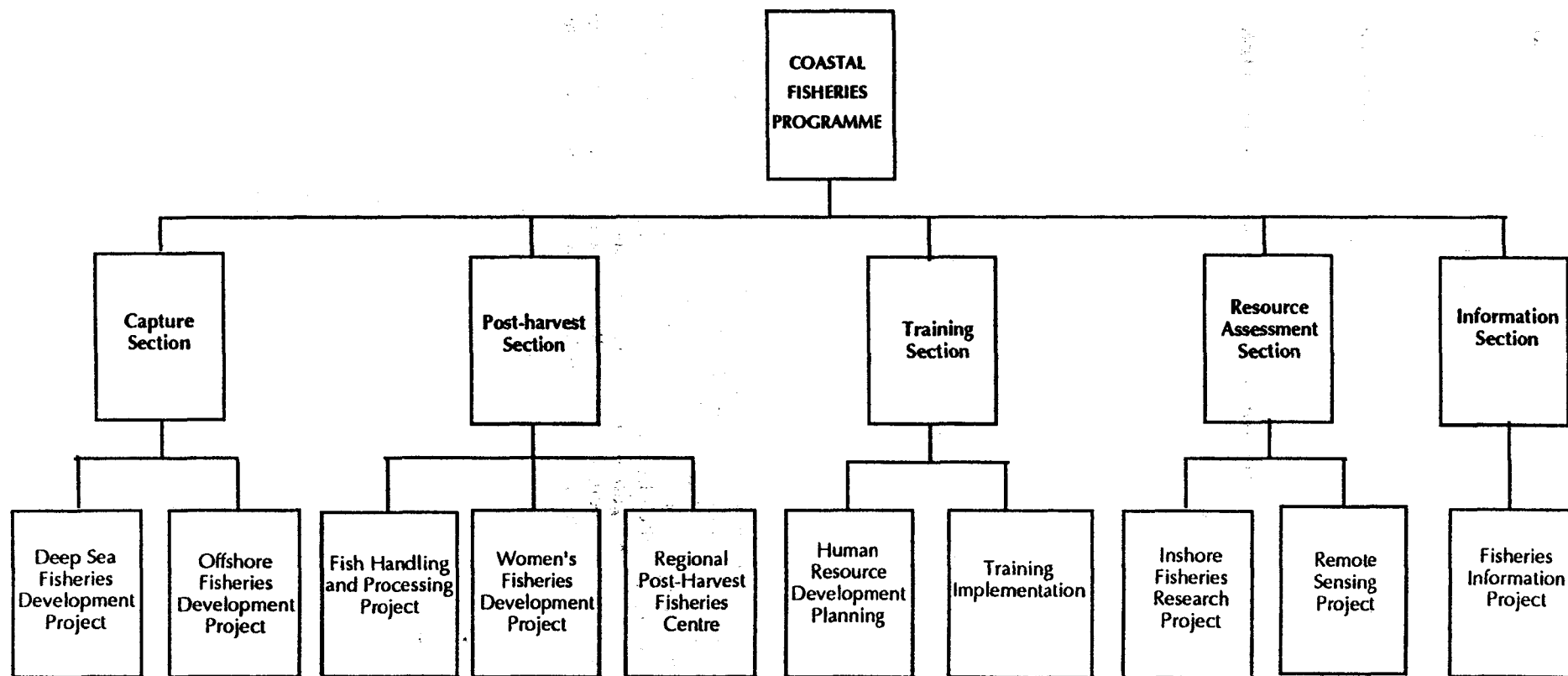


Figure 1: Coastal Fisheries Programme

4. The October 1993 South Pacific Conference approved several changes in the CFP establishment. As a result, the Programme now comprises 26 approved positions (21 professional posts and 5 support staff), as follows:

Title	Status
Coastal Fisheries Coordinator	Filled (G. Preston)
Fisheries Development Advisor	Filled (P. Cusack)
Fisheries Development Officer	(Under recruitment)
Master Fisherman	Filled (P. Wellington)
Master Fisherman	Filled (P. Watt)
Master Fisherman	Filled via consultancy arrangement (S. Beverly)
Master Fisherman	Vacant due to lack of funds
Post-harvest Fisheries Advisor	Filled (S. Roberts)
Manager, Regional Post-Harvest Fisheries Centre	To be recruited subject to funding of RPHFC
Post-Harvest Fisheries Technologist	To be recruited subject to funding of RPHFC
Post-Harvest Research Assistant	To be recruited subject to funding of RPHFC
Post-Harvest Technician	To be recruited subject to funding of RPHFC
Women's Fisheries Project Officer	Vacant due to lack of funds
Fisheries Education and Training Advisor	Filled (H. Walton)
Fisheries Training Officer	Filled (M. Blanc)
Fisheries Information Advisor	Under recruitment
Fisheries Information Officer	Filled (J-P. Gaudechoux)
Fishery Resources Advisor	Filled (T. Adams)
Inshore Fisheries Scientist	Filled (P. Dalzell)
Remote Sensing Technician	To be recruited in 1995
Fisheries Associate	To be recruited, pending funding confirmation
Project Assistant (Capture Section)	Filled (M.A. Bao)
Project Assistant (Post-harvest/Information Section)	Filled (P. Laffont)
Project Assistant (Resource Assessment Section)	Filled (K. Legras)
Project Assistant (Training Section)	Filled (H. Lecomte)
Project Assistant (Post-Harvest Fisheries Centre)	To be recruited subject to funding of RPHFC

5. As can be seen, several positions are presently unfilled, including: 5 posts associated with the Regional Post-Harvest Fisheries Centre, for which funding has yet to be secured; the post of Remote Sensing Technician, which will not be needed until 1995; and several other positions for which funding arrangements are being put in place, or where new arrangements are being sought to replace funding that has expired. It is expected that most of these latter positions will be filled during the first half of 1994.

6. A summary of project activities by Section follows:

CAPTURE SECTION

Overview

7. This section operates under the technical supervision of the SPC Fisheries Development Adviser (FDA) and incorporates two projects, the Deep Sea Fisheries Development Project (DSFDP) and the Offshore Fisheries Development Project (OFDP). A third project, the Regional Small-Scale Purse-Seine Test Fishing Project, was dropped from the 1994 work programme on the authority of the October 1993 South Pacific Conference since it had not succeeded in attracting the required funding.

8. The DSFDP, formerly wholly funded from the SPC core budget, has traditionally provided the services of professional Master Fishermen (MF) on a short-term basis to work in support of capture fisheries development activities in Pacific Island countries, almost always in conjunction with government departments.

9. The OFDP arose as a result of the increasing number of requests from SPC member-countries for assistance in medium-scale tuna fishery development, especially in association with programmes of FAD deployment. This focus extends beyond the normal scope of the DSFDP, which in any case did not have the capacity to respond to all the requests for assistance that were being received. As a result a proposal was put to UNDP for funding of a four-year programme of support to promoting medium-scale offshore fishery development in Pacific Island countries.

10. The OFDP effectively became operational in mid-1992 when, in order to proceed quickly with its implementation, the budget was scaled back to fall within UNDP's regional approval ceiling. This required removing important budget components in the fourth year. At present the project provides for the employment of a project officer (designated as Fisheries Development Officer [FDO] by CRGA 19), a Project Assistant (PA), and 6 man-months of specialised consultancy per year. During 1993, at the invitation of UNDP, and in light of the heavy demands placed on OFDP services, a revised budget was submitted which provides for re-instatement of the fourth year components, and an allocation for the provision of fishing vessel design and evaluation activities. Approval of this submission will be subject to the outcome of a tripartite review to be conducted as part of the present RTMF.

11. The Section operated with a staff of four for most of the period since the last RTMF; FDA, Peter Cusack, MF Paxton Wellington PA Marie-Ange Bao and MF Peter Watt, who was informally designated as OFD project officer early in 1993. With MFs Rata and Wellington having completed their contractual terms in October 1992 and March 1994 respectively and not replaced due to core funding cuts, and the re-designation of MF Watt, the Section will have no MF staff as of mid-March 1994. The position of FDO will be recruited to early in 1994.

12. Consultancy funds provided by UNDP and USAID were applied to employ consultant MF Steve Beverly for a number of short and medium-term field assignments and consultant MF Jerry Russo was engaged through the DSFDP under a shared-costs arrangement for an assignment in American Samoa. In addition a MF from New Caledonia's Territorial Fisheries Service, Aymeric Desurmont, was attached to the Section to undertake a field project in Wallis and Futuna.

13. In addition to the DSFDP and OFDP funding blocks, several smaller grants have been approved for specific sub-projects, including the production of a manual on FADs, the production of training videos, and support for a tuna fisheries development project in PNG.

National-level activities

14. The Capture Section has undertaken 90 country-specific, field assistance assignments since the inception of the DSFDP in 1978. In the 18 months since the 1992 RTMF, Section staff undertook 20 field projects in twelve member countries: Papua New Guinea (2), Wallis and Futuna (2), Fiji (4), Palau (3), Western Samoa (2) and one in each of New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Nauru, Tokelau, Tonga, American Samoa and Solomon Islands. Only one of these assignments, in Papua New Guinea, is still in progress. These activities are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Capture Section field activities undertaken between August 1992 and March 1994.

Country Dates Project staff	Request	Summary of Activities
Papua New Guinea June 92 - August 92 Consultant MF Steve Beverly	Initiate pilot FAD programme.	Conduct FAD site survey, supervise rigging and deployment of one unit.
Wallis and Futuna (Phase I) August - September 92 Consultant MF Steve Beverly	FAD assistance: Survey and chart FAD sites.	Conduct echo-sounding surveys at Alofi and Futuna. Complete accurate charts of site bathymetry.
Fiji July 92 - October 92 Staff MF Tuainetai Rata	Assist with training course rural fishermen.	Serve as boat skipper/tutor during practical fisheries training.
New Caledonia September 92 Consultant MF Steve Beverly	Provide technical assistance to pilot swordfish fishing programme.	Advise on gear, rigging and fishing, post-harvest handling. Participate in offshore fishing trials.
Fiji (Phase I FAD) September - October 92 Consultant MF Steve Beverly	Assist redeployment of two FADs off Suva.	Conduct echo-sounding surveys. Complete charts of site bathymetry. Supervise rigging and deployment of FADs.
Palau (Phase I FAD) October 91 - October 92 Staff MF Peter Watt	Develop FAD-based tuna fishing techniques and gear.	Survey further FAD sites. Investigate baitfish resource. Develop and demonstrate longlining gear suited to local vessels. Conduct fishing trials.
Vanuatu November 91 - November 92 Staff MF Paxton Wellington	Initiate national FAD programme.	Needs assessment, site survey, deployment of shallow and deep-water FADs. Training.
Wallis and Futuna (Phase II) November 92 MF on attachment Aymeric Desurmont	Assist design and procurement of FAD systems. Supervise deployments.	Coordinate procurement/shipping of FAD systems. Supervise deployment of FADs at Wallis and Futuna in collaboration with French Navy.
Papua New Guinea November 92 (ongoing) Consultant MF Steve Beverly	Implement pilot tuna longlining project.	Gear specification and procurement assistance. Supervision of FAD rigging/deployment and fitting out of vessel with longline gear. Conduct fishing trials.
Western Samoa (Phase I) February 93 OFD project officer Peter Watt	Assist implementation of national FAD project.	Assist FAD needs assessment, material requirements, design and procurement recommendations.
Fiji (Phase II FAD) February - August 93 Staff MF Paxton Wellington	Assist national FAD programme implementation.	Technical advisory/procurement services. Practical training in FAD skills. Assist design and implementation of catch monitoring programme.
Palau (Phase II FAD) April 93 OFD project officer Peter Watt	Assist re-establishment of FAD network.	Technical advisory/procurement services. Practical training in FAD skills. Design and deployment of experimental FAD types.

Nauru April - May 93 OFD project officer Peter Watt	Locate and chart offshore FAD sites.	Conduct offshore FAD site surveys. Practical training in site survey skills. Follow-up design/material procurement services.
Tokelau August 93 OFD project officer Peter Watt	Assist implementation of national FAD programme.	Technical advisory/procurement services. Complete site surveys, design and rig moorings, deploy 6 units. Practical training in FAD skills.
Western Samoa (Phase II) September 93 OFD project officer Peter Watt	Provide technical assistance in FAD survey and deployment.	Rig rafts for two experimental FADs. Training of FAD technician in site survey technique using GPS.
Fiji (Phase III FAD) August - September 93 Staff MF Paxton Wellington	Assist FAD deployment programme for national pole-and-line fleet.	Technical advisory/procurement services. Demonstration/training in FAD rigging and deployment.
Tonga September - October 93 Staff MF Paxton Wellington	Assist deployment of two FADs.	Technical advisory/procurement assistance. Supervision of/training in site survey, rigging and deployment.
American Samoa September/Dec 93 January/Feb 94 Consultant MF Gerry Russo	Assist implementation of pilot tuna longlining project.	Prepare vessel and gear. Supervise fishing trials.
Palau November 93 OFD project officer Peter Watt	Provision of technical assistance in planning sportsfishing development project.	Technical input to preparation for sportfishing guides' workshop.
Solomon Islands November 93 - February 94 Staff MF Paxton Wellington	Provide training in deep-bottom fishing technique/catch handling to export standard.	Practical training at sea for artisanal fishermen at three sites.

Regional-level activities

15. The Section continued to monitor regional and worldwide developments in FAD technology and use and medium-scale commercial tuna fisheries development. In recent times this has included: technological exchanges with FAD users in the Indian Ocean and Japan; extensive consultations with Pacific-rim FAD material and tuna fishing gear suppliers; and technical, resource and market opportunity information exchanges with established chilled tuna and broadbill fishing enterprises.

16. Progress has been made in investigating the social and economic implications of FAD programme initiation, including such issues as cost-effectiveness, user-conflict, FAD dependence, private sector FAD financing, and the impact on markets of FAD catches. In this connection emphasis has been given in the planning of each FAD-assistance project to supporting and encouraging the establishment of national FAD use and catch monitoring programmes. Field work toward this end has been undertaken in Nauru and Papua New Guinea with the cooperation of Resource Assessment Section staff, and is ongoing in Fiji in collaboration with an ODA-funded research project.

Training

17. While all field assignments undertaken by the Section emphasise group and counterpart training, it is also common for the Section to contribute to regional fisheries training efforts, particularly those coordinated by the Fisheries Training Section. During 1993 a staff MF served as boat skipper/tutor during the Practical Module of the SPC/Nelson Polytechnic Pacific Island Fisheries Officers' Course. In collaboration with the Training Section, specialised attachment training in capture fisheries was provided for fisheries officers from Palau, PNG, Fiji and Western Samoa under the OFDP.

18. Section staff collaborated with the Training Section on providing a FAD fishing techniques workshop for forty (40) Tongatapu fishermen in February 1994 and planning is under way for a sub-regional FAD skills workshop tentatively scheduled for May this year.

Publications

19. Reports to governments on Section activities in the field during 1992/1993 have in most cases been provided immediately at the completion of assignments. These reports give an account of the activities conducted, record catch data, provide technical descriptions of the gear, vessels and techniques employed, identify restraints to development aspirations, and make recommendations as to how such restraints might be alleviated. Three country reports have been published and distributed in recent months.

20. Apart from country reports, the Section has published a French-language version of the popular *Handbook on Trolling Techniques for the Pacific Islands*. Other publications in preparation or planned include: a Special Interest Group Bulletin devoted to FAD use; a handbook on deep-bottom fishing methods, designed as a companion volume to the Trolling Handbook; and a series of technical reports which will describe in detail appropriate gear construction, rigging and fishing techniques for vertical longlining, deep-trolling, small-scale surface longlining and other fishing methods. In addition, a draft version of the long-delayed, revised *SPC FAD Handbook* has been completed.

Advisory services

21. In addition to field assignments, the Section continued to provide advisory services on technical fishery issues in response to national request. This service, provided chiefly by the FDA and acting OFD project officer from SPC headquarters and during consultative visits, included advice on fishing technique and gear developments, sources of gear and equipment supply, technical aspects of FAD raft and mooring design and sources of FAD material supply, and provision of catch and resource assessment data gathered during field assignments.

Evaluation

22. While the Section's workload has continued to grow, core budget funding, which has in the past covered the operations of the FDA and three MF, and during 1993 was scaled back to provide for only the FDA and one MF, has been further reduced so that there are no funds available to the Section for MF positions in 1994. Shortage of funding for field staff is likely to be the biggest constraint faced by the Section in 1994 and thereafter. This issue requires the attention of SPC member countries if the range of services offered by the Section is to continue.

23. During 1993 the Section maintained its ability to respond quickly and effectively to requests for technical fisheries assistance in the field, mainly because of the availability of extra-budgetary funds (through the OFDP) which can be used in a flexible manner to secure short-term expertise as required. The provision of advisory services was also well maintained, particularly in the technical aspects of FAD programme development and tuna fisheries implementation.

24. While great effort has been made to keep abreast of the ever-growing demand for FAD programme assistance, the workload involved in providing such services has precluded the Section from responding quickly to all such requests. In addition the Section has been largely unable to undertake planned gear and vessel trials and evaluations designed to provide important information for fisheries managers, planners and donors interested in the regional development of domestic commercial tuna fishing, nor to fully satisfy requests for field assistance in this area.

25. It is a condition of all field assignments undertaken by the Section that countries make a commitment to provide basic support services, counterparts and follow-up extension work as appropriate. However, some 1992/1993 field assignments have failed to have their expected impact, in terms of increased fisheries production or self-sufficiency, due to an inability or failure on the part of national fisheries divisions to meet these commitments. Failure to assign appropriately trained and motivated counterparts has been the most serious problem, and in some cases has resulted in lack of follow-up of the MF's work, or reduction of its impact.

Future plans

26. The Section will continue to keep abreast of developments in FAD technology and application regionally and worldwide and will seek to make expert assistance available to member countries in all aspects of FAD programme planning and implementation. Particular effort will be made to promote stricter FAD monitoring and evaluation systems on a country-by country basis. In addition, effort will continue to promote and assist the development of medium-scale offshore fisheries in the region, particularly tuna fisheries. The common aim of this work will be to increase the participation of member countries in the harvest of their fisheries resources and in realising increasing benefit from such efforts.

POST-HARVEST SECTION

Overview

27. This section operates under the technical supervision of the SPC Post-harvest Fisheries Adviser (PFA) and comprises three major projects, namely the Fish Handling and Processing Project (FHPP), the Women's Fisheries Development Project (WFDP), and the Regional Post-Harvest Fisheries Centre (RPFC), as shown in figure 1. Of the three major components, the RPFC has not yet succeeded in attracting the funding required for its full implementation, and is therefore not yet active.

28. The project, which finances the post of PFA as well as providing half the costs of a Project Assistant position, continues to be funded by the UK Government. Funding for the FHPP has been extended until June 1994 following an internal review of the UK funded fisheries projects which was undertaken in September 1993 by the UK Aid Management Office in Suva. Funding for CFP projects in the post-harvest fisheries sector beyond June 1994 is the subject of a new project submission to the UK Government which is currently under consideration.

29. The WFDP comprises one professional staff position (Women's Fisheries Project Officer, WFPO) which became vacant in May 1992 when the incumbent left the Commission early after only one year in post. Insufficient funds now remain in the budget to allow recruitment of a replacement WFPO for a full contract period. Difficulties have been experienced in securing top-up funds to be able to offer a two year contract to a replacement candidate. The post therefore remains vacant until sufficient funding can be identified.

30. The initial phase of this project was designed to provide assistance to the Women-in-Fisheries Support Project in Papua New Guinea, with activities in other countries planned to take place during the second year. With the early departure of the WFPO some of these activities have not taken place, and the responsibility for existing project commitments to Papua New Guinea has fallen to the PFA. Support activity to PNG is continuing but at a reduced level, until funds have been secured to permit a new WFPO to be recruited.

Project activities

31. Table 2. provides a brief outline of the section's activities between August 1992 and March 1994. The table shows activities related to national and regional projects and includes all assignments undertaken either by the Post-harvest Fisheries Adviser or by consultants. Additional brief comments on these and other activities are provided in the following sections.

National level activities

Regional Post-harvest Fisheries Training Project - Stage Two, In-country Workshops

32. Stage two of the Post-harvest training project, the in-country courses, is now well under way, with courses in nine countries completed during 1992 and 1993 (see table 2). A technical or extension resource person (CFP staff member or external consultant) was made available to provide guidance and supervision with each in-country course.

33. The overall project is beginning to meet its objectives which is to provide sufficient in-depth training to individuals from the region so that in each country at least one trained person would be available who could train fishermen, market staff, retailers and exporters. The ultimate aim is to improve the quality of landed and marketed fish throughout the region.

34. A questionnaire survey conducted in August/September 1993 indicated that of the nine in-country workshops so far supported, a total of 629 fishermen, traders, extension officers and managers of small landing facilities have undergone some form of training. This breaks down to 249 trained in formally organised workshops (SPC supported plus others) and 380 individuals trained on an ad hoc basis on an informal level through provision of technical advice.

Table 2: Post-harvest country activities undertaken between August 1992 and March 1994

DATES	COUNTRY (Staff/Consultant)	ACTIVITY
Sep/Dec 92	Australia (UNSW and IFIQ)	SPC/ACIAR consultancy: two product development consultancies commissioned and completed on 1) Minced tuna products, and, 2) Improving Tokelau's marinated dried tuna product.
Oct 92	Vanuatu (Ken Kiniore)	Supervision by SPC consultant of in-country post-harvest workshop organised by the Vanuatu participant at the Regional Post-harvest Workshop held in March/April 1992.
Oct 92	Savusavu, Fiji (PFA)	Supervision of in-country post-harvest workshop organised by the Fiji participant at the Regional Post-harvest Workshop held in March/ April 1992.
Nov 92	PNG (Peggy Dunlop)	Mid-project review of the "Women-in-Fisheries Support Project for PNG" undertaken by SPC consultant.
Nov 92	Tonga/American Samoa (Bruce Goodrick)	Supervision by SPC consultant of two in-country post-harvest workshops organised by the Tonga and America Samoa participants of the Regional Post-harvest Workshop held in March/ April 1992.
Dec 92	Papua New Guinea (PFA)	Participation in the mid-project review of the "Women-in-Fisheries Support Project for PNG" and review consultant's recommendations with the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources. Plus visit Rabaul to provide marketing advice on a DSFDP on long-lining tuna.
	Brisbane/Sydney, Australia (PFA)	Review progress on SPC/ACIAR commissioned studies on product development of novel tuna products at UNSW and IFIQ.
Feb 93	Brisbane/Sydney (PFA)	SPC/ACIAR: Reviewed progress on SPC/ACIAR commissioned studies on product development of novel tuna products at UNSW and IFIQ. The meeting was attended by representatives from Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Marshall Islands.
Mar 93	Solomon Islands (Bruce Goodrick)	Supervision of in-country post-harvest workshop organised by the Solomon Islands participant of the Regional Post-harvest Workshop held in March/April 1992.
Mar 93	Papua New Guinea (David Milne)	Supervision of in-country post-harvest workshop organised by the Papua New Guinea participant of the Regional Post-harvest Workshop held in March/April 1992.
Mar 93 - ongoing	Noumea (AMC, Tasmania)	Consultancy with AMC to write up a set of student teaching notes for the chilled/frozen fish sector.
Apr/May 93	Kiribati/Tuvalu (Bruce Goodrick)	Supervision by SPC consultant of in-country post-harvest workshop organised by the Kiribati and Tuvalu participants of the Regional Post-harvest Workshop held in March/April 1992.
Apr/May 93	Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Kiribati (PFA)	Provide training and advice to an outer islands fish drying project in the Marshall Islands with short exploratory and advisory visits to Pohnpei, FSM and Tarawa, Kiribati
Jun/Aug 93	Kiribati (Richard O'Neill)	Consultancy to develop an attractive high quality packaging label for the Kiribati Outer Island Project and undertake marketing trials of the improved product in Australia.
Aug/Sep 93	Tokelau (Vaine Wichman)	Socio-economic study of the community on Atafu the site of Tokelau's trial tuna processing and marketing project.

Nov 93	Papua New Guinea (PFA)	Tutor support to the Momase Region Women's Workshop on Fish Processing and Marketing, held in Madang on 8-19 November 1993.
Jan 94	New Caledonia (PFA)	One day visit to a fish processing operation on the island of Belep, Northern Province to provide technical advice.

Trial tuna processing and marketing project - Tokelau

35. The PFA continued to provide significant support to this activity. The project is nevertheless experiencing difficulties at a number of levels. On the production side, highly variable landings of yellowfin tuna result in irregular supplies of product, and there is some inconsistency in product quality. On the marketing front buyers are demanding different flavoured products, e.g. sweeter versions, and curry and chili flavours. In addition, most potential buyers are interested in larger volumes of product than Tokelau is presently able to provide. There is also a shortage of funds to continue to subsidise the processing operation while the promising marketing trials continue. The result was that all manufacturing was temporarily halted at the end of 1992 until new funds can be identified. Despite the difficulties a New Zealand company has expressed some interest in a joint venture to produce and market marinated dried tuna.

36. Specific assistance has since been provided through this collaborative project. At the end of 1992 IFIQ was hired to improve Tokelau's products and develop a lower cost processing procedure. IFIQ have succeeded in doing this. They also included some alternative flavour formats such as curry and chili flavours as requested by potential buyers.

37. A socio-economic study of the community on Atafu, Tokelau, where the processing facility is based, was undertaken in August 1993 to investigate the social, cultural and economic factors that affect the day to day running of the tuna processing operation. The final version of the report should be ready in early 1994. This study will be used to help develop a more appropriate way of managing the project.

Regional level activities

Regional Post-harvest Fisheries Training Project - Student Teaching Notes

38. During the regional post-harvest workshop held in March/April 1992 the participants started putting together a series of teaching notes specifically tailored to help run short courses for fishermen, fish traders and exporters. These compiled sets of notes represented a very incomplete collection of material which required further significant input before they could be considered finalised.

39. To help with this task the Australian Maritime College was engaged to finalise these notes. The format of these notes has been modified so that they are more comprehensive, provide clear and easy to follow guidelines to the tutor, and include a full range of visual teaching aid materials that can be utilised with an overhead projector. This work was started at the end of March 1993. Although progress has been slower than expected two out of the five teaching modules are nearing completion. It is hoped that the full set of notes can be printed and distributed by April 1994.

Collaborative project between SPC and ACIAR on developing and extending novel tuna products (selected countries)

40. At the end of 1991 SPC and ACIAR (Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research) started evaluating a collaborative approach to support the manufacture of novel tuna products in the region. Following a review of two desk studies commissioned by ACIAR to help assess the feasibility of the project, two Australian institutes were commissioned to undertake product development studies on flavoured dried tuna products utilising sliced tuna flesh (International Food Institute of Queensland - IFIQ) and minced tuna (University of New South Wales - UNSW). Both studies were completed at the end of 1992.

41. These completed studies were reviewed in February 1993 by the various technical and development specialists and representatives of the project's initial target countries which includes Tokelau, Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. This meeting also considered the future direction of the project.

42. Under an action plan that was drawn up an informal Working Group was established as a consultative and advisory body to provide direction to future project activities. Action plan activities completed or are in progress include: mercury content analysis of products from Kiribati, Tokelau and IFIQ's studies showed that these products are within import regulation limits in force in Australia; advisory visit to Kiribati to evaluate the two tuna processing operations there; development of a new packaging format and label for Kiribati with marketing studies at retail outlets in Australia; a socio-economic study on Atafu, Tokelau to establish the constraints to tuna processing at the community level; and the SPC's leaflet on Home Made Recipe for Dried Marinated Tuna updated to include modified processing procedures.

Regional Post-harvest Fisheries Centre

43. The establishment of a Regional Post-Harvest Fisheries Centre (RPFC) within the Commission's Fisheries Programme was recommended by the 22nd RTMF in 1990, and subsequently endorsed by the 30th South Pacific Conference. Funding for the project has been requested through the European Community (EC) under the Lomé IV regional assistance programme. Although the RPFC, which is currently valued at about US\$ 3.2 million over five years, was assigned a high priority status, it was left out of the final list of projects submitted for EC consideration. Numerous other avenues have been pursued to secure funds through the EC but none have been successful. A sustained effort will be made to ensure that this project is considered under the second protocol of Lomé IV as well as by other donors.

Production of fish handling and processing videos

44. Funds have been available through ICOD since 1991 for the production of nine new videos in the Fish Handling and Processing Video series. These would add to the two very popular videos on fish chilling that were produced in 1989 ("An icy tale" and "A chilling story"). Unfortunately it has not been possible to complete any of these new videos over the reporting period due to commitments to other activities which have taken priority over this project. However a start has been made on the production of a video on the air-freighting of chilled fish. A commercial video company in Suva has been hired to develop a script, undertake filming and complete the editing, with technical advice being provided by PFA. Filming should take place in Fiji in early 1994.

Other activities

Publications

45. The new edition of the very popular booklet *Beche-de-mer of the Tropical Pacific* is now being printed. A review of women-in-fisheries development projects was completed and has been included in the SPC technical document *People, Society, and Fisheries Development and Management in the Pacific Islands*. A pilot version of a *Handbook on Small Fishery Business Management for Pacific Women* has also been produced and will be trialled in Papua New Guinea before being revised for a wider release.

46. No progress has been made with the *Field Manual for Seafood Poisoning Outbreaks*, or with other tentatively planned technical manuals, mainly due to commitments to country assignments and regional projects.

Evaluation

47. Although the Section has had a very active 18 months, it has faced difficulties in accomplishing all of its objectives. The demand for the services of the Section has grown, and this increased workload has been made more difficult to accommodate by the premature departure of WFPO in May 1992 plus failure to secure top-up funds to replace this officer, and the resultant need for the PFA to devote additional attention to this area. Inevitably some activities planned for the period, in particular publications and video production, have suffered. There is no obvious solution to this problem until funds can be secured to permit the replacement of the WFPO.

48. In addition, some countries themselves have contributed to the lack of progress in certain projects, by not following through with their own inputs to ensure that activities, once started, can be completed. In at least one instance, the lack of follow-up by a member government to an initial study requested from SPC has resulted in the overall assistance package being unfinished, with little prospect of completion. This situation leads to a waste of already scarce project resources, and might be avoided if member governments were careful to undertake realistic assessments of national needs and priorities.

49. The establishment of the RPFC, a major project initiative that will provide a much-needed increase in support to the development of fishery post-harvest activities in the region, has experienced substantial delays due to difficulties in securing the required funds. The expansion of appropriate training and research opportunities in post-harvest fisheries within the region largely depends on such a facility becoming operational. The project concept has been evaluated by and discussed directly with SPC member countries and at several regional meetings, and is supported widely by the marine resource sector. However, because of the relatively high cost of the project (nearly US\$ 3.0 million over five years) funding options are limited. The procedure of requesting funds under Lomé IV regional arrangements has proven time consuming and frustrating, but alternative funding sources are not obviously available.

50. Funding arrangements for the WFDP expired during May 1993. The FHPP has had its termination date extended from 31 December 1993 to the end of June 1994 following a review of UK funded projects of the Coastal Fisheries Programme undertaken by the UK Aid Management Office in Suva in September 1993. The identification of funds for the continued activity of Post-harvest Section will need to be given a high priority during the year. The 24th RTMF expressed its concerns over the short-term nature of funding arrangements for these and other CFP projects and recommended that the Secretariat do its best to secure long-term commitments from donors, a recommendation which was endorsed by the 17th CRGA and adopted by the 32nd South Pacific Conference.

TRAINING SECTION

General

51. SPC fisheries training activities are coordinated through the Training Section, which comprises the two professional positions of Fisheries Education and Training Advisor (FETA) Hugh Walton, and Fisheries Training Officer (FTO), Michel Blanc supported by a Project Assistant, Hélène Lecomte. Section staff also respond to national and regional requests for assistance and advice within the broad area of fisheries education and training.

52. The Section's operational funds are provided by the Government of Australia, the Government of France, and the Territorial Administration of New Caledonia. In addition, some individual training initiatives are funded from other sources including the Government of Canada, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Government of New Zealand, and the United Nations Development Programme.

53. The Section operated with a complete staff complement for most of 1992, after the vacant position of FETA was filled in February of that year. Major emphasis during 1992 was placed on the completion of a number of activities initiated during 1990 and 1991, and on developing a longer-term strategy for the operation of the Section. In addition, Section staff prepared eleven papers for presentation to regional fora, as well as eleven reports and associated financial statements for donors. Two proposals for longer-term (4-year) financial support were also produced and submitted to donors, as were a further three proposals for specific activity support.

54. During 1991, the Section commissioned a study entitled *Human Resource Development and Planning in the Pacific Islands Fisheries Sector* (HRD study). The draft report of the study identified a number of key shortcomings relating to fisheries education and training in the region, including the lack of effective regional coordination of fisheries education and training, the absence of long-term human resource development plans, the 'project-oriented' approach to fisheries development, the lack of personnel information for use by regional donor and educational institutions, and the immediate need for improved organisational management training for senior fisheries staff.

55. These issues provoked considerable discussion at the 23rd RTMF in 1991, and led to the Training Section formulating a series of potential activities to address them. The 24th RTMF in 1992 considered these suggestions in some depth, as well as re-examining the conclusions of the HRD study, at a *Workshop on Fisheries Education and Training* that was held in conjunction with the meeting. The workshop also reviewed existing and proposed Training Section activities and made recommendations that have formed the basis for a four-year activity plan that has been developed by the section. During CRGA 18, the government of Australia advised the meeting of an agreement in principle for financial support to the section for the four-year time-frame proposed by the activity plan.

56. As a result of the 24th RTMF's recommendations, the Section has now become increasingly active in the co-ordination of fisheries training and in manpower and human resource development planning, in addition to its more traditional role of developing and implementing training activities in areas not covered by other institutions. The four-year plan which arose from the RTMF reflects this shift in direction, and the activities of the section are now categorised according to the two broad themes of "Human resource development planning" and "Training implementation" as exemplified in the Fisheries Programme organisation chart.

Table 3: Summary of Training Section Regional-level Activities August 1992 to March 1994

Activity	Summary	Comment
Directory of Training Opportunities for Fisheries Personnel	Hard copy published and distributed early 1993. Database updating ongoing as information comes to hand	Diskette of updated database available on request.
Fisheries Personnel Database	Database exchange with FFA during 1993. Country information added as information comes to hand.	Current country personnel information available on request.
ASEAN/PINS Cooperation in Fisheries Education and Training	Study Tour completed in 1992 and report circulated early 93. SPC summary paper presented to PECC and APEC meetings 1993.	Access to ASEAN courses dependant on identification of financial support. Proposal in preparation for APEC to support inter-regional access to courses.
Special Interest Group on Fisheries Education and Training	Two bulletins published with circulation exceeding 400 copies.	Need to encourage wider contributor base. Positive response from readers for SIG as a means of coordination in training.
Standardisation of Fishing Vessel Crew Certification	Working paper (WP.5) prepared for meeting. Two pilot courses planned. Six institutions interested to develop programme.	Financial support proposed in SPC/FFA joint project to UNDP.
Organisational Management Training	Working paper (WP.4) prepared for meeting.	Financial support proposed in SPC/FFA joint project to UNDP.
SPC/Nelson Fisheries Officers Training Course	14th course completed and reviewed in 1993. 58. course underway with practical module planned for New Caledonia.	Financial support confirmed for 1994. Some concern as to ongoing financial support for 1995.

Activity	Summary	Comment
Certificate in Fisheries	Various national level vocational/technical courses operational. Mechanisms for introduction of standard curricula still under consideration.	Consultation ongoing.
Extension Training	59. regional and 13 national workshops completed. Survey review conducted suggesting need for ongoing support. Extension module included in Nelson Course.	No current plans to implement additional activities.
Chilled Fish Sector Workshops	Nine workshops completed with 250 participants. Survey review conducted to assist in planning 1994 programme. Five workshops and four follow-up visits planned for 1994.	Project extended until December 1994.
Video Production	Two videos completed in 1993.	Possible production of small boat safety video in 1994.
Production of Teaching Resource Materials	Teaching modules for post harvest and FAD fishing complete in draft with publication due mid 1994.	
Publications	Published during 1993: HRD Planning in the Pacific Islands Fisheries Sector; Fisheries Training Directory; French language version of Extension manual; ASEAN Study Tour Report; SIG Bulletin Nos. 1 and 2;	

Table 4: Planning of Regional Training Programmes

Activity	Summary	Comment
Fisheries Business Management and Fisheries Administration	SPC/AMC cooperative programme suggested to countries in circular letter. Sub-regional courses proposed.	Financial support proposed in SPC/FFA joint project to UNDP.
Sashimi Tuna Grading	Several country requests received. Regional course proposed.	Financial support as yet unidentified.
Report Writing Skills	Joint project with USP delayed pending funding.	Financial support proposed in SPC/FFA joint project to UNDP.
FAD Workshop	Sub-regional workshop programme planned commencing mid 1994 in American Samoa.	Joint Training and Capture Section activity.

Table 5: National Level Activities

Activity	Summary	Comment
Country Visits	Visits to 12 member countries by Section staff for in-country assignments and in-country courses.	
Short course and attachment training	More than US \$50,000 identified in support of short course training for personnel from six countries.	Attachment and short course support proposed in SPC/FFA joint project to UNDP.
HRD Planning	Draft HRD plans developed for Tonga and Palau. HRD consultations undertaken in FSM, Guam, CNMI, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Kiribati.	HRD planning services undertaken on request.

Evaluation

60. The Section's expanded role in the promotion of human resource development planning and the coordination of training activities has increased the need for labour-intensive database and information activities which, in conjunction with existing administrative and reporting responsibilities, has limited the Section's ability to service specific country requests. Production of training support materials such as resource kits has also been constrained although recruitment into the newly established Training and Information Associate position should alleviate this problem.

61. The provision by AIDAB of longer term financial support for the FETA and PA positions has allowed the Section to be more confident in the promotion of services and activities beyond an annual cycle. Based primarily on the HRD study and the recommendations of RTMF, the Section has planned a four year work programme covering a wide range of training activities. The further formulation and implementation of these activities remains, in most instances, subject to the confirmation of support funding.

62. The Secretariat remains concerned with the general tendency on the part of both donors and recipients to approach training opportunities without adequate attention to staff development planning. The prioritisation of staff development planning at the national level is viewed as an essential prerequisite to the efficient delivery of training and education opportunities.

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT SECTION

General

63. The IFRP comprises three full time positions Senior Inshore Fisheries Scientist (SIFS), Tim Adams, Inshore Fisheries Scientist (IFS), Paul Dalzell, and a Project Assistant (PA), Kay Legras. Staff and operational costs are funded by the British Government until mid 1994. This funding is supplemented by support for specific activities from other donors.

64. The IFRP provides assistance to member countries through in-country field research assignments by its scientific staff, the encouragement of scientific and professional contact and information-sharing amongst Pacific Island fishery workers, and a programme of literature research, data compilation and analysis, and documentation activities at SPC headquarters.

National level activities

65. Due to funding constraints, it has not been possible to respond to all member country requests involving in-country visits. However, over the past 18 months several national level activities were undertaken, sometimes with funding support from other sources, and these are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Inshore Fisheries Research Project in-country field activities between August 1992 and March 1994

Assignment dates and Project staff	Request	Summary of activities
Cook Islands Aug-Sept 1992 SIFS	Case study of the Aitutaki trochus fishery	Comparative study of trochus population and sustainable harvest using three different methods, with recommendations for future approaches to setting harvest quota.
Papua New Guinea Feb-Mar 1993 IFS	Collaborative investigations on pelagic fisheries resources	Review and analysis of data collected from artisanal fishery based on FAD in Port Moresby: Observations on small pelagic fisheries in East New Britain.
Papua New Guinea Feb 1993 Aug 1993 IFS	Assistance to Department of Fisheries & Marine Resources with technical report production	Finalisation of five technical reports in February and a further three reports in August during a short attachment to IFRP of DFMR scientist.
Nauru Jun-Jul 1993 IFS	Coastal fisheries data collection	Establishment of coastal fisheries data collection system in Nauru and subsequent estimation of level of coastal fisheries activity.
Palau Feb 1993 SIFS	Review of research activities of Marine Resources Management Division	Review of MRMD research section's work programme, assistance with programming fisheries statistics database and editorial assistance with 1992 annual report
Vanuatu Oct 1992 IFS	Review of fisheries data collection for Vanuatu Fisheries Division	Review of data collection by Research and Extension Sections, and by Fishermen's Training Centre. Draft terms of reference for Research Advisor.
Tonga November 1992 IFS	Stock assesment of deep slope fishery resources and longline baitfish resources	Participation in a workshop to develop a management plan for Tonga's deep slope fisheries and to make a preliminary analysis of data collected from experimental baitfishing for small scale longlining

Pitcairn Jan 1993 Feb-Apr 1994? IFS/SIFS Consultant Peter Sharples	Survey of fish and invertebrate resources in Pitcairn group	Jan 1993: Assessment of most suitable NZ fishing company to conduct fishing survey of Pitcairn Feb 1994: Consultant observer conducts onboard recording of fishing activities at Pitcairn.
Niue Sept-Oct 1993 IFS	Fisheries resources survey of Beveridge Reef	Bad weather and other problems forced cancellation of trip to Beveridge reef. IFS summarised all available written and anecdotal information on Beveridge Reef for supplement to Niue fisheries resources survey report.

Regional level activities

66. The IFRP has conducted a number of regional level activities, most of which are still ongoing. An update on these activities is given in Table 7.

Table 7: Inshore Fisheries Research Project national level activities between August 1992 and March 1994

Regional-level activity	Activity update
Ciguatera research and management	Continued database compilation of case history data. Participation in international workshop on ciguatera management and regional heads of health service meeting
Interim support for FAO SPRADP activities	Assistance was provided to Western Samoa and Cook Islands for tilapia culture, PNG for trout farming, Niue for a coconut crab video, Kiribati for a SCUBA training course and giant clam farming
Remote sensing	Finalised project concept and project proposal for EU submission under the OCT
AIDAB phase III giant clam culture feasibility study	In-country visits by to Fiji and Tonga (SIFS) and Cook Islands (FCOORD) to review giant clam culture activities and to suggest options for future AIDAB funding of giant clam culture
Advisory services	Ad-hoc provision of advice and technical information on fisheries research and management. Participation in regional meetings: ACIAR UVC workshop; SPREP Integrated Coastal Zone Management Workshop

Publications

67. The fisheries resource assessments of Niue and Woleai Atoll were both published during 1993. Stock assessment of the Palau coral reef fishery was finalised and awaiting printing in February 1994 and the Aitutaki trochus fishery will be published later this month

68. Staff time was devoted to the production of a French-language edition of the popular Trolling Handbook which was published in late 1993. Presently in preparation are the proceedings of the 1990 Workshop on Trochus Resource Development and Management and the 1991 RTMF Workshop on Traditional Fisheries Management.

69. Numerous other reports were produced at a less formal level. All section activities and, where possible, results of field assignments are regularly documented in the SPC Fisheries Newsletter. Comprehensive draft reports of all country-specific activities were forwarded to Fisheries Departments and other relevant bodies, usually within one week of completion of field work.

Future activities

70. IFRP activities in the coming year are likely to include:

- Continued support for aquaculture in the region until re-commencement of SPRADP, should funding be forthcoming;
- Support to SPC member country fisheries scientists with the analysis of resource assessment data and the preparation of technical documents;
- Resource assessment fieldwork and management advice on trochus, beche-de-mer, pearl oyster and other economically important, fragile, or rapidly-changing fisheries;
- Strengthening of national catch monitoring and fishery data gathering systems and operational development of the regional inshore fisheries statistical database;
- Collaborative work on ciguatera case history data collection and analysis.

71. The project will also continue to develop regional initiatives in response to the expressed needs of SPC member countries, and to respond to specific requests for assistance as they are received.

Evaluation

72. The work of the IFRP and, when established, the Remote Sensing Project, is to assist countries to acquire the data needed for the development of appropriate inshore resource management plans. Compared with five years ago, when the IFRP was first established, fisheries department staff are more aware of the need to consider the biological limits of marine resources as part of the development process.

73. There is, however, still a gap between fisheries staff and the management decision-makers, including politicians and senior civil servants. As a result, there are still many private business ventures and development projects that are implemented without adequate consideration of resource issues. Where management occurs, it is still usually in response to a problem, or, when it is not, is often a result of a decision or representation by a local community that has decided to take its own action rather than wait for government.

74. To resolve this situation, there is a need for greater emphasis to be placed on putting the results of resource assessment into practice and through development of fishery management plans as an integral part of the resource assessment process. We feel that the regional-level IFRP has a continued part to play in this process since member countries have much to gain through the sharing of management experiences, successes and failures, and because many inshore marine resource issues are common to groups of countries.

75. At present, funding for the IFRP is assured until June 1994. The 24th RTMF recommended that the Commission *make every attempt to secure continued funding for the project so that its activities could be continued without interruption when the present funding expired*, and this recommendation was endorsed by the 32nd South Pacific Conference. The Secretariat has therefore devoted considerable time to seeking further funding for a new project phase which, while not abandoning technical aspects of resource assessment, will place increased emphasis on supporting countries in their attempts to carry research through to the resource management stage.

INFORMATION SECTION

General

76. The Information Section is newly established within the CFP structure and groups together the Fisheries Information Project (FIP), funded by the Government of France and, until March 1993, the SPC/OFCF Technical Cooperation Project (TCP), funded by the Japanese Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation.

77. The FIP coordinates the provision of information, both routinely and on request, to assist fisheries scientists, development officers, extension agents, planners, managers and others involved in developing and managing fisheries at national, regional and international levels. Many such individuals work in remote locations with poor communications and inadequate access to advice and information on technical fisheries-related topics. The SPC has established this project with the goal of improving its capacity to process and disseminate information. Information services will continue to be an important function of the SPC Fisheries Programmes. The project at present comprises the single position of Fisheries Information Adviser (FIA). Additional funds have been located to allow the employment of a second information officer and a fisheries associate (position to be shared with the Training Section) in 1994. These two positions have been approved by the 33rd South Pacific Conference.

78. The TCP acts as a channel for the input of Japanese information and expertise into the work of the SPC Fisheries Programme. The overall goal of the project is to provide support both to the development of fisheries in the Pacific Islands region, and to the further development of fisheries relations between SPC member countries and Japan, through a programme of activities which are principally information-related. The project, which is fully funded by the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation (OFCF) of Japan, covers the single position of Fisheries Development Associate. The agreement for this project expired in March 1993 and at present there is no provision for its renewal.

National-level activities

Marine resources bibliographies

79. Marine resources bibliographies of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Guam were published during the year. The respective Governments requested assistance in compiling bibliographies of material relating to fisheries and marine resources of their particular countries. During a search for appropriate documents, special attention was paid to research and experimental reports written in Japanese before World War II, and reports on marine resources and the environment.

80. The bibliography on FSM contains 1,283 references, that on Marshall Islands 786 references, and the Guam bibliography 1,479 references. The reports will be useful to people who are involved in fisheries development activities in these countries and in the region as a whole.

Information requests

81. Responding to information requests is a routine activity of all sections of the SPC Fisheries Programme, and is coordinated by the FIP. Under normal circumstances, a request is discussed among SPC Fisheries staff members with technical knowledge of the subject area, and either a listing of useful literature/ information sources, or specific technical advice, or both, are prepared. This may be supplemented using bibliographic searches conducted through the SPC library on internal or external databases. In some cases, where information obtained through these sources is inadequate to address the needs of the request, further assistance may be sought from other PIMRIS nodes or from elsewhere.

82. The frequency of information requests from regional fisheries workers has been increasing over the past four years. This trend seems to be a response to the increased emphasis placed on fisheries information by SPC and other PIMRIS participating agencies, and a resulting increased awareness on the part of regional fishery workers about the sorts of services that are available. The trend is expected to continue in the coming year.

Regional-level activities

Special Interest Groups

83. A major activity, since 1990, has been the establishment of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) on fishery related topics of interest to regional fishery workers. The SIGs were developed as a result of the SPC Workshop on Pacific Inshore Fishery Resources, held in March 1988, where participants expressed concern about the absence of mechanisms to promote contact and information exchange among regional fishery workers. In establishing the SIGs, the most important areas of interest in the region were determined by canvassing regional fishery workers using a questionnaire. More than 450 responses to the questionnaire were received by the end of 1993, 75% from the region, and returns are continuing.

84. Responses to the questionnaire surveys have been used to identify the most common areas of interest to fishery workers in the region, and those that should therefore be targeted first through the formation of SIGs. In addition several SPC fisheries meetings and workshops have also recommended the establishment of SIGs. Based on this guidance, 6 SIGs have now been established, on *Beche-de-mer*, *Pearl Oysters*, *Ciguatera*, *Trochus*, *Traditional Marine Resource Management and Knowledge*, and *Fisheries Education and Training*. Further SIGs will be established in 1994 (including one on fish aggregation devices), as financial and manpower resources permit.

85. As part of the support offered to each SIG, SPC undertakes to circulate literature, technical materials and correspondence relevant to the interests of group members on an approximately six-monthly basis. This is mainly done in the form of an information bulletin, compiled with the assistance of an external technical specialist (selected on their regional experience combined with expertise on the subject in question) and relying heavily on contributions from members of the SIG.

86. Using technical coordinators in this way ensures that the standard of the information circulated is maintained at a high level and is relevant to the needs of the region. Eight bulletins have been produced in 1993 (both in English and French).

SPC Fisheries Newsletter

87. Production of the SPC Fisheries Newsletter is maintained on a quarterly basis, in both English and French. The Newsletter provides timely information on SPC Fisheries Programme activities and on regional developments, as well as providing technical information on aspects of fisheries. The Newsletter is typically about 36 pages long and is widely distributed within the region (600 addresses on the mailing list).

SPC fishery ephemera database

88. In 1991, a database was established which, when complete, will contain a keyword-indexed listing of all the fisheries ephemera ("grey literature") produced by the SPC Fisheries Programme since its inception in 1957. This includes all articles and useful information published in the Fisheries Newsletter, all the working, information and background papers presented during RTMFs and other SPC fisheries meetings, and all articles in the various Special Interest Group Information Bulletins since their creation. This work will be done in collaboration with library staff.

89. During 1993, research and data entry continued to allow the expansion of the database which, when up to date, will be made available to regional users.

Pacific Island Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS)

90. The FIP is one of the mechanisms (along with the SPC Library) whereby SPC participates in the Pacific Island Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS), a joint activity in which SPC collaborates with the Forum Fisheries Agency, the University of the South Pacific and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC). The agencies participating in PIMRIS provide a variety of services to member countries, including the provision of bibliographies and literature searches, in-country assistance in organising information collections, and question-and-answer services, as well as collaborating on the compilation of a computerised bibliographic database, called MOANA, on Pacific marine resources. The FIP participates in these activities to the extent required, and the FIO also represents SPC on the PIMRIS Steering Committee, which has now met six times, including the meeting of 8–9 November 1993.

Information on Japanese fishery issues

91. A wide range of Japanese fisheries organisations, research institutions, and fishing and marine gear companies were contacted to provide information on aid and technical cooperation, and educational/training material. Some of this material has been translated and condensed for use in the SPC Fisheries Newsletter and SIG Information Bulletins.

92. A number of other contributions have also been made to these publications, both original materials and translated Japanese texts, which cover a wide range of topics from reports of work programme activities to articles on fishery statistics, turtle farming, beche-de-mer propagation, seafood nutrients, fish aggregation devices, Japanese research activities in Micronesia in the 1930s, and book reviews.

93. Specific information on the Japanese Government's aid system and the activities of OFCF in the South Pacific was also provided to SPC member countries on request, to promote a better understanding of Japanese assistance to the region. In addition, technical assistance to SPC member countries in connection with those elements of their national fisheries development plans that involve Japanese assistance were provided on request.

Evaluation

94. The gathering, repackaging and dissemination of information is one of the functions that SPC as a whole is ideally equipped to carry out on behalf of its member countries, and is of continually growing importance within the CFP. Promoting the flow of information to technical workers in the region is central to the operation of all sections of the CFP. It is therefore disappointing that the Secretariat's efforts to seek additional funding with which to strengthen and expand the work of the Information Section have so far not been successful. A number of targets for the Section have still not entirely been met, including the establishment of 12 SIGs, and the production of a number of other publications.

95. The level of future work will continue to be constrained unless additional extra-budgetary funding can be located to support these activities. Additional manpower resources have been requested through the establishment of a an additional position (to be shared with the Training Section) as recommended by RTMF 24, and approved by the 33rd South Pacific Conference. The establishment of this new position will improve the capacity of the project to respond to the expressed needs of SPC member countries in the provision of fisheries information, especially the maintenance of existing SIGs and the establishment of new ones.
