

Remote legal internship on coastal fisheries and aquaculture – a successful experience!

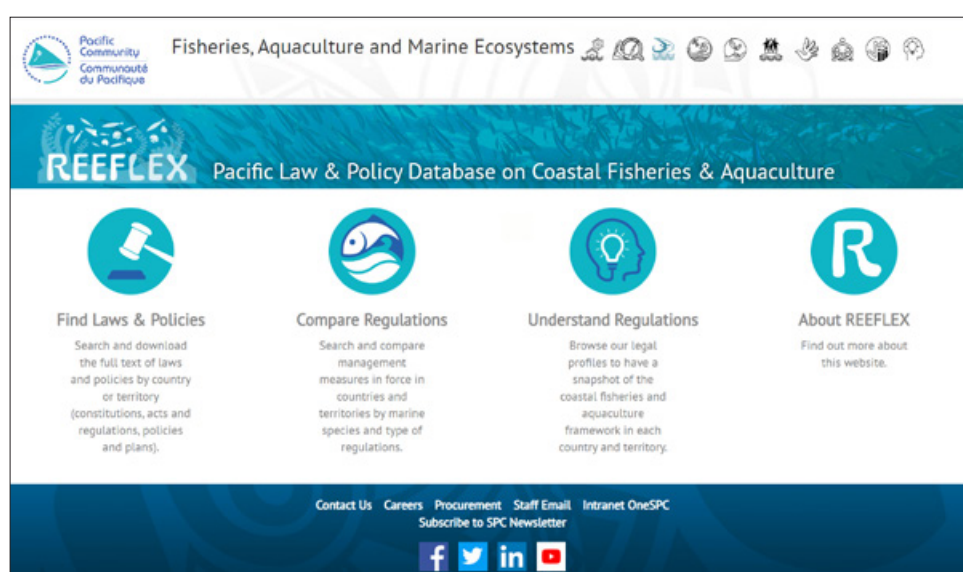


I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a remote intern with the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division of the Pacific Community (SPC) this past summer. My main project was researching aquatic biosecurity legislation in three different Micronesian countries—the Federated States of Micronesia, the United States Territory of Guam, and the Republic of Palau. I got a chance to exercise my research skills as a law student and leveraged SPC's REEFLEX database (Fig. 1) in addition to other sources. Learning about the different laws and legal structures of these island nations, especially as they handled and applied to pressing issues with fisheries and aquaculture, was very enriching for me and my education in international environmental law.

Aside from my research and work on aquatic biosecurity legislation, I had the opportunity to join some activities that I would not have been able to if not for the remote internship. I was able to participate in SPC's Gender, Social Inclusion and Human Rights Workshop and learn about progress being made in different Pacific Island countries and territories. I was also able to join a discussion on the Ocean Rights and Kinship Network on incorporating traditional knowledge into negotiations among nations for a treaty on biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Lastly, I joined a presentation with the Oceans and International Environmental Law Interest Group on alternative negotiation strategies for nations in seeming conflict during the formation of international agreements, such as the Antarctic Treaty System. The access I had to these extracurricular activities further enhanced my exposure and understanding of current issues in oceans and Pacific communities. The extra exposure broadened my frame of reference when I investigated issues related to my work with FAME, and were very beneficial.

The remoteness of the internship did not impede its high quality. New Caledonia and US West Coast time zones overlapped enough that I was able to stay in touch and meet through video conference with my manager, Ariella D'Andrea, SPC Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Legal Adviser, throughout the internship. The technical team at SPC was also very responsive and helped set up all the technical tools necessary for me to access and share resources for my work with FAME, including virtual support for presentations and work groups at the GSI and Human Rights Workshop. Video conferencing was of high quality and vital to my participation in the internship.

Given the disruption of the whole world with the COVID-19 pandemic, I was uncertain and uneasy about my ability to have a successful and meaningful legal internship experience this summer. However, my remote internship with FAME was an excellent experience for my greater education in environmental law and policy, and I am very grateful to SPC for the opportunity.



For more information:

Brian Calavan
JD Candidate 2022
The University of California,
Hastings College of the Law,
San Francisco, CA
calavan@uchastings.edu

Ariella D'Andrea
Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture
Legal Adviser, SPC
ariellad@spc.int

Figure 1. The SPC REEFLEX web application (<https://www.spc.int/CoastalFisheries/Legislation/main>) comprises three different tools to help users familiarise themselves with the legal framework for coastal fisheries and aquaculture in Pacific Island countries and territories.