Working Paper 8

Original: English

How FAME disseminates information

Prepared by Aymeric Desurmont, Fisheries Information Specialist
and Emmanuel Schneiter, Regional Data Manager
Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME)

HOW FAME DISSEMINATES INFORMATION

1. Producing information has been a core function of SPC's fisheries programmes since 1950. The digital library[1] of SPC's Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division (FAME), which includes almost all SPC fisheries-related documents produced so far, contains more than 9,500 documents, new ones being added each week. On top of these publications, other type of information such as fisheries data or meeting presentations are now available from FAME[2], the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP)[3] or the Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP)[4] webpages.

2. This paper focuses on how this information is disseminated, where it can be found and from whom it can be requested.

Dissemination of printed publications

3. FAME printed publications include a very wide range of documents that, for dissemination, can be split in two broad categories:

   i. Documents produced for selected audiences (e.g. newsletter and information bulletins, scientific or technical reports, technical manuals, etc.) that are sent directly to subscribers or pre-defined mailing lists.

   ii. Documents produced for communities or the general public (e.g. posters, brochures, information sheets, etc.) that are usually sent, in bulk, to fisheries departments, NGOs or other "relays", which take care of the in-country distribution.

4. The first category of documents normally reach their destination with no difficulties, thanks in part to a well-maintained list of 1800+ contacts updated each year by the Information Section for the SPC Fisheries Address Book[5].

5. The success of dissemination of the second category of documents relies on our in-country counterparts. It may be affected by related cost — such as custom clearance taxes or cost of the distribution from the point of reception, usually in the capital city, to other parts of the country —, which our counterparts didn't necessarily planned for even when the publication is shipped at their request. The cost of sending documents to our members already represents an important part of the Fisheries Information budget, a part that has substantially grown in recent years. It is not possible for SPC to take in charge the cost of distribution within countries, for logistic and financial reasons. Nevertheless, the Information Section will keep looking for ways to assist with the in-country distribution of fisheries-related information, in collaboration with the persons in charge when they can be identified.

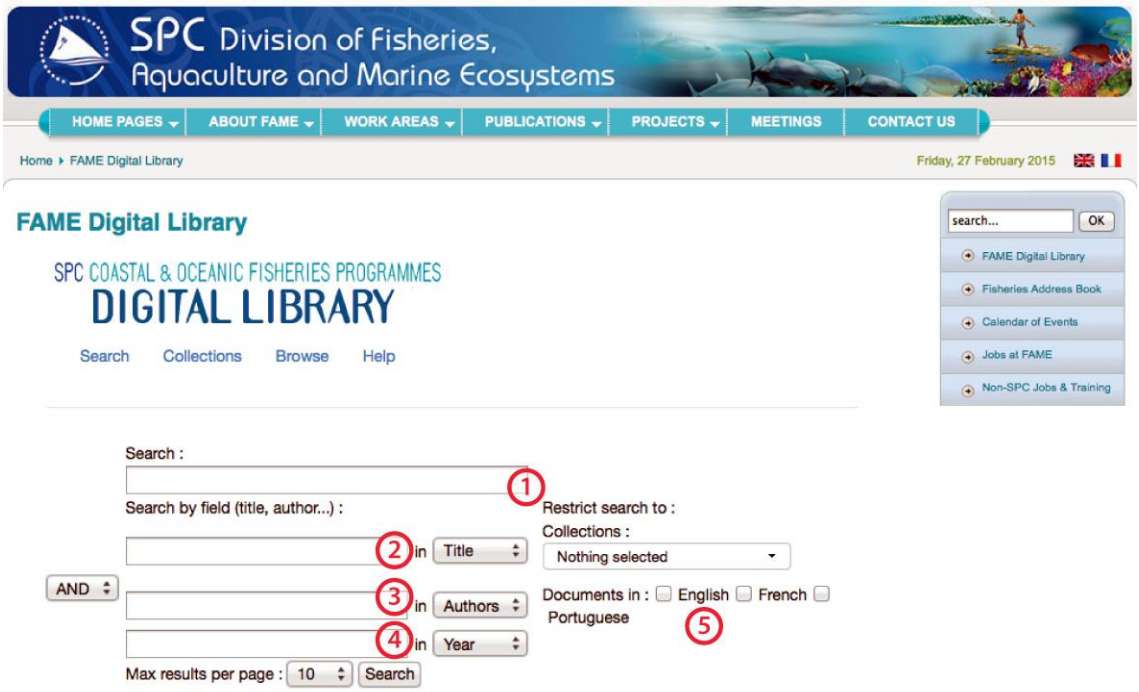
[1] http://www.spc.int/fame/en/fame-digital-library
[2] http://www.spc.int/fame/
[3] http://www.spc.int/oceanfish/
[4] http://www.spc.int/fame/
[5] http://www.spc.int/coastfish/en/publications/fisheries-address-book.html

6. Spare copies of most printed documents are also kept in stock at SPC headquarter, available for ad hoc requests addressed to the Fisheries Information Section[6]. Documents are usually sent free of charge to SPC members.

Dissemination of information via SPC website

FAME's Digital Library

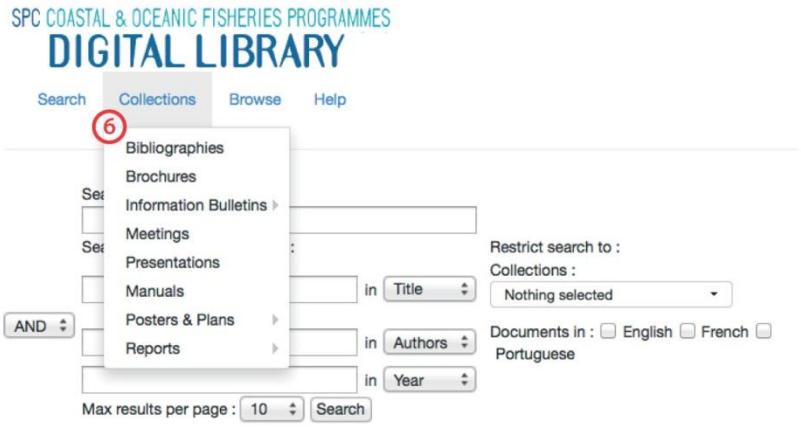
7. The main repository for all fisheries-related publications on SPC website is the FAME digital library, accessible from all FAME, OFP and CFP webpages. All fisheries-related publications produced by, for or in collaboration with SPC are added to the digital library as soon as they are published. The digital library is free access.



FAME's digital library interface (www.spc.int/fame/en/fame-digital-library)

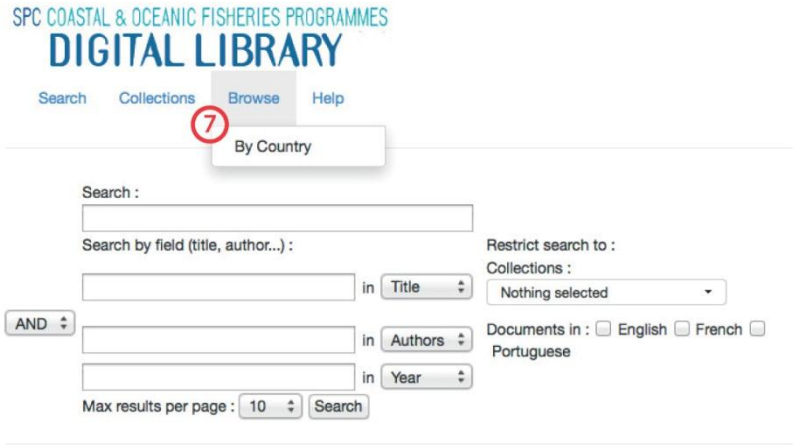
8. The digital library includes a powerful search engine that allows searches within 9,500+ fisheries-related documents. The search can be done combining four main search fields: full text (1), by title (2), by author (3), and/or by year of publication (4). It can also be limited to documents produced in English, French and/or Portuguese (5).

[6] cfpinfo@spc.int



The digital library's eight collections

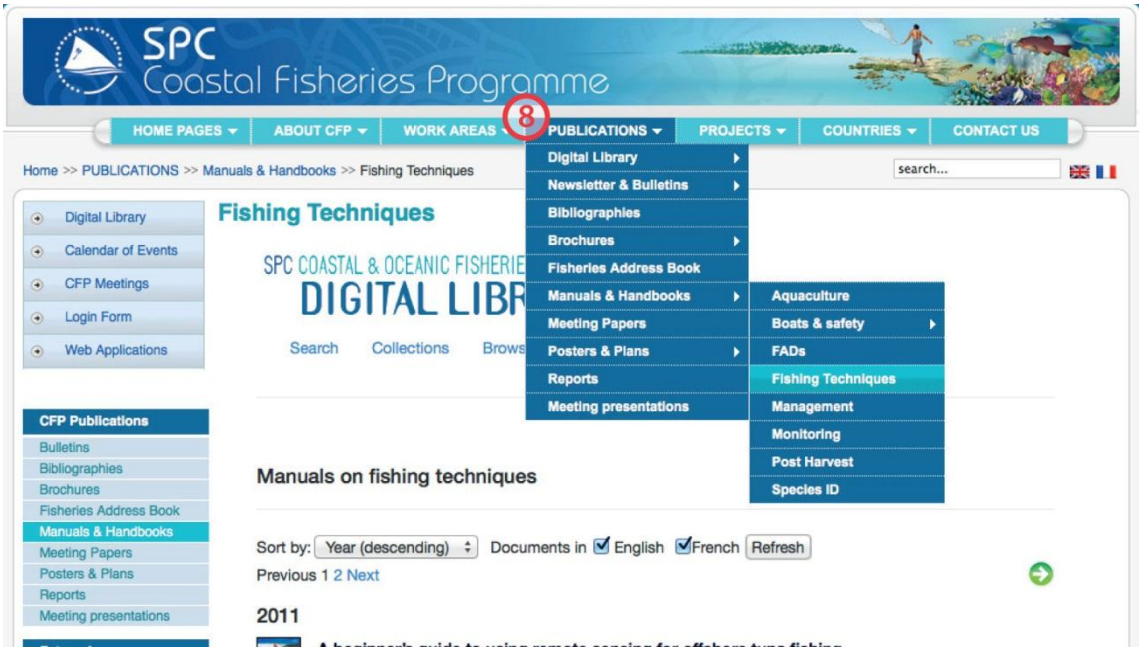
9. The digital library is also organised in eight different collections (Bibliographies; Brochures; Information bulletins and newsletters; Meeting papers; Meeting presentations; Technical manuals; Posters and plans; and Reports) (6). Collections allow, for example, finding the 94 papers presented during the 26th Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries in 1996[7], or the first issue of SPC Fisheries Newsletter published in 1971[8].



The browse button gives access to country-specific documents

10. It is also possible to limit the search to documents related to a specific country, using the "Browse" and "by country" buttons (7)[9]. The library contains, for example, 110 documents specific to the Federated States of Micronesia, some dating back to 1960, which can be retrieved by browsing countries.

[7] http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/FAME/Collection/RTMF_26
[8] http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/InfoBull/FishNews/1/FishNews1.pdf
[9] http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/FAME/ByCountry



Publication menu of CFP webpages (www.spc.int/coastfish/)

11. Documents available on the Digital library are also accessible via the publication menu of FAME, OFP and CFP (8) webpages. These menus give a preferential access to the type of documents produced by each programme.

Alerting stakeholders of new fisheries-related publications available on SPC website

12. The Fisheries Information Section maintains a mailing list of close to 500 contacts to which a short email is sent when a new publication of importance is added to FAME website. The email usually gives a short description and/or the table of contents of the document. To be added to this list, just send a blank message to join-publications-update@lyris.spc.int or send the request to the Fisheries Information Section at cfpinfo@spc.int.

Private secure SPC-member webpages on OFP website

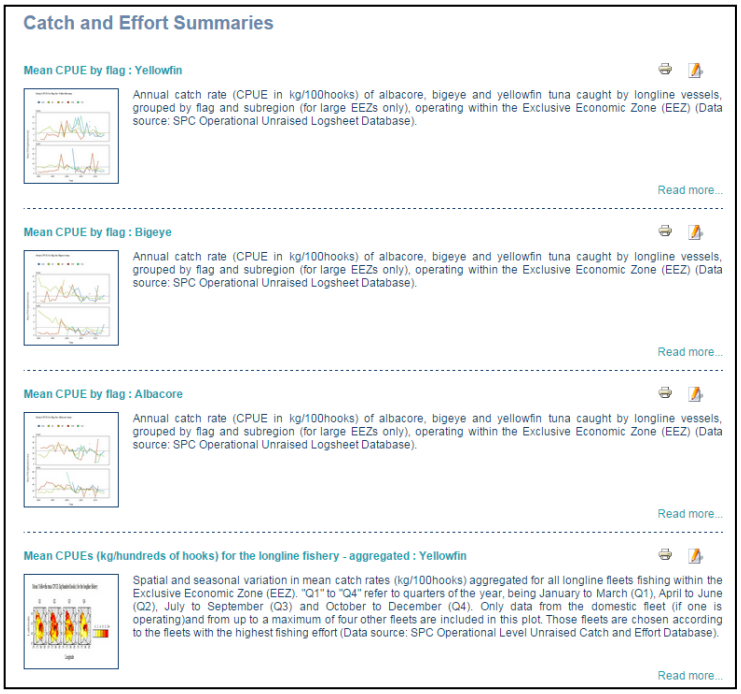
OFP member secure webpages
(http://www.spc.int/OFPMemberCountries/)

13. The OFP Member secure webpages have originally been created to distribute key information (tuna summaries) to PICT fisheries managers. A username and password, sent by OFP, is needed to access this resource.

14. When logged in, each country or territory can access private and secure pages featuring the following tuna fishery summaries:

    - Catch and effort summaries
    - Observer summaries
    - Part1 (Scientific committee oriented reports)

15. All summaries available on this web site are updated on a regular basis.



16. Countries also have access to various other types of information/data:

- TUFMAN[10] software resources;
- Links to secure online applications (TUFMAN and OBSERVER online reporting);
- Software updates;
- Issue specific National reports.

17. For SPC members, an access to this secure resource can be requested to Emmanuel Schneiter (emmanuels@spc.int).

Other means of access to FAME digital information

Servers installed in fisheries departments

18. To allow a fast access to FAME's digital library documents, a copy of the library has been added to servers installed by the Coastal Fisheries Science and Management Section in 15 member countries. This initiative has been implemented under the umbrella of the SciCOFish Project, funded by the European Union[11]. Accessing the server from the local network, fisheries department staff can access all documents of the digital library, as well as training videos and other information specific to their country or territory without having to rely on a slow or unstable Internet connexion. The digital library content on these servers is updated opportunistically at the occasion of FAME staff duty trips or through updates distributed on DVDs.

Server ready to be installed in Niue

Flash drives and DVDs

OFP 4Gb flash drive

19. While most information is available for online browsing and downloads, FAME uses USB cards or DVDs to disseminate information when or where Internet bandwidth is limited. For example, the 4Gb USB cards produced by OFP with EU funding have been used during training workshops to store documents and software necessary for the training. The flash drives ensured that participants had a quick access to these documents and software, without relying on a slow connexion, as the bandwidth is often overloaded during meetings.

[10] TUFMAN: Tuna Fisheries Data Management System
[11] http://www.spc.int/fame/en/projects/scicofish/about-scicofish

Questions and prospects

Do we still need paper copies?

20. It will be difficult to avoid using printed awareness and educational materials targeting communities, particularly in remote places with a limited access to other means of information. Short messages can always be communicated via radio broadcasts, but educational or awareness information that needs to be detailed and comprehensive will always require printed documents in places with no access to Internet. It is essential that Fisheries departments and other national and regional partners ensure the distribution of the documents they request.

21. Yet many bulletins and reports are produced for an audience that has access to computers and Internet. The cost of printed publications has sharply increased in recent years, particularly the cost related to shipping. With the fast increasing access to Internet in the Pacific Islands region, FAME propose to increasingly distribute documents and specialised information bulletins in electronic form only and save shipping costs at the benefit of content production.

How can we facilitate the access to FAME digital fisheries-related information?

22. While the Digital Library has allowed a lot better access to digital copies of FAME-produced documents — if nothing else, by gathering all documents in one place — its access via the general SPC website remains difficult, particularly for newcomers. Work for the development of a totally new version of its website has been engaged by SPC. It should lead to a lot more user-friendly website, as navigation has been identified as the main weakness of the actual SPC website. In the meantime, the very good indexation of FAME digital library contents by main search engines such as Google ensures an easy direct access to FAME documents. Monitoring of our website hits and downloads indicates that it is the most often-used route to our documents.

23. FAME has so far made little use of social networks or new communication tools such as smartphones. These media would probably of little use to disseminate scientific or technical information, but could be very helpful to communicate about the availability of this information on FAME webpages, and lead to it. This is an avenue FAME intends to explore in coming months.

24. Providing information to a targeted audience is a long process with many steps. FAME has a built-up a good reputation for the quality and relevance of the information it produces. It has made great efforts to make this information widely and easily available. But it still needs to improve in two domains in particular: ensure that the information reaches the targeted audience, particularly in remote places, and better communicate about the availability of the information it produces.