

Managing people, not fish, in tuna industries

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Should fisheries managers know about human rights, gender equity and social inclusion, and are these relevant to their work? The *Pacific Handbook for Human Rights, Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Tuna Industries* suggests that these factors, which are about the *humans* involved in fishing and processing, rather than *fish stocks*, is very much a responsibility for fisheries managers.

During 2021, a group of researchers and consultants worked on a *Pacific Handbook for Human Rights, Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Tuna Industries*. This project started as a module in the 2021 version of the *Pacific Handbook for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture*.² Tuna industries, however, are very different from coastal fisheries, and because there are many other issues to consider, it was decided to produce a separate handbook specifically for tuna. The *Tuna Handbook* also builds on a report by World Wide Fund for Nature *Mainstreaming in Fiji Offshore Tuna Industry*.³

Sometimes, it is hard to see what fisheries managers can do about human rights and gender equity and social inclusion issues, especially since, arguably, the responsibility usually falls within the mandate of other arms of government (e.g. justice, labour, social welfare, women's affairs). However, as

government officials, fisheries managers are “duty bearers” who are legally obliged to protect and enforce human rights within their field of work. Moreover, other government agencies do not have the resources to learn about the specifics of tuna industries to be able to handle all of this work without the help of fisheries managers. Practically speaking, fisheries managers must collaborate with other government and non-governmental organisations to promote human rights, gender equity and social inclusion, to ensure that Pacific Islanders get the best possible development outcomes from their tuna resources.

The *Tuna Handbook* project is funded by the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership, involving collaboration between the Pacific Community and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. Researchers and consultants working on the *Tuna Handbook* include Kate Barclay, Aliti Vunisea, Megan Streeter and Senoveva Mauli. In addition, the Pacific Community has contracted fishing crew and human rights and civil society activists Patricia Kailola, Savenaca Kadavi, Luse Madigibuli and Taniela Ranadali to provide expert input into drafting the *Tuna Handbook*.

The *Tuna Handbook* will consist of nine modules, including an introduction and a section on social analysis, monitoring

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² <https://coastfish.spc.int/en/component/content/article/494-gender-equity-and-social-inclusion-handbook>

³ https://wwfasia.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/gender_mainstreaming_in_fiji_s_offshore_tuna_industry_report_1.pdf



and evaluation, followed by modules on human rights and gender equity and social inclusion at sea, within port areas, in processing plants, in small scale informal tuna fishing and marketing, in fisheries management and science, and in community engagement. The final module explores all of these issues in a case study in Fiji. In order to communicate these complex topics clearly, the *Tuna Handbook* will use plain English language, plenty of graphics, and examples from across the Pacific. It is inspired by and builds on the existing SPC *Pacific Handbook for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture*.

The *Tuna Handbook* explores human rights and gender equity and social inclusion as commitments, duties and responsibilities from a government angle, but also why and how private sector players can and must act to combat human rights abuses and to further enhance a safe environment where Pacific Island women and men can find decent employment opportunities.

Progress made towards the *Tuna Handbook* in 2021 included a round of inception meetings with staff from the Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and World Wide Fund Fiji, to see what should be included, and a list of stakeholders compiled to contact for their input. Then we talked with more than 50 people from different stakeholder groups, to listen to their perspectives on human rights and gender equity and social inclusion in tuna industries. A first draft of the *Tuna Handbook* was circulated among the author group, leading to a second draft completed at the end of 2021.



Moving fish bins around, Noro, Solomon Islands © Francisco Blaha

Continuing the efforts of engaging with the future audience from public and private sector actors, a socialisation workshop is planned for early 2022, and following input and comments from a wide range of stakeholders, the *Tuna Handbook* is likely to be finalised towards the third quarter of 2022.



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