

Gender and fisheries in Samoa Summary of key issues

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Introduction and purpose

This report is intended to inform gender-responsive approaches to fisheries and aquaculture programmes undertaken by the Pacific Community (SPC) in Samoa. It an internal SPC product that is expected to stimulate discussion in the Social Development Programme and the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division of SPC.

The paper provides a snapshot of available information and analysis about gender issues in fisheries. More research and analysis are, however, required to develop a comprehensive understanding of the multiple ways in which men and women participate in the sector across Samoa. Recommendations relevant to SPC, the Government of Samoa and development partners are provided at the end of the document.

Analysis of gender issues in fisheries and aquaculture requires an understanding of commitments, laws and policy frameworks that support gender-equitable management of fisheries and marine resources.¹ It also requires clarification of how men and women:

- are involved in fisheries;
- influence decisions about the use of fisheries resources:
- access those resources; and
- share the work, benefits and risks of using fisheries resources for different purposes

Identification of gaps in knowledge about these issues can guide future work and provide the rationale for research by government, development partners and communities themselves.

Methodology

This report was developed from a desk review of relevant available literature. That review drew heavily on recent SPC research done in Samoa, including a study of gender and aquaculture and an SPC/FAO country gender assessment of agricultural and rural sectors (CGA-ARS). Other recent research and reports from development partners and government were also scanned to assess the availability of additional information on gender and fisheries in Samoa.

This report provides a brief analysis of government commitments and policy frameworks that can support or constrain gender responsive fisheries and aquaculture development. It also summarises existing findings on the status, strengths and weaknesses of enabling environments for gender mainstreaming. This is relevant to the work of government, development partners and the private sector.

To inform further data collection, analysis and improved programming, the report highlights:

- gaps in knowledge and evidence;
- areas for further data collection and analysis;
- preliminary observations on gender responsive approaches; and
- recommendations for progressing gender mainstreaming in fisheries and aquaculture within SPC and the Government of Samoa.

Overview of gender issues in fisheries

The Fisheries Division of the Samoa Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has done some gender analysis and integration of gender issues into their work. A recent study and gender analysis of aquaculture and fish reserves in Samoa involved managers and field staff undergoing gender analysis training with particular focus on conducting gender sensitive research in communities. The findings of the study elicited positive responses from both communities and government and has resulted in an interest in further analysis and more gender responsive planning and implementation of the Fisheries Division mandate.

The aquaculture study found that women seldom self-identify as aquaculture farmers or fishers, even though they are actively engaged in fish farm maintenance and post-harvest processing and marketing. They viewed this contribution to the family business as just one of the many tasks in their workday. Male family members were, therefore, often listed as the primary farmer, which led to men becoming the primary point of contact for information about training and available services.

¹ Fisheries and aquaculture include conservation and development and the use of fresh water and marine fisheries.

² Pacific Community (SPC) & United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO), 2019. Country gender assessment of agriculture and the rural sector in Samoa. Forthcoming.

An issue that must be considered in gender analyses of fisheries, aquaculture and coastal resource management is the amount of time women and men spend on reproductive and caregiving work in the home and community and how this affects the time they have available to engage in development activities, community decision-making forums, and productive work. This information is basic but fundamental to effective design and implementation of gender-responsive programmes and projects.

Guiding frameworks that support gender equality in the fisheries sector

The government of Samoa has made a number of commitments linked to gender equality in the fisheries sector.

At an international level, ratification of United Nations (UN) conventions means that Samoa has agreed to norms and standards for gender equality in decision-making and the economy. The Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women notes that rural women are often marginalised from control and management of natural resources and that, in some cases, special efforts are required to ensure that women benefit from resource conservation and development. Special measures may include design and implementation of strategies that "address discriminatory stereotypes, attitudes and practices which impede their rights to land and natural resources." Samoa has also ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biodiversity. Guiding bodies for these conventions have recognised that analysis of men's and women's roles in resource management, including management of rivers, reefs and oceans, is critical to making progress on the conventions.⁴

The Agriculture Sector Plan 2016–2020, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

The Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is responsible for managing advisory/extension services, coastal fisheries, oceanic fisheries and aquaculture. The ministry collaborates with the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD) through its Agriculture Sector Plan. The MWCSD is represented on the Sector Plan Steering Committee, as well as on two of the four technical working groups responsible for delivering strategic outcomes of the plan. These provide entry points for gender mainstreaming but the country gender assessment of agricultural and rural sectors found that the MWCSD does not have the staff or technical capacity to engage effectively in the technical working groups. As a result, there is currently little gender analysis being done in relation to the sector plan.

A review of the plan reveals opportunities for women in the fisheries sector, although these are not specifically articulated. To illustrate this, end of sector plan outcomes (ESPOs) are shown in column 1 of Table 1 and column 2 shows the importance of gender mainstreaming to achieve those outcomes.

Table 1: Importance of mainstreaming gender into the Agriculture Sector Plan

ESP0	Plan outcome	Why gender mainstreaming is important to achieve this outcome
1	Sector coordination improved and investment in food security and inclusive commercial agriculture / fisheries production systems increased	The Ministry of Women and Community Development plays a critical role in sector coordination, from the national to the village level. It acts as a coordination point between government and the Village Council through the <i>Pulenu'u</i> . There are various formal and informal groupings in Samoan communities, such as the <i>aualuma</i> (daughters born of the village) and youth groups that can be drawn on by the government and the private sector to support semi-commercial and commercial fisheries production.
2	An increased supply and consumption of competitively priced domestically produced food	Although women do not identify as farmers or fishers, they play a critical role in the fisheries sector. They maintain fish reserves, clean ponds, feed tilapia and sell mariculture value-added products, such as trochus, clams and seagrapes, on the roadside and at local markets.
3	A sustained increase in production, productivity, product quality, value-adding and marketing of agriculture and fisheries products	Women play an important role in product quality, value–adding and marketing of aquaculture, mariculture and inshore fisheries. Recent studies show that women clean fish and other mariculture products, cook and sell these value–added products to local schools, businesses and along the roadside throughout Savaii and Upolu.
4	Sustainable agricultural and fisheries resource management practices in place and climate resilience and disaster relief efforts strengthened	Based on findings of a recent study on gender and fisheries in Samoa, women play an important role in the community-based fisheries management programme run by MAF. Although Samoan men traditionally fish (spearfishing, line fishing) women also hold knowledge of fishing practices and fishing grounds that are now depleted of marine resources.

³ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. 2016. General Recommendation #34 on the Rights of Rural Women. http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/ Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_7933_E.pdf

⁴ Convention on Biodiversity. 2015–2020 Gender plan of action pocket guide: Summary and examples. https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/CBD-GenderPlanofAction-EN-WEB.pdf; See also the UNFCCC Introduction to gender and climate change and associated documents https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/the-big-picture/introduction-to-gender-and-climate-change.

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Corporate Plan 2016–2020

The MAF corporate plan identifies specific outputs to increase women's capacity and access to opportunities. The corporate plan also contains gender-sensitive activities and performance indicators in measuring the implementation of the Agriculture Sector Plan. These are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Examples of gender sensitive activities and indicators in the MAF Corporate Plan

Outcome area	Activity	Performance indictor
Outcome 1.1 A well-coordinated and implemented Agriculture Sector Plan (ASP)	Activity 1.1.8 Using a participatory, inclusive gender-sensitive approach, collect and regularly monitor data on ASP output and outcome indicators	Quarterly monitoring reports to the agriculture sector committee
Outcome 1.5: The MAF and relevant partner agencies have an appropriate capacity to fulfil their roles in implementing the ASP	Activity 1.5.2 Undertake a training needs analysis and deliver an appropriate training programme for relevant stakeholders in key ASP implementing agencies.	Gender disaggregated numbers of staff from relevant agencies completing training programmes

The Corporate Plan sets out the direction and priorities for MAF over a five-year period and it is therefore essential that activities and performance indicators to measure them are gender sensitive. The desk review of the Corporate Plan reveals that the MAF made an effort to ensure gender is mainstreamed into the plan (See Table 2). However, there are other outcome areas within the Corporate Plan that also include gender dimensions. An example is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Gender dimension of another outcome area

Outcome area	Activity	What is the gender dimension here?
Sustainable management of fisheries resources and control of fishing practices strengthened	4.4.2 Promote and strengthen environmentally friendly aquaculture/mariculture farming practices	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,

The Ministry also has a Coastal Fisheries Management Plan which may contain more specific guidance, but this was not available online and therefore was not consulted for this report.

The Fisheries Division mandate, focus areas and sector links appear to provide multiple entry points for gender mainstreaming that can be further developed.

Decision-making about management and use of fisheries and marine resources

The government supports community-based management of fisheries and marine resources and works with the traditional *matai*, or chiefly system of governance, at the village level. This model operates under the auspices of a village council comprised of *matai* from various village families. Women who are allowed to hold *matai* titles can sit on the councils but, in most cases, leadership is exclusively or very heavily male. This male dominated model of decision-making is grounded and upheld by Samoan culture and social norms. Making decision-making about fisheries resources more gender-equitable and inclusive requires culturally sensitive approaches that involve the community, as well as government extension staff, to assess priorities and recognise the value of the engagement of women and girls.

Coastal villages have village fisheries management advisory committees to implement plans developed in cooperation with the Fisheries Division. These committees also tend to be male dominated and they dictate what roles women and men will play in fisheries management and use. In the case of aquaculture and family fishponds, decisions are made within the household and are likely to be more equitable – although men tend to be the identified lead farmers.

Decision-making at the level of government and within the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is generally driven by sector plan priorities, corporate plan objectives and specific detailed plans. Design and inclusion of gender analysis in these plans is limited and they do not appear to consider social and cultural constraints to more extensive engagement of women.

Supporting more gender-responsive decision-making in government can be promoted in a number of ways, including provision of gender mainstreaming training, creation of gender focal points at senior levels and developing clear responsibilities for gender mainstreaming within the job descriptions or contracts of senior ministry staff. Monitoring the gender balance of senior staff is also a positive step, but it should not be assumed that staff, both women and men automatically understand the technical aspects of gender analysis and gender-responsive planning.

Women and men's roles in fisheries and aquaculture

"Gender roles vary across time, place and region according to changing values, practices and technologies. Gender roles and responsibilities are largely socially constructed and are the basis for the structure and organisation of women and men's differential relationships with their environments, the economy, their resource utilization patterns and strategies."5

Consultations between Fisheries Division staff and community members during the SPC research on gender and aquaculture highlight that women and men continue to have quite distinct roles and responsibilities, both within the household and in the community. Social norms and values reinforce these roles and hold them in place. While some women act more independently than others, and in some cases take the lead in aquaculture activities, there is an ongoing expectation that they must not abandon their roles as homemakers, mothers and 'village women'.

In aquaculture, women and men divide the work of tilapia fish farming. Men tend to do the heavier tasks of digging ponds and piping water, while women are more likely to be responsible for regular pond maintenance. Men and women feed and harvest the fish and women do most of the post-harvest processing. In other areas of aquaculture, such as managing marine reserves for giant clams, women and men also have gender specific responsibilities for (i) cleaning the reserve, which is mostly done by women and (ii) monitoring growth and harvesting, which is mostly done by men.

Women are also involved in other fisheries. Little recent information on community fisheries was found during the desk review for this research, but older studies by Pacific regional agencies and government staff indicate that women and children collect many species of shellfish, beche-de-mer, sea urchins, octopus, crabs and seaweed from the shore area at low tide.⁶ Women may also dive from canoes for urchins, beche-de-mer and seaweed. Women's fishing techniques tend to be more low-tech than men's and involve only basic tools and equipment. A study in 2001 found that women made up an estimated 18% of all village fishers and were responsible for approximately 10% of a community's fishing effort. Women were also found to be the main contributors to post-harvest processing of all village catches.⁷

Men have historically been more involved in artisanal and commercial fisheries activities, fishing from boats or diving with spears or spear guns. In addition, fisheries extension services have largely focused on supporting men to upgrade technologies and techniques to encourage commercial activities and stimulate economic growth.

The distinct roles, methods and knowledge used by women and men in their fishing activities indicate that they will have separate – but possibly overlapping – sets of knowledge and skills, and that they observe the environment differently. This highlights the importance of understanding gender roles and working with both male and female fishers to manage marine environments, monitor climate change and develop effective adaptation strategies.

Services and support for women and men engaged in fisheries and aquaculture

Implementing gender responsive programmes in rural areas is complex and constrained by social norms about women's rights to engage in decision-making. The hierarchical nature of Samoan society may also be a barrier and marginalise specific groups. To work within the existing socio-cultural context, avoid increasing women's workloads, and ensure there is no backlash requires careful programme design to ensure engagement with, and buy-in from, communities. Programmes that aim to increase incomes should also empower women and broaden their opportunities.

Fisheries initiatives have not to date clearly documented men and women's roles in fisheries, the amount of time they spend or the extent and regularity of their subsistence and artisanal catch. Disaggregation of data and qualitative information by sex is currently a gap. Improving data collection will help generate evidence that can be used to inform decision-making and project design. Such evidence is also critical in demonstrating to communities that women are important contributors to fisheries and that they have specific and valuable knowledge and expertise that can be tapped and further developed to enhance community and family well-being.

Government extension services

Extension officers from the Fisheries Division provide guidance and can support and, in some cases, facilitate more involvement of women. This is in line with the ministry's overall corporate plan and fisheries objectives. Fisheries officers may not, however, be comfortable about suggesting changes that can be perceived as challenging social norms and gender roles. Gender awareness and gender analysis training for extension workers have been identified as gap areas. Provision of training can assist officers to contextualise new approaches and demonstrate how engaging women in decision-making about fisheries can lead to increased food security, as well as habitat and management improvements that will benefit families and communities.

⁷ Passfield, K., A. Mulipola, and M. King. 2001. Profile of village fisheries in Samoa. http://pimrisregional.library.usp.ac.fj/gsdl/collect/moanare1/index/assoc/HASH5a2b. dir/doc.pdf



⁵ Williams, S.B., Hochet-Kinbongui, M. and Nauen, C.E. 2005. Gender, fisheries and aquaculture: Social capital and knowledge for the transition towards sustainable use of aquatic ecosystems. EU: Brussels, 32 p. https://www.genderaquafish.org/discover-gaf/glossary-of-terms/

⁶ Lambeth L. et al. 2002. An overview of the involvement of women in fisheries activities in Oceania. https://www.worldfishcenter.org/content/overview-involvement-women-fisheries-activities-oceania-0



Development partner initiatives

The government is working with development partners on a range of fisheries-related initiatives, including coastal management and establishment of marine reserves. SPC and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme are the main regional agencies operating in this space, although some work has been done on ocean management by Conservation International. SPC has undertaken the research on gender and aquaculture and the Country Gender Assessment but there does not appear to be much other work under way to promote gender-responsive fisheries projects. Ensuring accuracy about development partner-run fisheries programmes will require further consultation and mapping.

Fisheries-based employment, small-scale business and income generation

Aquaculture and artisanal fisheries provide income-generation opportunities to families who sell products in the main markets or on roadsides. Women are involved in some harvesting, most post-harvest processing and small-scale marketing, while men tend to work in deep-sea fishing, and tourism-related sport fishing. There is a lack of information on brokers or intermediaries who buy fish or shellfish for resale.

Opportunities have been developed to link eco-tourism to marine reserves. Families or women's groups run some of these ventures and offer various attractions and services, including accommodation and food services, snorkelling in reserves, and hands-on participation in conservation aspects of reserve management. It is not clear if these initiatives receive business services support or technical advice from any civil society groups or international partners.

Gender responsive approaches to fisheries and aquaculture

Gender responsive approaches to fisheries and aquaculture are those that reflect and respond to men's and women's gender roles, their interests and the constraints they experience. Developing gender-responsive approaches requires collection and analysis of information and evidence about what men and women do and what resources they control and have access to. Building an evidence-base and sharing that evidence among stakeholders is a critical step.

Gender-responsive approaches also seek to ensure that women and men share and control decision-making and benefits in an equitable manner. Such approaches must also recognise and analyse contextual issues, such as socio-cultural norms and workloads to ensure that interventions do not cause harm to anyone. Understanding that women carry a higher burden of reproductive and caregiving work than do men is important when designing effective and inclusive projects.

The SPC gender and aquaculture research emphasised that implementation of gender-responsive approaches in the fisheries sector are constrained by a weak enabling environment. Weaknesses include: (i) lack of gender analysis expertise; (ii) limited sharing of skills and information between the MAF and the MWCSD; and (iii) absence of coordinated capacity development between ministries

While the MWCSD is the identified catalyst for gender mainstreaming in government, it lacks expertise in fisheries and aquaculture and does not have enough staff to support all line the ministries and divisions in their work. Similarly, extension staff in MAF have only received basic gender awareness training in the course of the gender and aquaculture research. Sector coordination plans facilitate interactions but moving from discussing issues to implementing gender-responsive approaches has been a challenge.

There is a need for division-by-division training to: (i) support gender analysis in the context of fisheries and aquaculture; (ii) develop gender indicators linked to all technical outcomes in Fisheries Division plans; (iii) document information and lessons about how gender roles and divisions of labour are relevant to more effective implementation of fisheries objectives; and (iv) create an organisational culture that sees the inclusion of women in decision-making and training as a normal and required way of working.

Table 4 highlights the strengths and weaknesses in the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming in the MAF. These findings are a result of consultations with selected staff in the ministry during the development of the FAO/SPC Country Gender Assessment of the Agriculture and the Rural Sector in Samoa in March 2018. They are not necessarily representative of the views of all ministry staff.

Table 4: Enabling environment assessment for Ministry of Agriculture

Enabling environ- ment criteria	Indicative findings			
Commitment at lead- ership level	Key commitments to gender equality are reflected in the Agriculture Sector Plan 2016—2020 that guides the work of the Agriculture Sector. These include:			
	 increased engagement of women in rural livelihoods, more opportunities for women to earn incomes and build capacity to manage projects; commitment to gathering sex and age disaggregated data; 			
	recognition of the cross-cutting role of MWCSD in achieving ASP objectives; and			
	the Corporate Plan commits to gender balance in training and extension service delivery.			
	Absence of a ministry or divisional gender policy or gender focal points to help implement the commitments in the ASP and the Corporate Plan			
Organisational culture	Staff within the Fisheries Division are willing to address gender issues.			
and internal willing-	The ministry is close to equal numbers of women and men in senior positions.			
ness to address gender issues	MAF officials are now making more effort to engage women in training activities.			
ISSUES	MAF recognises the cross-cutting role of the MWCSD.			
	• As a result of the equal numbers of women in senior positions in MAF and the ongoing efforts to be inclusive in the approach, many officials are of the view that 'gender is not an issue.' This reflects a lack of understanding about the technical nature of gender analysis.			
	• The presence of MWCSD representatives on the Agriculture Sector Steering Committee creates a false perception that accountability for gender mainstreaming is with MWCSD, rather than MAF, including the Fisheries Division.			
Accountability mech-				
anisms and systems to enforce commit- ments to gender mainstreaming	Lack of responsibility within MAF for accountability to the commitments to gender equality in the ASP. Seen as a job for MWCSD.			
Technical capacity to identify and address	• MAF officials rated their technical capacity for gender analysis as low to medium. There has been little training on gender in agriculture or fisheries.			
gender issues	MAF has no gender focal points and there are no individuals accountable for the implementation of gender commitments			
	There is no capacity for gender analysis to ensure the strategic implementation of commitments in the ASP.			

Potential for strengthening gender mainstreaming

Engagement between the Fisheries Division and SPC for the gender and aquaculture study indicates that there is willingness and potential to improve gender mainstreaming in fisheries and aquaculture. This can be done at multiple levels, including in policies, by improved sector coordination and capacity development, and by delivery of extension services. Coordination, collaboration and information sharing between the Government of Tonga, regional agencies and development partners can further support good practice and the generation of evidence about what works and what does not work.

Facilitating links and opportunities for joint work between MWCSD and the Fisheries Division will build capacity on both sides and increase the ability of MWCSD to advocate for quality gender analysis of fisheries issues. It will concurrently transfer skills in gender analysis to the Fisheries Division and support staff to champion the equitable engagement of women in all aspects of resource management, fishing and aquaculture.

Additionally, there is scope to link post-harvest fisheries and aquaculture processing to initiatives currently operating in villages across Samoa. Women in Business Development Incorporated supports families to develop business skills and operate natural resource-based businesses. It provides training on equitable decision-making, quality assurance, product handling, marketing and financial literacy. It also develops and manages links with intermediaries or brokers who can buy products from villages for resale. This is an area for further exploration.

Recommendations

Strengthening the enabling environment can be done in five key areas as listed in the following recommendations. They are relevant to a range of development actors, including The Government of Tonga, multilateral and regional agencies, civil society organisations, donors and international conservation non-governmental organisations.

Data and evidence

- Promote improved collection of sex-disaggregated data across all areas of Fisheries Division work.
- Regularly and systematically document men's and women's roles and their contribution to coastal fisheries and associated
 value-chain activities.
- Conduct gender analysis of access and control over productive resources (technologies, investments, land, transport, communication, extension services, etc.) and benefits (incomes, knowledge, employment, etc.) from coastal fisheries. The analysis should include formal and informal governance systems (how decisions are being made, implemented or enforced, and by who) and the type and level of participation of women in those systems.
- Collaborate with ministries responsible for small business and rural development to collect and document evidence on women's use of fisheries and marine resources in area such as post-harvest processing and sales, and tourism.
- Work with relevant regional agencies, the UN, and non-governmental organisations to analyse data and evidence in the context of natural resource management and women's economic empowerment.

Technical capacity

- Work with government to provide gender analysis training for senior staff and extension officers. Use the training to develop
 and implement strategic approaches to integrate gender considerations into the Fisheries Division and sector policies, planning and implementation.
- Provide data analysis training to translate information collected on women's and men's fisheries-related activities into evidence that will inform policies, plans and activities.

Organisational culture and accountability

- Provide technical assistance to MAF to develop a sector or ministry gender policy.
- Identify gender issues to be discussed in high-level meeting agendas nationally and regionally. Use these meetings to demonstrate evidence about the benefits of gender-responsive approaches to increase effective implementation of government programmes and benefit families and communities.
- Develop a core set of gender indicators linked to high-level planning outcomes that can be adapted across all sections of the Fisheries Division.
- Provide technical support to monitor and evaluate indicators on a regular basis and request regional assistance to document lessons learned.
- Integrate responsibilities for gender mainstreaming into job descriptions of senior fisheries staff and extension officers.

Coordination and collaboration

- Support increased cross-sector coordination and collaboration on gender mainstreaming to: (i) create more efficient learning and capacity development; and (ii) share lessons learned and good practice.
- Where possible, coordinate SPC and government field visits and support gender specialists from MWCSD to go to the field with fisheries officers. This can create project efficiencies and demonstrate synergies to village councils. Benefits include increased efficiencies gained by women's involvement in fisheries and aquaculture, family well-being, food security, economic development, improved livelihoods and disaster risk reduction.
- Invite MWCSD officers responsible for gender mainstreaming to fisheries workshops to increase their knowledge of sector issues.
- Support the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to coordinate and share information with national and regional civil society organisations working on gender-responsive climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction projects.

Monitoring, evaluation and documentation of what works and what does not

- Facilitate annual or biennial reflection meetings to monitor progress, examine and evaluate data and evidence, and assess progress.
- Document good practices and lessons learned regarding women and fisheries in Samoa and disseminate this nationally and regionally in support of improved gender-responsive resource management, technical support, and investments.



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