



Third Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

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Information paper

Progress update on the implementation of USAID OurFish OurFuture activity in the Pacific region

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Purpose of Brief

1. This information brief presents an update on the USAID-funded OurFish OurFuture activity, with the intent of informing the Third Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD3) stakeholders in the region of the strategic direction of the activity, its implementation status, and the various institutional partnerships that supports the activity.

Project Profile

Activity Title:	OurFish OurFuture
Activity Start and End Dates	October 4, 2021 – October 3, 2026
Implementing partner (prime):	Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island
Sub-awardees:	World Wildlife Fund (WWF), The Locally Managed Marine Area Network (LMMA), University of the South Pacific (USP)
Funding agency:	U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Geographic Coverage	Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu.

Project summary

2. Coastal fisheries are critical to the health and prosperity of coastal communities in the Pacific Island countries. Consumption rates of aquatic foods in the Pacific are among the highest in the world. Pacific habitats supporting coastal fisheries such as mangroves, coral reefs, and sea grasses are home to some of the highest marine biodiversity in the world. Coastal fisheries, biodiversity and the associated wellbeing of coastal communities are threatened by unsustainable fishing levels and practices and the degradation of coastal habitats. The governance structures within which coastal fisheries are managed, particularly at the sub-national and community levels, lack sufficient resources for implementation, which contributes to low levels of monitoring, control, surveillance and compliance, as well as policy support from both national and community level rules and regulations.
3. The OurFish OurFuture (OurFish) activity is a five-year (2021-2026) cooperative agreement awarded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) with the overall goal to address community, national and ecosystem level drivers of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing that are degrading coastal fisheries and biodiversity and negatively impacting local livelihood food stability and maritime security in the Pacific Island region. Key strategic areas (SA) results are associated with the activity goal:
 - SA 1: Improve sustainable coastal fisheries management by creating the enabling conditions for an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM) in and across Melanesia and Micronesia.

- SA 2: Enhance monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) in coastal fisheries to inform EAFM and reduce IUU fishing, thus improving sovereignty, security and sustainability.
 - SA 3: Demonstrate private sector partnerships to promote sustainable supply chains to develop and scale PSPs to mobilize coastal resource supply chains in contributing to the growth of a Blue Economy.
 - SA 4: Strengthen Resilience and Meaningful engagement of marginalized actors in coastal fisheries management
4. To achieve this vision, OurFish works across six countries in Melanesia (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) and Micronesia (Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Marshall Islands). The activity is implemented by the Coastal Resources Centre (CRC) at the University of Rhode Island (URI) in collaboration with a team of core implementing partners namely the Locally Managed Marine Area Network (LMMA), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the University of the South Pacific (USP). The project implements its activities in the countries through key country partners namely OneReef in Palau, Conservation Society of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) in RMI, WWF Solomon Islands for Solomon Islands, WWF PNG for PNG and Vanuatu Fisheries Department for Vanuatu.
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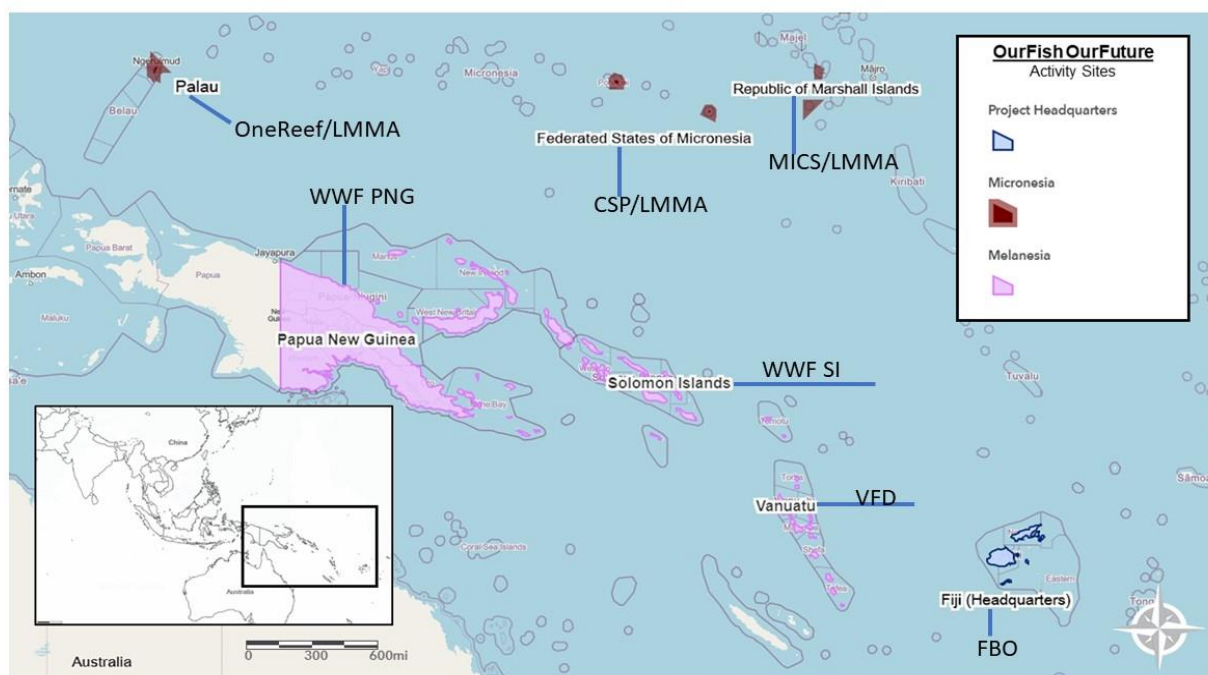


Figure 1. OurFish OurFuture geographic coverage including Micronesian and Melanesian country activity sites and the project headquarters location.

Implementation status

6. The project commenced in October 4, 2021, with activities beginning in early 2022. During Year 1, much of the focus was on startup operations, national inception activities, establishing governance structure of the project such as national advisory committees and project advisory committee and stakeholder consultations to identify key issues post-Covid and fine tune the OurFish results chain and Theory of Change (TOC). Since October 1, 2022, at the start of Year 2 of the OurFish activity, the primary focus has been on strategic entry points and activities where OurFish can achieve key results, demonstrate success, showcase innovations, and build momentum. Several key areas implemented align with the five objectives of the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management: 2021-2025:

Improve Sustainable Coastal Fisheries Management - (Objective 2, 3 & 4)

7. Efforts here have focused on enabling actions to support an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM). In the Solomon Islands, WWF focused on engaging the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) and Isabel Province Government in drafting an Isabel Province Fisheries Ordinance to support coastal fisheries management and drafting new CBFM plans for three communities (Egotitovo, Samboro & Pienuna). In PNG, WWF developed CBFM plans for four communities in the Southern region of Madang Province (PNG). In FSM, CSP developed Community Action Plans for Nahtik and Palikir communities. In Palau, LMMA Network and OneReef completed an EAFM stakeholders consultation for Palau that has guided a shift in focus to community livelihoods, particularly around domestic pelagic fisheries.

Enhance monitoring control and surveillance in coastal fisheries (Objective 2 & 3)

8. Efforts here have focused on monitoring and capacity building. OurFish assembled and trained enumerators on the use of AI-assisted smart sampling stations at Honiara market outlets serving SnapFish (Solomon Islands), market locations in Shefa and Tafea provinces (Vanuatu), and the MISCO market in Majuro (RMI). In FSM, CSP organised a two-day MCS train-the-trainer for Community Conservation Officers and municipal police, while OneReef Palau conducted an inhouse training for their staff on safety, safety, surveillance and enforcement. In RMI, the LMMA Network and MICS developed and piloted training materials for a Community Justice System in Ajeltake, an innovation that aims to provide a legal framework that directs the management, operation and dispute resolution process for fisheries conservation sites in a way that can be implemented and enforced by communities under their traditional systems, which increases compliance and allows communities to engage with the state legal and management institutions more selectively.

Private Sector Partnerships contributing to sustainable supply chains (Objectives 1 & 2)

9. Efforts here have focused on capacity building to establish financial foundations for community livelihoods. WWF Solomon Islands established savings clubs and undertook financial inclusion training for two communities, Penuina & Sambora in the Western Province. In PNG, Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups were organised through WWF PNG for communities in Sumkar and Bogia Districts, where they get to be registered and can open bank accounts through commercial banks such as MiBank. A lot of effort through preliminary discussions and financial literacy trainings was provided to VSLA group to ensure that they are commercially viable.

Strengthen resilience and engagement of marginalised actors in coastal fisheries (Objective 4)

10. OurFish recognises the importance of communities' using climate information in resilience planning and implementing risk reducing actions, and in March 2023, a climate and community fishers learning exchange workshop was organized by WWF for participants from the Solomon Islands and PNG. In the Solomon Islands, WWF conducted GEDSI awareness training for communities in the Western Province, and URI and Vanuatu Peace Corps conducted a gender train-the-trainers workshop for the Vanuatu Fisheries Department (VFD) to strengthen skills for gender inclusion at the national level. Lastly, WWF provided two financial inclusion trainings in Isabel and Western Provinces of the Solomon Islands as part of the established Savings Clubs where women, youths, and other vulnerable groups attended.

Year 3 Activities Outlook and moving forward

11. Moving forward, the OurFish OurFuture will implement a set of integrated strategies for its activities for Year 3 which covers the period of October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. Six key results are identified for scaling our approaches, tools, and target outcomes:
 - Data and traditional knowledge increasingly used for EAFM decisions: For instance, OurFish will focus on continuing to demonstrate and scale data collection and analysis systems that provides communities and provincial access to community level data for management decisions. The Fishery Artificial Intelligence Sampling Technology (FAST) was piloted in Vanuatu, RMI, and Solomon Islands and this work will continue to be validated in Year 3 to enable scaling in Y4-5. In addition, OurFish will continue to scale and enable adoption of the Spawning Potential Survey (SPS) methodology through its integrated CBFM approach and by increasing access to key information, management guidance, and other resources through the SPS Knowledge hub and mobile app/online database.
 - Nested EAFM bodies increasingly adopt and implement effective harvest controls and IUU fishing reduction measures: This key result area will include working with subnational authorities to adopt and implement controls and measures through updated policies, regulations, and plans, as well as joint agreements to support enforcement. For example, WWF will work to pass fisheries ordinances in the Solomon Islands and Ward Development Plans in PNG, while partners in the Micronesia sub-region will work to update municipal and state plans to incorporate EAFM principles and align with national PAN frameworks.
 - Community management plans supported and in place: This key result area will be achieved through developing regionally relevant guidance materials and tools on the integrated EAFM tools, approaches, and best practices that partners are piloting and scaling.
 - MCS leaders networked and coordination and capacity strengthened: One of the areas of focus will be on coordinating with existing regional efforts to tailor and deliver MCS trainings developed by SPC and USP, particularly short-term MCS courses designed to suit needs at the community level.
 - Private sector engaged in management decisions: Continued focus will be on securing economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resources and/or biodiversity conservation by engaging financial institutions such as the PNG National Superannuation Fund (NASFUND) in capacity building for coastal communities undergoing EAFM planning.



- Diverse livelihoods established and strengthened: A key emphasis will be on guiding scaling of partners models for developing diverse livelihoods including those that supports women, youth and disadvantaged groups. For instance, development of a training modules on financial literacy and inclusion that can be applicable to both subregions in Melanesia and Micronesia.
12. The success and sustainability of OurFish in its Year 3 of operation will rely on its ability to expand and leverage activities through collaboration with organisations, agencies, stakeholders and other partners in the Pacific region. The program will pursue such opportunities to strengthen its services to the six Pacific Island countries of Melanesia and Micronesia it is operating in, as well as share learnings and knowledge to the region through regional forums.