Small island developing states of the Southwest Pacific

Robert Gillett
FAO consultant, Policy and Planning Division, Fisheries
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INTRODUCTION

This review of marine capture fisheries management in the small island developing states of the Southwest Pacific is a component of FAO's project on the State of the World Marine Capture Fisheries Management. The overall goal of the project is to provide an informative reference to decision-makers, fishery managers and stakeholders.

Information was obtained from a variety of sources, including interviews with senior staff of the government fisheries agencies and regional organizations, fishery agency annual reports, other recent documentation, regional reviews of fisheries in the Pacific Islands and the author's experience in the region.

For the purpose of this review, the Small Island Developing States of the Pacific Islands are considered synonymous with the 14 independent Pacific Island nations. These countries, their land and their exclusive economic zone (EEZ) areas are given in Table 1.

In general terms, the dispersed nature of the region's land among this vast area of water has several consequences for fisheries management:

- In regard to inshore resources, the presence of numerous patches of land and their associated coastal and coral reef areas – separated by large distances and sometimes abyssal depths – means that many species with limited larval dispersal can be effectively managed as unit stocks.
- On the other hand, management of shared stocks of highly migratory species such as tunas can only be effective if carried out on a multi-country basis.
- The presence of extensive areas of international waters (high seas) among the region's EEZs greatly complicates the region's fishery management efforts.

Some historical perspective is required to appreciate the present inshore fisheries management situation. For many centuries Pacific Islanders have recognized that

TABLE 1
The Pacific Island countries

State/ territory	Land area (km²)	EEZ area (km²)
Cook Islands	180	1 830 000
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	702	2 978 000
Fiji	18 376	1 290 000
Kiribati	726	3 550 000
Marshall Islands	720	2 131 000
Nauru	21	320 000
Niue	258	390 000
Palau	500	629 000
Papua New Guinea (PNG)	461 690	3 120 000
Samoa	2 934	120 000
Solomon Islands	29 785	1 340 000
Tonga	696	700 000
Tuvalu	26	900 000
Vanuatu	12 189	680 000
Total	**528 803**	**19 978 000**

some form of management is necessary to ensure sustainability of fisheries resources. In former times, traditional management of coastal resources was undertaken by most coastal or resource-owning communities and appears to have been reasonably successful. In recent years, however, serious problems in the management of inshore fisheries resources have arisen. The local traditional leaders' authority has been eroded while the threats to the resources (over-harvesting, destructive fishing, pollution and a wide range of land-based threats) have increased.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

In most Pacific Island countries the overarching objectives of fisheries management are set out in each country's basic fisheries law. In general, there is a trend in the more

TABLE 2
National fisheries laws

	Main fisheries laws	Responsibility for fisheries management	Objectives of fisheries management as stated in the law (general, fishery-specific)
Cook Islands	Marine Resources Act 1989; Ministry of Marine Resources Act 1984	Minister and Secretary of Marine Resources	It is required that each fisheries plan specify the objectives to be achieved.
Federated States of Micronesia	Marine Resources Act of 2002 (Title 24)	National Oceanic Resources Management Authority (NORMA) and state governments	It is required that three general objectives are specified.
Fiji	The Fisheries Act (Cap. 158)	Minister	Not stated.
Kiribati	Fisheries Act 1978 (Cap.33)	Minister and Chief Fisheries Officer	General objectives must specify that fisheries resources be exploited to the full for the benefit of Kiribati.
Marshall Islands	Marine Resources Act 1997	Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority	It is required that four general objectives for fisheries management be specified; each specific management plan must specify the objectives to be achieved in the management and development of the fishery.
Nauru	Fisheries Act 1997 (No. 18 of 1997)	Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority, subject to policy directions of the Minister	Fisheries strategies drawn up for specific fisheries must specify management objectives.
Niue	Domestic Fishing Act l995	Cabinet and Director of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Not stated.
Palau	Title 27 of the Palau National Code,[1]; Marine Protection Act of 1994	Ministry of Resources and Development; Local governments	Not stated in Title 27.
Papua New Guinea	Fisheries Management Act 1998	Minister, the National Fisheries Authority, and its Managing Director	General "objectives and principles" are specified in the Act; the fisheries-specific management plans must indicate the objectives to be achieved.
Samoa	Fisheries Act 1988	Minister and Director of the Department of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries	The Director may "propose management and development measures designed to obtain the maximum benefits from the fishery resources for the people of Samoa, both present and future".
Solomon Islands	Fisheries Act 1998	The Minister and Director of Fisheries	General objectives are given in the law; fisheries-specific management plans are required to give the objectives to be achieved.
Tonga	Fisheries Act 1989[2]	The Minister and Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries	A general objective is given; each fishery plan must indicate the objectives to be achieved in the management.
Tuvalu	Fisheries Ordinance 1978	Minister and the Fisheries Officer	Not stated.
Vanuatu	Fisheries Act 1982	Minister and Director of Fisheries	Not stated.

[1] There are reports (Pacnews, October 2003) that a new fisheries law was passed in September 2003

[2] The Fisheries Management Act 2001 was passed by the Tongan Parliament and received Royal Assent, but has not yet been gazetted.

recent legislation to articulate management objectives. In countries with older fisheries laws, the emphasis is often on the development of fisheries and consequently, fisheries management and associated objectives receive less attention.

It can be seen from Table 2 that about one-third of the national fisheries laws do not contain fisheries management objectives and that these laws are all more than 20 years old. In these cases, overarching objectives can often be obtained from national development plans and annual reports of the fisheries management agencies. In Fiji, for example, the broad objectives of government management interventions in the fisheries sector are suggested in the mission statement of the Fisheries Department in its annual report:

> *[…] to provide sustainable management and development of the nation's fishery with the aim to create employment, increase foreign exchange earnings, and improve the standards of the rural people through capture fisheries development and a well-coordinated support service program.*

Many of the newer national fisheries laws require that fisheries management plans indicate the objectives to be achieved – about half of the Pacific Island countries have this legal feature.

The original dates of the national fisheries laws are given in Table 2. Half of the countries have laws that are more than ten years old. Most of the laws, especially those dating from or before the 1980s, have been amended multiple times. Papua New Guinea (PNG), Fiji, Cook Islands, Tonga and Palau have drafted new fisheries laws, which are now being considered at the national political level.

The period of time required to change a fisheries law is important for fisheries management purposes. Deliberation on the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) law started in 1996, which was passed by Congress in early 2002. Deliberation on the Tonga law started in 1997, and came into force in late 2004

Countries of the region have a variety of external sources of expertise in fisheries legislation, including the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), FAO and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The similarity in the content of fisheries legislation between the various Pacific Island countries is partly due to the fact that countries often face the same problems and legal issues with respect to their legislation, and that a small number of legal specialists have drafted most of the national fisheries laws, several of whom have worked on legislation for more than one such agency.

Recent international fisheries management norms/mandates such as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, UN Fish Stocks Agreement are not major features of the fisheries legislation of the region. Although concepts embodied in these international agreements may be promoted through the fisheries laws of some Pacific Island countries, no specific mention of these agreements occurs in the fisheries laws in the region, with the exception of FSM's Marine Resources Act of 2002 which cites the UN Fish Stocks Agreement.

There are some cases where non-fisheries legislation has major impacts on the objectives of fisheries management:

- The Social Justice Act passed by Fiji's Parliament in December 2001 has had an effect on fisheries management: promotion of affirmative action for indigenous Fijians is now an objective of fisheries management.
- The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Article IX, states that the national government has the power to regulate the ownership, exploration, and exploitation of natural resources within the marine space of the Federated States of Micronesia beyond 12 miles from island baselines. Within the 12-mile zones the states also have this power, including the establishment of any objectives for fisheries management. Because of this national/state arrangement, government interventions in the fisheries sector tend to be oriented to fisheries development in the 12-mile zones, while in the EEZ, the generation of government revenue in the form of access fees for foreign fishing activity is the primary objective.

In addition to national fishery management policy articulated in the legislation, specific national fisheries policy documents have been prepared in some Pacific Island countries, often at the urging of donors. PNG, FSM and the Marshall Islands have prepared such policy papers.

The first experience of some countries at formally establishing fisheries policies and articulating management goals has been the recent process of formulating tuna management plans. Since 1999 FFA and the Canadian government have assisted most countries in the region in producing such plans. Other agencies, including the Australian Agency for International Development and the Asian Development Bank, have recognized the benefits of developing such documents and have also promoted tuna management plans in a few countries.

At the regional level, several organizations are directly or peripherally involved in ocean management. The activities of FFA, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, the Forum Secretariat and the University of the South Pacific all to some degree touch on ocean management. To better coordinate the management policies of the various regional organizations, a regional meeting was held in February 2004 to address a regional ocean policy.[1]

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The fisheries laws of the various Pacific Island countries all indicate an entity or officeholder responsible for fisheries management. Table 2 shows the individuals or agencies so specified. In most of the countries the minister and a senior public servant share the responsibility for important decisions in fisheries management matters. In four countries (FSM, the Marshall Islands, Nauru and PNG), a statutory authority has the primary management powers.

With respect to enforcement of fisheries laws, the typical situation in the countries of the region is that fisheries officers and police officers are authorized by the Minister. In countries with military personnel, such as Tonga, PNG and Fiji, they are authorized to enforce fisheries laws, but in the case of Fiji, only in the EEZ.

There is a range of jurisdiction schemes for the entities responsible for fisheries management in the various Pacific Island countries. On the one extreme, in FSM, the one national and the four state management agencies function almost like five sovereign countries in their respective geographic areas in fisheries management affairs. On the other extreme, in Tonga, the ownership of all fisheries waters is vested in the King and the government's Ministry of Fisheries does not share jurisdiction over fisheries matters with other government agencies or different levels of government. In general, there is a trend throughout the region for national fisheries agencies to recognize the management jurisdiction of traditional village-level authorities in inshore areas and provide support to those authorities, rather than have the agencies themselves making direct management interventions.

In several countries the legal framework for fisheries management is influenced by non-fisheries specific legislation. This seems to occur most often through the establishment of parallel systems of management in which environmental agencies have some jurisdiction over some marine species and/or marine habitats. The national constitutions of three countries have provisions that alter the legal framework such as the creation of open access (Tonga, Samoa) and mutually exclusive national/state jurisdiction (FSM).

STATUS OF FISHERIES IN THE REGION

There are two broad categories of marine fisheries resources in the Pacific Islands: resources in coastal/inshore areas and resources in the offshore zone. The coastal/

[1] Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum (PIROF), 2-6 February, 2004.

inshore resources comprise a large number species of finfish, invertebrates and marine plants. An FAO study in Samoa – a country which does not have the largest species diversity in the region – showed that the subsistence marine fisheries make use of 500 species. It is estimated that the commercial inshore catch is made up of reef and deep slope fish (43 percent of total weight), coastal pelagics (18 percent), trochus/green-snail/pearl-shell (9 percent), crustaceans (8 percent), beche-de-mer (7 percent) and estuarine fish (6 percent). A vast number of fisheries occur in the inshore areas of the islands of the region, most of which can be categorized as subsistence or small-scale commercial fisheries.

The offshore resources are almost exclusively tuna, of which four species provide the vast majority of the catch: skipjack (59 percent by weight), (*Thunnus albacares*) yellowfin (32 percent), (*Thunnus obesus*) bigeye (5 percent) and albacore (4 percent). These resources support three main fisheries: the tuna purse seine fishery, the tuna longline fishery and the tuna pole/line fishery. Gillett *et al.* (2001) state that the Pacific Islands region is presently the most important tuna fishing area of the world. About one-third of all tuna in the world come from the Pacific Islands, and the region's tuna fisheries dwarf those of the other three major tuna fishing areas, both in volume and value. Within the region, tuna fishing is the most important type of fishing, producing about ten times the amount of fish produced by all the other fisheries of the region combined.

In general, the inshore fisheries are heavily fished and often show signs of over-exploitation, especially: (i) in areas close to population centres; (ii) for high-value benthic invertebrates; and (iii) for fishery products in demand by the rapidly growing Asian economies. The inshore fisheries are also negatively affected by habitat degradation, which occurs from destructive fishing practices, urbanization, siltation from mining/logging and competing uses of the coastal zone.

In the offshore fisheries the major tuna stocks are not believed to be biologically over-exploited at present. On the contrary, SPC scientists believe that present skipjack catches could be increased. There is, however, some evidence for a declining trend in bigeye catch rates.

If a fishery is defined as the activity of a group of fishers targeting the same specified stocks and using similar gear, then there are very few examples in the Pacific Islands where the regional totals (volume and value) of particular fisheries have been estimated.[2] Alternatively, there have been exercises in which fisheries have been combined into aggregate categories and the volume/value of these categories have been calculated nationally and compared regionally. The most recent exercise was carried out by the Asian Development Bank in late 2001 for 1999 (see Table 3 and Figure 1 for the results).

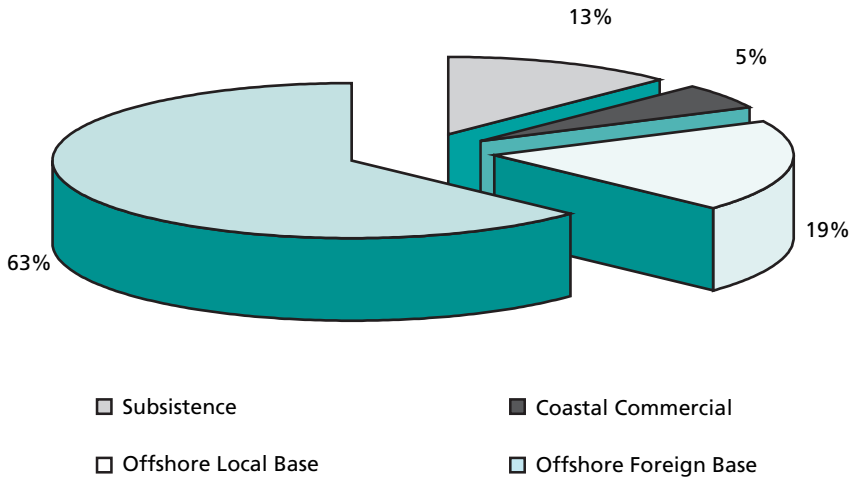
Each Pacific Island country uses a slightly different methodology for calculating the contribution of the fishing sector to gross domestic product (GDP) (Gillett and Lightfoot, 2001). The calculations for most countries are not based on particular fisheries, but rather on composite categories of fisheries, which are mainly different in each country. In Tonga, for example, the fishing sector GDP contribution is calculated as a sum of the value added from market fishing, non-market fishing and export fishing. Fishing sector contributions to the GDP of the Pacific Island nations are given in Table 4.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

In the Pacific Island region, with 14 different political systems, types of fisheries administrations, levels of resource endowment and a host of other factors, it is difficult to generalize about the process in which management measures are developed

[2] The trochus fishery of the Pacific Islands is perhaps the only case where such information is readily available.

FIGURE 1
Regional total volume of fisheries production, late 1990s



Source: Gillett and Lightfoot, 2001

TABLE 3
Volumes and values of Pacific Island fisheries, late 1990s

	Volume (tonnes)					Value (US$ '000s)				
	Subsistence fishing	Coastal commercial fishing	Offshore local fishing	Offshore foreign fishing	Total	Subsistence fishing	Coastal commercial fishing	Offshore local fishing	Offshore foreign fishing	Total
Cook Islands	795	80	75	300	1 250	1 164	10 320	397	407	12 288
Fiji	21 600	9 320	5 500	917	37 337	24 675	15 232	25 640	555	66 101
FSM	5 000	5 000	2 499	127 000	139 499	10 000	14 500	12 495	144 000	180 995
Kiribati	10 000	6 000	0	132 000	148 000	7 890	6 310	0	132 258	146 458
Marshall Islands	2 800	444	0	33 217	36 461	3 836	973	0	50 000	54 809
Nauru	110	315	50	41 000	41 475	332	1 118	250	36 774	38 473
Niue	194	12	0	2	208	167	51	0	4	222
Palau	1 250	865	2 500	124	4 739	2 500	2 595	12 500	270	17 865
PNG	26 000	5 500	50 500	85 000	167 000	20 227	21 394	44 344	75 074	161 039
Samoa	4 293	3 086	5 156	100	12 635	7 143	6 583	9 840	99	23 665
Solomon Islands	13 000	3 200	73 328	948	90 476	8 061	1 902	69 242	827	80 031
Tonga	2 863	4 173	800	45	7 881	3 922	10 856	3 676	104	18 628
Tuvalu	880	220	0	40 532	41 632	931	284	0	38 000	39 215
Vanuatu	2 700	230	0	118	3 048	3 975	682	0	253	4 909
Total	91 485	38 445	140 408	461 303	731 641	94 893	92 797	178 384	478 626	844 700

Source: Adapted from Gillett and Lightfoot, 2001
Note: Subsistence fishing values are based on farm-gate prices, coastal commercial fishing values on available sources, offshore local fishing values on free-on-board (FOB) prices, and offshore foreign fishing values on overseas market prices less transshipment costs.

and implemented. It is possible to state that the past catalysts in most countries for management intervention were often crises or political directives. In recent years there have been some trends in the development and implementation of management measures:

- Offshore fisheries management measures are developed and implemented by a process established by plans, rather than on an ad hoc basis. This planning has been encouraged by the availability of Canadian funding and FFA assistance (see Box 1).

TABLE 4
GDP Information

	Fishing contribution in US$	Fishing contribution as percentage (%) of national GDP
Cook Islands	2 336 473	2.84
Fiji	42 699 025	2.34
FSM	10 806 270	4.70
Kiribati	5 667 741	11.78
Marshall Islands	7 203 400	7.40
Nauru	1 094 516	2.12
Niue	123 782	1.65
Palau	3 148 000	2.77
PNG	19 176 909	0.56
Samoa	18 656 015	7.99
Solomon Islands	35 793, 803	12.80
Tonga	11 191 071	7.13
Tuvalu	937 429	6.77
Vanuatu	2 161 617	0.95

Source: Gillett and Lightfoot, 2001

BOX 1
Fisheries management plans as catalysts

In 1998, as part of the Canada-South Pacific Oceans Development Programme, FFA assisted in the development of a detailed tuna management plan for the Solomon Islands. On country request, FFA (using money from Canadian sources) have subsequently prepared plans for Palau, Vanuatu, Fiji and Kiribati. The Asian Development Bank and the Australian Agency for International Development have also assisted in the formulation of tuna management plans for FSM and Samoa, respectively. FFA has continued with this process using its own staff and has prepared or in the processing of formulating tuna management plans for Tonga, the Marshall Islands, Niue, the Cook Islands and Tokelau.

These management plans have had a major positive effect on the region. Although the process has not always been smooth, there have been substantial benefits:

- The first experience of some countries at formally establishing fisheries policies and articulating management goals was during the process of formulating these plans.
- The plans have brought a degree of transparency to the fisheries management process, which was somewhat nebulous in several countries.
- The stable and/or reliable set of policy measures promoted by the plans is crucially important for attracting domestic and foreign investors to the fisheries sector.
- In some countries the first government/industry consultative mechanisms in the fisheries sector are those established by the plans.
- The tuna planning process has resulted in a movement in some countries to develop management plans for other fisheries.

- Development/implementation of measures by semi-autonomous fisheries management authorities is becoming more common.
- After attempting inshore fisheries management on a central basis for many decades, there is a movement to devolve responsibility for developing and implementing management measures to coastal communities. In many countries where this is occurring, environment agencies rather than fisheries agencies have been spearheading the movement.

Potential regional fisheries management measures for the shared offshore tuna resources are mooted at meetings of the Forum Fisheries Committee, FFA's governing body. If there is regional consensus, FFA promotes and coordinates the measure.

BOX 2
Stakeholders in Papua New Guinea's fisheries management

The arrangements for stakeholder involvement in national-level fisheries management in PNG are quite favourable and have served as a positive model for the region.

The Fisheries Act 1994 transferred responsibility for fisheries development and management from a government department, which operated under the supervision of a permanent secretary to a newly created National Fisheries Authority (NFA). A National Fisheries Board was also established to provide general control and guidance over NFA. The composition of the board was remarkable in that it greatly increased stakeholder input to fisheries management in the country.

The National Fisheries Board consists of ten people, including representatives of four government departments and the President of the Fishing Industry Association, one person nominated by the Fishing Industry Association, one person nominated by fisheries resource owners, and one person nominated by non-governmental organizations.

Since stakeholders make up an important proportion of the National Fisheries Board, they have the opportunity to significantly influence the decision-making process. To an important extent, NFA is oriented to the concerns of these stakeholders and its staff function accordingly. The relevance and effectiveness of fisheries management in Papua New Guinea has improved considerably because of these stakeholder arrangements. NFA now serves as a positive example for the region that some countries are trying to emulate.

An example of this is the recent introduction of the requirement for vessels to carry automatic location communicators.

Stakeholder involvement in fisheries management is increasing in most countries. Several factors at the national level are responsible for this, such as the growing assertiveness of fishing associations and the influence of the tuna management plans. One of the most advanced situations is in Papua New Guinea where stakeholders have substantial influence in the national-level fisheries management (see Box 2). In general, the smaller and more isolated countries have less developed national institutional structures for stakeholder input.

At the community level, the trend towards devolution of management responsibility has increased fishers' influence on the management decision-making process in many villages, especially those with external assistance in fisheries management matters.

In the offshore areas, there are three major fisheries – tuna purse seine, tuna longline and tuna pole/line. All three could be considered managed, both on the national and regional levels. The degree of management has remained more or less constant during the past ten years.

In the inshore fishing areas, the situation is much more complex. Given the definition of fisheries described above, there are a very large number of inshore fisheries in the region. FAO's Species Identification Guide for Fishery Purposes covering the Western Central Pacific lists over 2 000 species of fisheries importance. According to Johannes (1998), in no other region does fishing involve so many different species and gear types. In this situation, it is not possible to categorize the numerous fisheries into "managed" and "unmanaged". Although some management measures are fishery-specific (e.g. size limits for trochus), many are applied to specific gear types (e.g. mesh sizes for gillnets) regardless of species being targeted or applied across all fishing activity (e.g. licensing requirements for all fishing vessels involved in commerce). Nevertheless, some statements on the proportion of managed inshore fisheries can be made:

- Few of the inshore fisheries of the region escape all forms of management.

BOX 3
Management of the trochus fishery

The annual harvest of trochus in the Pacific Islands in recent years is about 2 300 metric tonnes, with an export value of about US$15 million. Although this is not great in purely financial terms, the impact is substantial. Since little or no equipment is used in collecting trochus and since the shells may be stored for long periods prior to shipment to market, trochus is one of the few commercial fisheries feasible for remote communities. In several Pacific Island countries, trochus provides an important source of cash income at the village level, especially since the demise of the copra industry.

The trochus fishery is considered by many fisheries specialists in the region to be the best managed commercial inshore fishery of the Pacific Islands. The management has consisted of area closures, seasonal closures, minimum size limits, maximum size limits, moratoria, sanctuaries, total allowable catches and individual transferable quotas.

- In countries where traditional authority remains strong (e.g. Solomon Islands) most of the fisheries are subject to a great deal of management control.
- In countries with open access regimes for the inshore areas (e.g. Tonga, parts of FSM), the proportion of managed inshore fisheries is lowest.
- In countries where substantial external assistance is available for fisheries management (e.g Palau, Samoa), certain targeted communities manage a very high proportion of fisheries.
- Sports fishing, both commercial and recreational, is probably subject to the least amount of fisheries management in the region.
- The proportion of managed inshore fisheries has declined during the past half-century due to the erosion of traditional authority, but has increased in the past decade due to a resurgence of interest in community-based management.
- About half of the countries in the region have a trochus resource and associated fishery. In all countries with managed trochus fishery, and it appears that the effectiveness of the management is often good compared to other fisheries (see Box 3).

There is growing recognition that the management of the inshore fisheries cannot be done exclusively by central government authorities. Substantial local community input is considered necessary for effective management regimes. The central feature here is that the community has a stake in the long-term future of the resource and that more effective management schemes engender lasting resources for harvesters.

An important factor that catalysed management action in the offshore areas was the large increases in tuna fishing activity, especially purse seining. The total carrying capacity of purse seine vessels participating in the fishery increased about 43 percent from 1988 to 1995 (Gillett and Lewis, 2003). In the inshore areas, depletion of village food supplies and the exhaustion of the targets of commercial fisheries and associated calls for action by fishers were important management catalysts.

Stocks are assessed to varying degrees for the various fisheries. SPC's Oceanic Fisheries Programme carries out stock assessment on the region's tuna resources. With respect to the subsistence fisheries of the region, in most countries the local residents are well aware of the changes in abundance of the important fishery resources, knowledge which is often the basis for management action. The fisheries agencies in most countries often carry out resource surveys for specific resources (e.g. giant clams, beche-de-mer, live reef food fish) and for specific areas, including resource inventories of traditional management areas. Some of this work is carried out in cooperation with external partners, such as SPC's Coastal Fisheries Programme. There is an increasing

realization in the region that rigorous stock assessment on the large number of species targeted by inshore fisheries may not be practical, possible or even desirable given the very limited financial resources available for management-related activities in government fisheries agencies.

The condition of the fisheries (under-exploited, fully utilized, depleted) can be described as follows:

- The tuna fisheries of the region are in relatively good condition. There is some debate, however, on the status of the bigeye tuna resource, which is an important target species in one of the three major offshore fisheries.
- For the inshore fisheries, in the absence of stock assessment information, it is difficult to pronounce the various fisheries as fully utilized or depleted. In general, however, the high-value benthic species (e.g. giant clams, beche-de-mer, mangrove crab, lobsters, sea cucumber) are in the worst condition and could be considered depleted in many countries. The less accessible species (e.g. deep slope fish) are in the best condition and could be considered under-exploited. There is also a geographic dimension to the situation – most of the important fishery resources found near the main urban areas are heavily exploited, while those found in remote areas of the country are characteristically lightly exploited.

For those fisheries that are depleted, the fisheries laws of most countries do not compel the fisheries management agencies to take remedial management action, but rather, as exemplified by the Samoa situation, to "*propose* management and development measures". An exception to this is the national fisheries law of FSM, which states that the fisheries management agency "*shall* take measures to prevent or eliminate overfishing and excess fishing capacity and to ensure that levels of fishing effort do not exceed those commensurate with the sustainable use of fishery resources."

With respect to management tools, for the offshore fisheries, all countries of the region license foreign fishing vessels and charge for this access. On a subregional basis, the most important tool is limited entry for the tuna purse seine fishery under the Palau Arrangement for the Management of the Western Pacific Purse Seine Fishery.

The management tools are much more complex for the inshore fisheries. Rather than stating what tools are used, it may be easier to state what are *not* used. The following are not common or are unknown in the region:

- defined number of hours of fishing;
- catch restrictions: vessel catch limits, individual vessel quotas;
- performance standards.

Some of the management tools and associated objectives are somewhat unique to the region. Several countries ban fishing on Sunday, for example – an entire section in the fisheries law of Niue is dedicated to this ban. In some areas of Melanesia, fishing is banned after the death of a chief. Further, in some of the more traditional societies there are participatory restrictions based on gender and prohibitions against taking certain species that are identified as personal or clan totems.

The effectiveness of the above management tools is variable. Various reviews of the restriction on numbers of tuna purse seine vessels have concluded that any restraints have been partial and temporary at best. Generalizations on effectiveness are difficult to make for the inshore management tools. There is a growing realization that management tools used in communities (e.g. spatial restrictions) are more effective than those used by centralized government management agencies (e.g. requirements for licences). Some observations have also been made on the types of rules that work best at the community level (see Box 4).

There is great reliance on sanctuaries as a management tool in several countries, most notably in Samoa and Palau. Where a sanctuary exists, the residents usually have very high expectations for the positive effects of the sanctuary on the important resources. Although the value of the sanctuary is often measured in terms of abundance

BOX 4
Community perceptions of effectiveness of management measures

A World Bank survey in 1998/1999 examined inshore fisheries management at 31 locations across Polynesia, the Federated States of Micronesia and Melanesia (Bettencourt and Gillett, 2001). The survey made observations on fisheries management regulations, and concluded that some of these rules work better than others. Three types of rules were perceived by communities as having the best compliance:

- National rules, which were seen as relevant and subsequently adopted by community leaders, were considered more effective than purely national or purely local rules.
- Simple rules, such as complete bans or closures, were perceived as being more effective than more complex or conditional rules such as size limits or closed seasons/areas.
- Rules that could be enforced by the buyers or exporters, such as crocodile exports in the Solomon Islands or trochus exports in Palau, were seen as particularly effective.

increases, another benefit is that its presence in a community seems to stimulate interest, knowledge and awareness of coastal resource management.

The management tools currently used have changed over time to some extent. There is a much greater use of marine protected areas, and in some countries such as Palau and Tonga, an increase in the use of export bans. In support of the objective of saving lives of fishers, many countries, such as Samoa and Fiji, have introduced more stringent safety requirements.

There are few, if any, management tools prohibited in the region. A possible exception is that in countries with open access (country-wide or in specific areas), it is not possible to use territorial use rights (usually referred to as customary marine tenure [CMT] in the region). The countries in this category are Tonga, Samoa, areas of FSM and the Solomon Islands.

Most of the regional and national management interventions in the offshore fisheries have had economic objectives (e.g. generation of government revenue), rather than objectives relating to improving or safeguarding stock status. It is not surprising, therefore, that these management measures have not done much to improve stock status.

For inshore areas, there is debate on whether the greater use of marine protected areas (MPAs) has led to improvement of stock status. Although it is likely that MPAs increase the abundance of key species in discrete geographic areas, rigorous monitoring of the entire stock is not a common feature.

There are two categories of principal impediments to more effective management: those relating to national inshore fishery management and those relating to regional offshore fishery management. National inshore fisheries management is constrained by the low skill level of fisheries managers, poor accountability of fisheries management agencies, lack of organized feedback from fisheries constituents to fisheries agencies, inadequate funding for fisheries management, insufficient knowledge of the properties of stocks being managed, overemphasis on development, the inability of fisheries management to address factors outside the fisheries sector (e.g. siltation, pollution, encroaching urban development), and lack of cooperation of fisheries management agencies with other government agencies charged with aspects of coastal zone management. The constraints to regional offshore fishery management are of a different nature, however. The newly concluded Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention is far from being able to take management action. In the meantime, regional fisheries institutions are oriented to, in the case of SPC, studying the population dynamics of tuna, and

in the case of FFA, responding to directives of country representatives to the Forum Fisheries Committee. Most of the latter deal with extracting immediate and tangible benefits from the region's tuna resources. The region seems to lack a mechanism and associated political support for taking bold management action, which, although having some short-term economic costs, would contribute to long-term sustainability of the tuna resources. This constraint would obviously diminish with the emergence of a functional tuna management commission.

COSTS AND REVENUES OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

It is difficult to extract fishery management budgets and costs from government fishery agencies that characteristically do considerably more than just fisheries management. Most agencies in the region are heavily involved in fisheries development; some are involved with operating a government fishing enterprise or government service (ice making, subsidized boatbuilding); and some fisheries agencies are charged with promoting indigenous business development.

Although there are differences between countries, national fishery management budgets have generally remained stable during the past decade but costs have risen due to "wage creep". Increases in fisheries management activity have mostly arisen from the elimination of non-priority activities or from projects sponsored by donors.

Additional fisheries management activity during the decade included participating in the negotiations for the establishment of a Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, producing fisheries management plans, promoting community-based management, refining regional management arrangements and revising fisheries legislation.

There is considerable interest by donors and technical assistance agencies in providing resources for fisheries management in the region. Major international contributors during the decade were FFA, SPC, FAO, ADB, various Australian agencies, and the Canadian Government.

During the past ten years, Samoa, PNG, FSM, Tonga and the Marshall Islands have enjoyed relatively large externally-funded projects with significant fisheries management components. Offshore surveillance in most countries has been facilitated by an Australian programme that has provided patrol boats and surveillance advisers.

At the village level, due to the subsistence and traditional nature of village life in most Pacific Island countries, there are few real budgets for fisheries management activity. Fisheries management has opportunity costs, but at the village level these

TABLE 5
Access fees and Gross Domestic Product

	Access fees (US$)	GDP (US$)	Access fees as percentage (%) of GDP
Cook Islands	169 072	82 371 930	0.21
Fiji	212 000	1 821 334 281	0.01
FSM	15 400 000	229 869 864	6.70
Kiribati	20 600 000	48 123 871	42.81
Marshall Islands	4 982 600	97 311 800	5.12
Nauru	3 400 000	51 612 903	6.59
Niue	151 793	7 514 077	2.02
Palau	800 000	113 484 869	0.70
PNG	5 840 000	3 415 590 478	0.17
Samoa	188 616	233 506 665	0.08
Solomon	273 458	279 593 229	0.10
Tonga	152 041	157 018 257	0.10
Tuvalu	5 900 000	13 848 788	42.60
Vanuatu	218 448	226 280 313	0.09

Source: Gillett and Lightfoot, 2001

occur largely outside the cash economy. Some villages may fine offenders for violating the fisheries rules, but this can take the form of fines other than cash.

With only a few exceptions, revenue derived from national fisheries management is not on a cost-recovery basis, but rather, various fees are charged and deposited in a government's general fund. In some countries (e.g. FSM, PNG), observer programmes are funded by a levy on the types of vessels required to carry observers.

Generation of national government revenue from licensing foreign fishing activity is a major objective of fisheries management in some Pacific Island countries. All Pacific Island countries receive some fees for such fishing. In some countries the access fees form a very large portion of government revenue. In FSM, the 1999 access fees represented an estimated 39 percent of non-tax revenue and 22 percent of total domestic revenue for the national government. In Kiribati, 34 percent of government income in 1999 was from licence fees. Gillett *et al.* (2001) reports that the US$60.3 million received for fishing licences in 1999 represent a 402 percent increase from the US$15 million in fees in 1983. Table 5 gives the foreign fishing access fees for 1999 and compares it to GDP.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GLOBAL FISHERIES MANDATES AND INITIATIVES

As of 19 August 2003, 13 Pacific Island countries have ratified or acceded to the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Fiji was the first country in the world to sign and ratify the Convention. Niue has signed the Convention but is yet to ratify. Nine Pacific Island countries ratified or acceded to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. Table 6 gives information on the dates of ratification/accession.

No country in the region has deposited an instrument of acceptance of the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas.

Some of the international requirements that most countries of the region have undertaken to implement are as follows:

- The coastal state shall determine the allowable catch of the living resources in its exclusive economic zone. Encouraged by the process of formulating tuna management plans, most countries in the region have made the determination.
- Available scientific information, catch and fishing effort statistics, and other data relevant to the conservation of fish stocks shall be contributed and exchanged on a regular basis through competent international organizations. All countries in the region furnish tuna *fisheries data to both SPC and FFA. Most of the countries provide fisheries data to FAO and, on request, to SPC.*

TABLE 6
The Status of UNCLOS and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement in the Region

	UNCLOS Ratification-Accession*	UN Fish Stocks Ratification-Accession
Cook Islands	15 Feb. 1995	1 April 1999
Fiji	10 Dec. 1982	12 Dec. 1996
FSM	20 April 1991	23 May 1997
Kiribati	24 Feb. 2003	24 Feb. 2003
Marshall Islands	9 Aug. 1991	19 March 2003
Nauru	23 Jan. 1996	10 Jan. 1997
Niue	---	---
Palau	30 Sept. 1996	---
PNG	14 Jan. 1997	4 June 1999
Samoa	14 Aug. 1995	25 Oct. 1996
Solomon Islands	23 June 1997	13 Feb. 1997
Tonga	2 Aug. 1995	---
Tuvalu	9 Dec. 2002	---
Vanuatu	10 Aug. 1999	---

*The UN website only states ratification or accession, without specifying which one.

- Where the coastal state does not have the capacity to harvest the entire allowable catch, it shall give other states access to the surplus of the allowable catch. *All Pacific Island countries grant access to the surplus.*
- Where the same stock or stocks of associated species occur within the exclusive economic zones of two or more coastal states, these states shall seek, either directly or through appropriate subregional or regional organizations, to agree upon the measures necessary to co-ordinate and ensure the conservation and development of such stocks. *Region and subregional cooperation in tuna fisheries management is a salient feature of the region. The countries formulated and formalized several measures for such cooperation/development: the Nauru Agreement, the FSM Arrangement, the Palau Arrangement.*

A few Pacific Island countries have moved faster than most to implement provisions of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement by modifying their fisheries legislation. The relatively new national fisheries laws of FSM and PNG are notable in this regard. As an example of an UNFSA provision in legislation, PNG's Fisheries Management Act 1998 states that the National Fisheries Authority

> *shall, in respect of highly migratory fish stocks which occur both in the fisheries waters and in the high seas, and without prejudice to the sovereign rights and special requirements of Papua New Guinea as a developing coastal State, have authority to cooperate with States fishing on the high seas in respect of such stocks for the purpose of achieving compatible conservation and management measures.*

Countries in the region have not taken specific steps on their own initiative to directly implement the International Plans of Action (IPOAs) relating to capacity management, IUU fishing, shark management or seabird by-catch in longline fisheries. However, some of the concepts embodied in the various IPOAs are being promoted by many countries of the region through various laws, regulations and policies.

There are some notable points regarding IPOAs in the region:

- A recent report of seabird by-catch in the longline fisheries of the region (Watling 2002) indicated that in the Pacific Island region "seabird by-catch is extremely rare by comparison with the situation at higher latitudes".
- FAO has carried out work in support of shark management plans in PNG, Fiji and the Marshall Islands.

REGIONAL FISHERIES BODIES IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

FFA and SPC are the regional organizations with the greatest involvement in fisheries. Several other regional organizations are at least peripherally active: the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), the Forum Secretariat and the University of the South Pacific (USP).

The Forum Fisheries Agency

FFA, whose headquarters are in the Solomon Islands, has 17 member countries: Australia, Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and most recently, Tokelau. The governing body of FFA is the Forum Fisheries Committee, made up of representatives of member countries. The Agency was established in 1979 to help member countries manage and develop their living marine resources, in particular their highly migratory fish species. In the early 1990s, FFA sharpened its focus and began to concentrate more closely on the tuna fisheries of the region. The Agency's corporate mission for the 2000 –2005 period is "to enable member countries to manage, conserve, and use tuna resources in their EEZs and beyond, through enhancing national capacity and strengthening regional solidarity."

FFA currently has 52 staff and is organized into seven divisions: executive management, corporate services, economics and marketing, information technology

and communication, legal services, monitoring/control/surveillance and treaty administration.

FFA provides assistance to its member countries to coordinate and harmonize the management of tuna fisheries. Recent management-related activities of the FFA include assisting countries in the negotiations for the establishment of a Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, formulating national fisheries management plans, and reviewing the Palau Arrangement for the Management of the Western Pacific Purse Seine Fishery.

Regional fisheries management measures are mooted by country representatives at meetings of the Forum Fisheries Committee, FFA's governing body. If there is regional consensus, FFA promotes and coordinates the measure. Given that FFA's mission is to *assist* countries in the management of tuna fisheries, it acts largely on the individual or collective requests of its members and accordingly, does not have a major role in enforcing management agreements on its members.

Country participation in FFA includes attendance at the Forum Fisheries Committee Meetings several times a year and participation in various FFA technical meetings and activities. In recent years much of this activity has been associated with spearheading regional tuna fisheries management initiatives, including establishing regional positions on the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific.

Since FFA is involved in the management of the tuna fisheries of the region, the primary species covered are skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*), yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna. Due to the focus being on fisheries rather than species, the agency has also dealt with non-target species, including by-catch and tuna baitfish.

Regionally agreed fisheries management measures promoted by the FFA include:

- the Harmonized Minimum Terms and Conditions (MTCs) for Foreign Fishing Vessel Access as being essential for licensing for fishing vessels.
- the requirement that any foreign vessel wishing to obtain access to the fishery waters of any FFA member country must first register with the FFA and be in good standing on a regional register of foreign fishing vessels.
- reciprocal fisheries law enforcement, as per the Niue Treaty on Cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement in the South Pacific Region.
- a limit on the number of tuna purse seine vessels allowed to fish in the region in the Palau Arrangement for the Management of the Western Pacific Purse Seine Fishery.
- incentives for local basing for purse seine vessels as per the Federated States of Micronesia Arrangement for Regional Fisheries Access.

FFA uses stock assessment information from SPC's Oceanic Fisheries Programme and does not make its own assessments of the status of the tuna resources.

The Agency is not greatly involved with implementing specific IPOAs. However, some of the concepts embodied in the various IPOAs are being promoted by FFA through tuna management plans and other aspects of its work programme.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (formerly the South Pacific Commission)

SPC, headquartered in New Caledonia, has 27 member countries and territories: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna Islands. The membership consists of the 14 independent Pacific Island countries, eight territories and five

founding developed countries. The governing council is the Conference of the Pacific Community, which meets once each year. SPC was established in 1947.

SPC is not a regional fisheries body, but rather a regional organization that currently focuses on three sectors: land resources, social resources and marine resources. The Secretariat's Marine Resources Division is organized into the Regional Maritime Programme, Oceanic Fisheries Programme and the Coastal Fisheries Programme, the latter two having relevance to fisheries management:

- The Oceanic Fisheries Programme provides countries and FFA with the scientific information and advice necessary to rationally manage fisheries exploiting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and related species. There are three sections in the Programme: Statistics and Monitoring, Tuna Ecology and Biology, and Stock Assessment and Modelling,
- The Coastal Fisheries Programme provides a regional support service that assists Pacific Islanders in identifying the status, and optimizing the long-term social and economic value of, small-scale fisheries and aquatic resources in Pacific Island waters. There are six sections in the programme: Aquaculture, Fisheries Development, Coastal Fisheries Management, Fisheries Training, Reef Fisheries Observatory and Fisheries Information.

Countries participate in the Oceanic Fisheries Programme by attending the annual Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish, furnishing data and participating in activities associated with assessment of the region's tuna resources. In SPC's Coastal Fisheries Programme, in addition to receiving substantial technical assistance, countries attend the annual Heads of Fisheries Meeting, contribute to technical workshops and support the country work of the Programme.

In practical fisheries management terms, the Coastal Fisheries Programme provides management advice on request to its member countries in small-scale and inshore fisheries, especially advice concerning community-based management. The Oceanic Fisheries Programme provides tuna statistics and tuna stock assessment information to its member countries and FFA.

The status of the stocks of the region is reported in various forms by the Oceanic Fisheries Programme. An assessment is given by Hampton and Williams (2003) for 2001:

- **Skipjack tuna** – The available fishery indicators suggest that while skipjack tuna stock biomass in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) shows considerable inter-annual variation, the fisheries have had little measurable impact on the stock. Current levels of stock biomass are high and recent catch levels are easily sustainable under current stock productivity conditions.
- **Yellowfin tuna** – The various fishery indicators examined are mostly stable, indicating that fishery performance has been sustained over a long period of time. The stock is at least moderately exploited, with recent average levels of age-specific fishing mortality somewhat less than the corresponding maximum sustainable yield (MSY) levels. Recent catch levels would therefore be sustainable at long-term average levels of recruitment, but the lower recruitment in recent years may indicate that the stock is shifting to a lower productivity regime. If this is the case, catch and CPUE may decline in coming years.
- **Bigeye tuna** – Bigeye tuna demonstrably grow slower, live longer and, as a consequence, less resilient to fishing than skipjack and yellowfin tuna. Preliminary modelling results and fishery indicators suggest that a decline in abundance occurred from the early 1960s until the mid-1990s. Post-1995 biomass is estimated to have risen, but this requires confirmation by future analyses.
- **South Pacific albacore tuna –** Fishery indicators suggest that the South Pacific albacore tuna stock declined moderately during the 1970s and up to the early 1990s. This decline in stock biomass was mainly recruitment-driven, as was

recovery in the mid-1990s. The impact of the fishery on the stock is estimated to be small and higher levels of catch could likely be sustained.

SPC is not directly involved with the implementation of specific International Plans of Action (IPOAs). The Secretariat, however, recently commissioned a report on seabird bycatch in the longline fisheries of the region.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There are two broad categories of marine fisheries resources in the Pacific Islands: those in coastal/inshore areas and those in the offshore zone. The coastal/inshore resources comprise a large number of species that are targeted by many different types of subsistence or small-scale commercial fisheries. The targeted offshore resources are almost exclusively tuna, with three main fisheries supported: the tuna purse seine fishery, the tuna longline fishery and the tuna pole/line fishery. The Pacific Islands region is presently the most important tuna fishing area of the world.

It has been estimated that the fisheries operating in the region harvest about 730 000 mt, with a value of about US$840 million. In general, the inshore fisheries are heavily fished and often show signs of over-exploitation. In contrast, in the offshore fisheries the major tuna stocks are not considered to be biologically over-exploited at present.

With respect to fisheries legislation, there is a trend in the more recent legislation to articulate management objectives. In countries with older fisheries laws, the emphasis is often on the development of fisheries, and consequently, fisheries management and associated objectives receive less attention.

- Recent international fisheries management norms/mandates such as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRP), the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and IPOAs are not a major feature of the fisheries management of the region. Although concepts embodied in these international agreements may be promoted in various ways, there is little specific mention of these agreements in the fisheries laws in the region or little activity focused specifically on CCRP/UNFSA/IPOAs, but some promotion of the general concepts embodies by those agreements.

In the past five years, FFA, the Canadian Government and various organizations have assisted most countries in the region in producing tuna management plans. These appear to have had a positive catalytic effect.

In recent years, there have been some trends in the development and implementation of management measures:

- Offshore fisheries management measures are developed/implemented by a process established by plans, rather than on an ad hoc basis.
- Development/implementation of measures by semi-autonomous fisheries management authorities is becoming more common.
- After attempting inshore fisheries management on a central basis for many decades, there is a movement to devolve responsibility for developing and implementing management measures to coastal communities.
- There is considerable interest in the region in emulating the PNG model of stakeholder input in the fisheries management process.

It can be stated that all of the major offshore fisheries in the region are managed, but the situation is more complex in the inshore areas. The proportion of managed inshore fisheries has declined during the past half-century due to the erosion of traditional authority, but has increased in the past decade due to a resurgence of interest in community-based management.

With respect to management tools for the offshore fisheries, all countries of the region license foreign fishing vessels and charge for this access. On a subregional basis, the most important tool is limited entry for the tuna purse seine fishery. For the inshore fisheries, a great variety of tools are used.

Although there are differences between countries, national fishery management budgets have generally remained stable, but costs have risen because of incremental wage increases. Any increases in fisheries management activity have mostly arisen from the elimination of non-priority activities or from projects sponsored by donors. Generation of national government revenue from licensing foreign fishing activity is a major objective of fisheries management in some Pacific Island countries. All Pacific Island countries receive revenue from these licensing fees.

There are effective regional organizations involved in Pacific Islands fisheries management. Rather than directly making management interventions, these agencies work by enhancing national capacities and providing assistance to regional management initiatives.

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APPENDIX TABLES

Participation of small island developing states of the Southwest Pacific in regional fishery bodies

Country	Pacific Ocean										Trans-Ocean	
	APEC*	CPPS	FFA	IATTC	IPHC	NPAFC	PICES	PSC	SPC	WCPFC**	CCAMLR	CCSBT
Cook Islands			M						M	S		
Fiji			M						M	S/R		
Kiribati			M						M	R		
Marshall Islands			M						M	S/R		
Federated States of Micronesia			M						M	S/R		
Nauru			M						M	S		
Niue			M						M	S		
Palau			M						M	S		
Papua New Guinea	M		M						M	S/R		
Samoa			M						M	S/R		
Solomon Islands			M						M	S/R		
Tonga			M						M	S		
Tuvalu			M						M	S		
Vanuatu			M	M					M	S		

Notes:
M – Member
C – Cooperates but not a member
S – Signed
R – Ratified
* APEC Fisheries Working Group.
** according to the Interim Secretariat of the Commission, as of 1 August 2003
APEC - Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
CCAMLR - Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CCSBT -Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna.
CPPS - Comision Permanente del Pacifico Sur (Permanent South Pacific Commission).
IATTC - The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
IPHC - International Pacific Halibut Commission
NPAFC- North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
PICES- North Pacific Marine Science Organization
PSC Pacific Salmon Commission
WCPFC Western and Central Pacific Fishery Convention

Participation in international agreements

Country	UN Law of the Sea Convention		UN Fish Stocks Agreement*		FAO Compliance Agreement**	
	Signed	Ratified/Acceded*	Signed	Ratified/Acceded (note below *)	Signed	Ratified/Acceded (indicate which one)
Cook Islands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Fiji	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Kiribati	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Marshall Islands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Federated States of Micronesia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Nauru	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Niue	No	No	No	No	No	
Palau	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	
Papua New Guinea	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Samoa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Solomon Islands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Tonga	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	
Tuvalu	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	
Vanuatu	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	

* The UN website only states ratification or accession, without specifying which one.

International Plans of Action (IPOAs) implemented in National Plans of Action (NPOAs)

Country	Management of Fishing Capacity		Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries	Conservation and Management of Sharks	Prevent, Counteract and Eliminate Illegal, Unregistered and Unregulated Fishing
	No. of assessed fisheries	NPOA	NPOA	NPOA	NPOA
Cook Islands	0	No	No	No	No
Fiji	0	No	No	No	No
Kiribati	0	No	No	No	No
Marshall Islands	0	No	No	No	No
Federated States of Micronesia	0	No	No	No	No
Niue	0	No	No	No	No
Palau	0	No	No	No	No
PNG	0	No	No	No	No
Samoa	0	No	No	No	No
Solomon Islands	0	No	No	No	No
Tonga	0	No	No	No	No
Tuvalu	0	No	No	No	No
Vanuatu	0	No	No	No	No