
Report prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Assessment of the Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) programme 2010-2013

Final Assessment Report

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADD	Activity Design Document
CA	Competent Authority
CBO	Community-based organisation
CBFM	Community-based fisheries management
CD	Capacity development
COFIA	Commercial Fisheries Investment Advisor
CTI	Coral Triangle Initiative
CTSP	Coral Triangle Support Partnership
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EC	European Commission
EoI	Expression of Interest
EU	European Union
FAD	Fish aggregating device
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
GETS	New Zealand Government Electronic Tenders Service
GIS	Geographic Information System
HR	Human Resources
IFA	Inshore Fisheries Advisor
IFC	International Finance Corporation (part of the World Bank Group)
IS	Institutional strengthening
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)
MCS	Monitoring, control and surveillance
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEA	Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor

MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MFMR	Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
MoE	Solomon Islands Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology
MoFT	Solomon Islands Ministry of Finance and Treasury
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPI	New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries
MSSIF	Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries
NCC	National Co-ordination Committee (for Community-based Resource Management)
NZD	New Zealand dollars
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NZHC	New Zealand High Commission
OFA	Offshore Fisheries Advisor
OFCE	Overseas Fishery Co-operation Foundation (of Japan)
PHAMA	Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Project
PFO	Provincial Fisheries Officer
PIC	Pacific Island Country
PNA	Parties to the Nauru Agreement (Parties: Tuvalu, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Nauru, Palau, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia)
PMUTA	Project Management Unit Technical Advisor
PS	Permanent Secretary
PSC	Solomon Islands Public Service Commission
SBD	Solomon Islands dollars
SI	Solomon Islands
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SILMMA	Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Area Network
SIMROS	Solomon Islands Marine Resources Organisational Strategy
SLA	Service Level Agreement

SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SSI	South Seas Investment
TA	Technical Advisor
TL/IDA	Team Leader/Institutional Development Advisor
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
USD	United States dollars
VDS	Vessel Day Scheme
VMS	Vessel Management System
WBI	World Bank Institute
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Executive summary

Background and context of the Activity

The Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) programme is a partnership between New Zealand and Solomon Islands. It is implemented by the Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), with support from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The partnership arrangement signed in 2009 noted that New Zealand's support is expected to continue until at least 2018.

The goal of MSSIF is 'the sustainable development and management of fisheries resources to ensure long-term benefits for the people of Solomon Islands'. To achieve this goal, the objective of MSSIF is 'to strengthen the capacity of Solomon Islands fisheries sector to achieve improved livelihood, food security, and economic benefits'. Key focus areas include offshore fisheries development, inshore fisheries development and institutional capacity development (CD).

New Zealand's support for Solomon Islands fisheries is considered a long-term partnership approach. Support is delivered via the following modalities:

- Financial support for MFMR operations (provided by way of a Grant Funding Arrangement).
- Advisors working in-country to assist with capacity development and programme implementation (funded directly by MFAT).
- Technical specialists retained and funded through MSSIF, providing input on specific issues, e.g. seaweed industry development, or monitoring and evaluation.
- Funding for non-government organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) to implement programmes that support MFMR priorities, also arranged and funded by MSSIF.

Purpose and objectives of the assessment

The objectives of this assessment are as follows.

- Assessing the general performance of MSSIF to date, drawing on desktop analysis completed by MFAT consultants.
- Assessing progress on CD to date, assessing key organisational needs in this area, and making any associated recommendations for consideration for design of the support over 2010 to 2018.
- Recommending potential areas where New Zealand can best add value to Solomon Islands fisheries via the MSSIF programme for 2014 to 2018.
- Reviewing modalities of assistance to date, including the nature and structure of international and local technical assistance, and the delivery and performance of subcontracted third party projects.
- Assessing the application and functionality of the MSSIF monitoring and evaluation plan and linked MFMR performance framework, and recommend improvements to the plan.

- Recommending options for collaboration and harmonisation with current and proposed activities supported by other development partners and MFAT regional programmes.

Following approval of this Assessment report, we will then develop a draft ADD to describe the nature and extent of New Zealand's support for fisheries under the MSSIF programme until the end of 2018.

Methodology

Our approach comprised desk-based research, data and information collection and analysis, and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in Solomon Islands and New Zealand. At the conclusion of our field work in Solomon Islands, we conducted a report back session in Honiara with the MFMR Permanent Secretary and Division heads, and the New Zealand High Commission. The purpose of this session was to present our preliminary findings, and test our emerging recommendations for the design of MSSIF 2014-2018.

Key findings and conclusions

MSSIF had a slow and difficult start but is now gaining traction. However, competing demands are stretching its resources too thin – with key Advisors being diverted into 'firefighting' and day-to-day project management and programme administration.

The overall level of support is about right, and increased funding would risk placing stresses on an organisation that is already probably at absorptive capacity. However, the focus of MSSIF needs to be rebalanced, with greater effort and attention on capacity development.

Work in offshore fisheries management has successfully contributed to policy positions that have increased economic returns and positioned Solomon Islands as a strong and responsible regional leader. The work of the Offshore Division of MFMR is comparatively mature; future efforts need to focus on implementing priority policies and extending further into selected priority areas.

Investment in onshore processing is a crucial priority for the Solomon Islands government and for MFMR. Robust foundational work in onshore investment means MSSIF is well placed to assist MFMR in designing the rules and managing processes for the various investments in the pipeline. However the lack of policy staff (and of explicit capacity development objectives for the Project Management Unit advisor) means MFMR itself will continue to be dependent on MSSIF support in this area for some time.

Support for inshore fisheries management appears less successful, partly due to the inherent complexities of this area, as well as the lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities within MFMR and other inhibitors that are discussed in our report. Stakeholders expressed a desire for MFMR to take more of a strategic leadership and co-ordination role in inshore fisheries. We recommend that MSSIF supports such efforts, along with an implementation support role in inshore fisheries management, aligned with a new Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy.

The monitoring and evaluation framework has not been used as intended and requires significant improvement in order to make it a meaningful, useful and practical for programme reporting and planning. In particular, the programme intervention logic needs to be more robust and complete (e.g. it lacks a middle layer that links programme activities/outputs to well-defined impacts/intermediate outcomes) and accompanied by well

specified results metrics that are suitably contextualised for the MFMR and Solomon Islands environment. Programme reporting should then be simplified and improved on the basis of this, including further moves towards outputs-based reporting.

Summary of lessons learned

Our analysis revealed the following lessons:

- The programme overall needs greater clarity on the desired end state (i.e. what success looks like and how it will be measured) and the staged pathway of activities that will take it there. This should drive the selection of a smaller number of high priority projects on which MSSIF can concentrate its efforts.
- Capacity development efforts need to be based on best practice principles and maintained as the focus of support if they are to result in sustained capacity improvements.
- Relationships are critical. Capacity development requires trusting relationships built up over a period of time. The long-term nature of MSSIF is appropriate in this regard, but improvements can be made to the Advisor recruitment process and to the transition between Advisors to improve the likelihood of success.
- A variety of external blockages have hampered the effectiveness of MSSIF. These include: broader Solomon Islands government (SIG) processes such as approvals for staffing positions (and relatedly, the number of unfilled positions particularly in policy) and financial payments; political oversight of offshore fisheries management; and the commitment and engagement of MFMR counterparts and decision-makers. Reciprocal commitments are required on the parts of both development partners, if these blockages are to be overcome and the benefits of MSSIF are to be realised. The commitments required are set out below in our recommendations.

Recommendations

Programme design

Level of support

1. Maintain the level of funding and technical support provided by MSSIF at planned levels, including the currently planned levels of in-country Advisor time.

Modalities

2. Maintain the existing combination of modalities of MSSIF, comprising grant funding, in-country Advisors, technical specialists for specific inputs and funding for selected activities that support MFMR priorities.
3. Support MFMR in the regular production of a Corporate Plan that reflects priorities and the resources devoted to them, as well as timely Annual Reports that report on progress towards and spending on those priorities.
4. Consider greater use of secondments from the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries to support MSSIF objectives and MFMR priorities (under the existing Memorandum of Understanding between MPI and MFAT).

Focus of support

5. Increase the emphasis on capacity development, freeing up resources to do so by:
 - (a) Focusing MSSIF on a smaller number of key projects.
 - (b) Lifting the focus of the Team Leader to overall strategic programme management, with MFMR Deputy Directors assuming responsibility for day-to-day project management.

Results framework

6. Develop a more robust programme logic and results framework, by:
 - (a) Clearly articulating the middle level of intervention logic (programme-level impacts) that is currently absent.
 - (b) Developing better and more specific indicators that relate directly to the programme's outputs, impacts and outcomes and meet good practice criteria for indicator selection and design.

Approach to capacity development

7. Support MFMR in commissioning a formal CD assessment that:
 - (a) Spans the dimensions of organisational, individual and stakeholder engagement capacity.
 - (b) For individual CD, encompasses both technical and generic skills.
8. Support MFMR in developing an organisation-wide CD plan and individual staff development plans to address the identified needs, which:
 - (a) For individual CD, include a variety of skills transfer methods, tailored to individual staff needs and learning styles.
 - (b) Are contextualised for the Solomon Islands and MFMR context and environment, by being:
 - (i) Simple to implement, with sequenced priorities and implementation steps over several years.
 - (ii) Suitably tailored to address the gender-specific needs of MFMR staff members.
 - (c) Are fully documented and approved by the MFMR Permanent Secretary (or Deputy Directors for individual staff plans).
9. Ensure that the annual MSSIF work plans specify how the programme will contribute to these MFMR development plans.
10. Create a Technical Advisor counterpart/mentoring role for the Fisheries Director and for the Human Resources Development manager.
11. Strengthen the Advisor recruitment process by:

- (a) Developing Terms of Reference for MSSIF Advisors that include:
 - (i) Clearer and more explicit focus on CD, including outputs-based deliverables with specific metrics.
 - (ii) Realistic and pragmatic expectations around the nature and pace of CD benefits realisation.
 - (b) Consider broader dissemination of Expressions of Interest (including via other media/tools) to reach a wider talent pool.
 - (c) Verbally interview all shortlisted candidates and all referees.
 - (d) Broaden the selection panels to include relevant specialists (including CD).
12. Support MFMR in clarifying internal Ministry roles and responsibilities for stakeholder fora such as the Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Management Area Network (SILMMA).
13. Support MFMR in undertaking a stakeholder analysis and developing a stakeholder engagement plan (that is suitably contextualised for the Solomon Islands environment).

Areas for future support

Offshore fisheries

14. Help MFMR complete current priorities by supporting:
- (a) The passage of the new Fisheries Bill through Parliament (relates also to inshore fisheries) and Cabinet approval of the draft Tuna Management and Development Plan.
 - (b) Analysis and development of negotiating strategies for longline and purse seine access discussions with foreign fishing nations.
 - (c) The roll-out of the Forum Fisheries Agency information technology modules in MFMR, drawing on Secretariat for the Pacific Community expertise to improve data input, and other aspects required to implement the findings of the review of the licensing system.
 - (d) Strengthening operational aspects of fisheries compliance.
 - (e) The revival of the Fisheries Advisory Council and the approval of the Licensing Guidelines.
15. Assist with extension into the following selected priority areas:
- (a) Tightening of the implementation of the longline policy to ensure returns are maximised.
 - (b) Developing policy and implementing systems for sustainable management of and maximising returns from archipelagic waters.
16. Continue to support the development and application of onshore investment requirements and processes, and build MFMR's capacity to lead these processes.

17. Assist MFMR in ensuring that the development and application of onshore investment rules considers and addresses the gender and human rights issues associated with such developments.
18. Continue to support the joint process to improve the functioning of the Competent Authority (CA), and consider assisting by:
 - (a) Facilitating MFMR in taking a lead in the industry working group.
 - (b) Contracting in of technical expertise to support the CA if required.
 - (c) Addressing ongoing CA funding, through assisting MFMR and the Ministry of Health to secure recurrent funding or through developing cost recovery mechanisms.

Inshore fisheries

19. Help MFMR clarify its internal distribution of roles and responsibilities in inshore fisheries management and development.
20. Support MFMR managers in taking a leadership role in co-ordinating inshore management efforts through the National Co-ordination Committee (NCC) and SILMMA fora, ensuring these efforts are aligned with a new MFMR Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy.
21. Support the development of a replacement Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy, in collaboration with stakeholders in NCC, SILMMA and Provincial Governments.
22. Assist MFMR in ensuring that the development of this Strategy, and the selection, design and implementation of any inshore fisheries projects to support this Strategy, considers and addresses gender roles and impacts in inshore fisheries management and livelihoods activities, including by drawing on research previously commissioned by MSSIF.
23. Support investment in data collection and analysis by:
 - (a) Supporting the continuation of the Hapi Fis project, and its proposed extension into the provinces.
 - (b) Exploring the potential to connect provincial data collection efforts with Community-based fisheries management activities, to encourage locals to provide information.
 - (c) Building MFMR capacity to manage and analyse the data, and use it to inform fisheries management policy and decision-making.
 - (d) Encouraging and supporting MFMR in building a culture that understands and values the role of data and information, and facilitates the sharing and use of that information.
24. Assist MFMR in investigating long-term, sustainable funding options for inshore fisheries management.

25. Continue to support the seaweed farming project as a promising livelihoods endeavour, but formulate a donor exit strategy, whereby farmers cover the full costs of replacement equipment, at least in initially successful areas (or secure another donor).
26. Encourage MFMR to look to other donors to fund the infrastructure investment in Provincial Fisheries Centres.
27. Continue to support training for existing Provincial Fisheries Officers, aligned with a new MFMR Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy and work plan.
28. Ensure that the consideration of a model Provincial Fisheries Centre draws on lessons from the literature on past efforts, noting that the best approach in each location depends on local circumstances and there is no 'one size fits all'.

Programme planning and governance

29. Consider putting in place a higher-level governance body.
30. Develop a more robust programme logic and results framework, by:
 - (a) Clearly articulating the middle level of intervention logic (programme-level impacts/intermediate outcomes) that is currently absent.
 - (b) Developing better and more specific indicators that relate directly to the programme's outputs, impacts and outcomes and meet good practice criteria for indicator selection and design.
31. Use this redeveloped framework to further simplify and improve MSSIF and MFMR planning and reporting.
32. Start to formally plan the shape and scale of MSSIF assistance over a more than one-year timeframe, particularly as the programmed end in 2018 is approached.

Preconditions for success

The following mutual commitments are considered preconditions for the effectiveness and sustainability of MSSIF:

On the part of MFMR:

- (a) Developing a robust Corporate Plan, alongside which MSSIF can structure and focus its support.
- (b) Committing to practice staff performance management, supported by MSSIF. This could be assisted by proactively engaging the SIG-wide initiatives in public sector management.
- (c) Clarifying and codifying the MFMR organisational structure, roles and responsibilities (particularly between the Inshore and Provincial Fisheries Divisions).

On the part of MFAT:

- (a) MFAT committing to better planning and earlier commencement of the recruitment process to avoid gaps and disruption between advisors (ideally planning for overlap between advisors to allow handover).
- (b) Implementing the above improvements to the advisor recruitment process.
- (c) Accepting realistic expectations around the realisation of CD benefits (to be developed and codified in the Activity Design Document stage).
- (d) Ensuring that the formulation and development of new activities is aligned with MSSIF governance and planning processes, and encouraging other donors to do likewise.

1. Background and context of the Activity

1.1 Programme goals

The Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) programme is a partnership between New Zealand and Solomon Islands (SI). It is implemented by the Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), with support from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The partnership arrangement signed in 2009 noted that New Zealand's support is expected to continue until at least 2018.

The goal of MSSIF is 'the sustainable development and management of fisheries resources to ensure long-term benefits for the people of Solomon Islands'. To achieve this goal, the objective of MSSIF is 'to strengthen the capacity of Solomon Islands fisheries sector to achieve improved livelihood, food security, and economic benefits'. Key focus areas include offshore fisheries development, inshore fisheries development and institutional capacity development.

1.2 Background and context

1.2.1 New Zealand's support for Solomon Islands fisheries

New Zealand support for MFMR began in earnest with the Solomon Islands Marine Resources Organisational Strategy (SIMROS) programme, an institutional development activity that ran from 2006 to 2010. The current MSSIF programme emerged from SIMROS. There have also been other fisheries projects to improve rural livelihoods in Solomon Islands, notably a project undertaken by WorldFish to support the development of the marine ornamentals industry that was funded by New Zealand from 2005 to 2010.

Support for Solomon Islands fisheries efforts is in the context of a broader New Zealand aid programme related to fisheries. Aid to Solomon Islands forms a significant part of that effort (20% of funding in the ten years from 2003 to 2013). The major part of the fisheries aid programme is budget and project support for the regional agencies, in particular the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

Fisheries aid support to Solomon Islands is also a relatively modest part of New Zealand's overall assistance to Solomon Islands, which also includes a significant effort on education amongst other activities.

1.2.2 Offshore fisheries

Solomon Islands' offshore fisheries are dominated by tuna fishing, comprising purse seine, longline and pole and line fishery sectors. Tuna are a regional resource located in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The catch of the four main tuna species (skipjack,

yellowfin, bigeye and albacore) from the region averages around 2.5 million tonnes, with about 6% of this coming from Solomon Islands fisheries waters.

Because tuna are a regional resource their effective conservation, management and development requires a high degree of co-operation between coastal states and those states with fishing interests. Solomon Islands is party to a number of agreements and participates in the work of several agencies with this co-operative aim, including: the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the FFA, and the collection of agreements between the tuna-rich central Pacific countries¹ (the Nauru Agreement (PNA), the Palau Arrangement, and the Federated States of Micronesia Arrangement).

The Solomon Islands has three distinct tuna fisheries:

1. **Purse seine** fishery targeting skipjack, with significant bycatches of yellowfin and bigeye. Fishing is managed by MFMR under the PNA vessel day scheme (VDS), which currently provides Solomon Islands with an annual allocation is 3,185 days. Fishing effort in archipelagic waters is not counted against this day allocation. Catches over the past five years have averaged around 115,000 tonnes (worth USD 168 million per year).
2. **Long line** fishery comprising large scale long line vessels targeting yellowfin and bigeye (with albacore bycatch) and smaller vessels targeting albacore tuna (with yellowfin and bigeye bycatch). MFMR manages the fishery by limiting the number of licenses in each target fishery. The Solomon Islands plans to bring the fishery into the PNA long line VDS in 2014 or shortly thereafter. Catches over the past five years have averaged around 24,000 tonnes (worth USD 124 million per year).
3. **Pole and line** fishery, targeting skipjack with a catch of yellowfin. The fishery has recently been re-established with local and foreign licensed boats re-entering the fishery. Catches over the past five years have been highly variable, averaging around 3,000 tonnes, but ranging from zero tonnes in 2010 to over 11,000 tonnes in 2012.

The legal and policy framework comprises the Fisheries Act 1998,² the MFMR Corporate Plan 2010-13, the Longline Fishery Policy and the (draft) Solomon Islands Tuna Management and Development Plan. Apart from the power to enter into bilateral and multilateral agreements, which is the domain of the Minister on approval from Cabinet, offshore fisheries management is predominantly the responsibility of the MFMR Director of Fisheries. The Director is supported by an Offshore Fisheries Division comprising a Deputy Director and information, licensing and compliance sections.

The main stakeholders in the domestic industry are SolTuna/National Fisheries Development (NFD) and South Seas Investments (SSI). Other stakeholders include:

- Charter vessel operators, who are required to follow the conditions of licenses.

¹ Tuvalu, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and Solomon Islands (Tokelau has joined the Palau Arrangement).

² A replacement piece of legislation is due to be introduced to Solomon Islands Parliament in 2014.

- Foreign countries seeking access to offshore resources, which are secured through foreign licensed access arrangements, and the companies that operate vessels under those access arrangements (and required to follow licence conditions).

Several government agencies are involved in the offshore fisheries sector:

- Police Maritime Unit of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, who assist in boarding and inspection of fishing vessels to check compliance with license conditions.
- The Customs and Excise Division of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, who receive access fees secured under foreign licensed access arrangements.
- The Ministry of Health and Medical Services, who are responsible for the safety of seafood for human consumption and are therefore the ‘Competent Authority’ (CA) for certifying seafood exports to the European Union (EU).

1.2.3 Inshore fisheries

Inshore fisheries are an important source of food security and income. In rural areas, where most of the Solomon Islanders live (between 70% and 80%), nearly half of all women and 90% of men fish or collect aquatic resources for food and income.

Fishing and collection is done with a wide range of gears and techniques. Estimates of the total value and quantity of harvests are not available, but MFMR estimates that in 2011 exports were in the order of 1,073,000 kilograms worth SBD³ 17.6 million (average value SBD 16/kilogramme). The most valuable exports were of trochus shell, seaweed and coral.

Inshore fisheries management is principally in the domain of provincial governments and local communities. There are three levels to the fisheries policy and legislative framework governing inshore fisheries:

1. **National** – providing assistance to Provincial governments to develop fisheries management and development plans or, in special cases, developing a fisheries management plan for a particular species. Each plan needs to be considered by the (to be established) Fisheries Advisory Council (FAC) and approved by the Minister of Fisheries. The principal power that the central government has over the use of inshore resources is via export licences and (when required) bans on exports of species.
2. **Provincial** – Provincial governments have principal responsibility for managing and developing fisheries in their coastal waters (out to three nautical miles from shore). They have a range of powers, activated by ordinances, including: preparing and administering management and development plans, registering customary rights and boundaries, setting closed areas and closed season, and establishing marine reserves. To come into effect, ordinances must be approved by the Minister for the Province and by the Minister of Fisheries. No ordinances have been approved under the Fisheries Act 1998, though some have been approved under provincial legislation.
3. **Customary/local** – customary rights can be registered, with boundaries and their assignment to persons. These necessarily built on existing traditional tenure systems

³ Solomon Islands dollars.

exercised by coastal villages and communities. As resourcing of customary/local fisheries management is non-existent, most resource management and conservation initiatives at this level appear to be mainly driven by village chiefs, non-government initiatives and the churches.

Apart from the approval powers for provincial fisheries management and development plans, which is the domain of the Minister, the national government's inshore fisheries management powers are predominantly the responsibility of the MFMR Director of Fisheries. The Director is supported by two divisions:

- Inshore Fisheries Division, led by a Deputy Director, with research, marketing and aquaculture sections.
- Provincial Development and Extension Division, led by a Deputy Director, with provincial extension, community-based fisheries management, and engineering and maintenance sections.

Stakeholders that work with MFMR in inshore fisheries include: WorldFish, the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, SPC, and the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MoE), provincial governments, and local communities and villages.

1.3 Modality of support

New Zealand's support for Solomon Islands fisheries is considered a long-term partnership approach. Support is delivered via the following modalities:

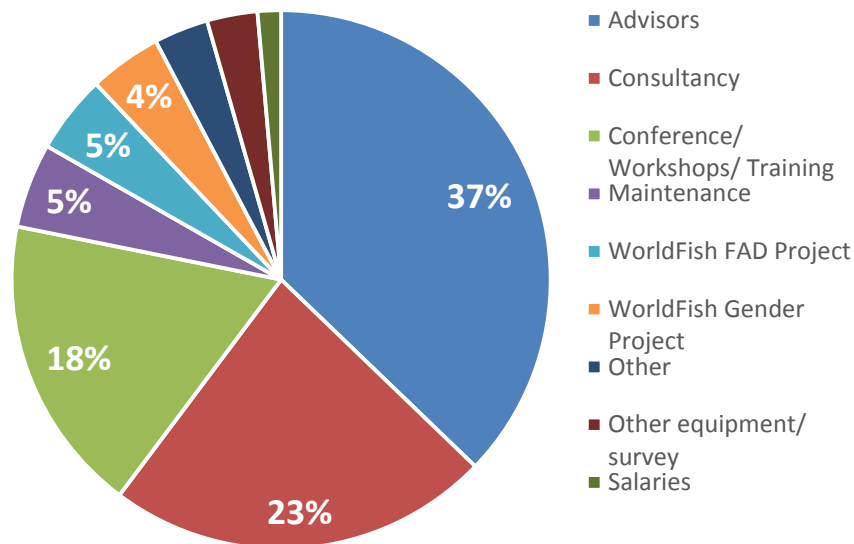
- Direct funding for MFMR operations, including funding for non-government organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) to implement programmes that support MFMR priorities (provided by way of a Grant Funding Arrangement).
- Advisors, contracted directly to MFAT, working in-country to assist with capacity development and programme implementation.
- Technical specialists contracted through MSSIF, providing input on specific issues, e.g. seaweed industry development, or monitoring and evaluation.

1.4 Funding overview

Total budgeted funding from October 2010 until the end of 2014 is SBD 47m (around NZD 8m). Of this, 17m SBD has been budgeted for the MFAT-contracted Advisors, 11m for consultancies contracted through MSSIF, and 9m for training. Together these three items account for just under 80% of the total budget, with two WorldFish projects accounting for another 10%.

The chart below shows the breakdown of the SBD 47m, i.e. of total budgeted spending over four years.

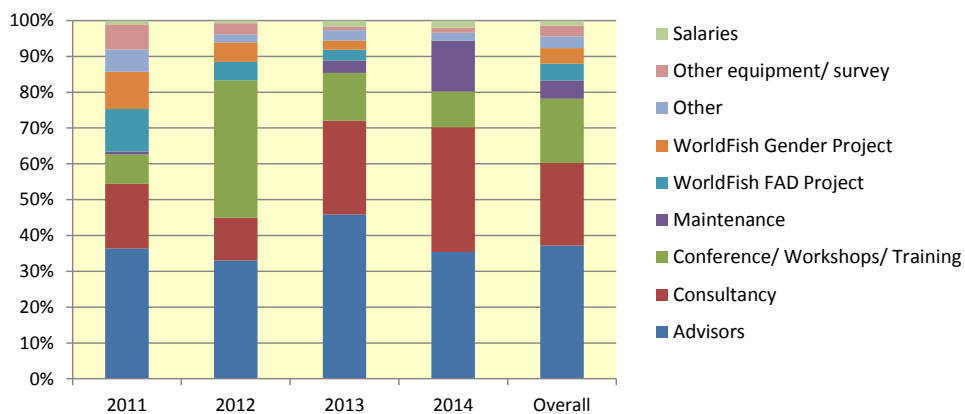
Figure 1 Total budgeted MSSIF spend (including advisors) 2010 to 2014



Source: MFAT; MFAT Grant Funding Arrangement and Letters of Variation

The chart below shows how the components of budgeted spending have varied by year. The pie chart above is the same as the last column on this chart.

Figure 2 Budgeted MSSIF spend (excluding advisors) 2010 to 2014



Source: MFAT; MFAT Grant Funding Arrangement and Letters of Variation

Unfortunately the input cost breakdown used in the grant funding documentation is not especially intuitive, and there is no explanation of movements in the numbers over time, which makes it hard to analyse.

We can see from these figures that MSSIF involves a high proportion of spend on Advisors, and a high and growing spend on consultancies. As noted above, 69% of budgeted spend in the 2011-2014 period has been on technical assistance and external advice. The budget for external advice has grown over time, reaching 4.9m in 2014 compared with 2m in 2011.

We had limited information on actual spending compared with budgets. The 2013 financial acquittal explains that the 2013 budget was substantially underspent: by 1.9m on a 4.9m budget. We were told that this was due to delays in appointing Advisors; i.e. the gap before the new TL/IDA was arranged and got on the ground. We note that two-thirds of the underspend, 1.3m of 1.9m, is in the consultancy line item, indicating that the TL/IDA is crucial for driving consultancy activity for MFMR, and perhaps also suggesting that the budget is not the limiting factor on spending overall.

It is very hard to tell from the reporting from the previous TL/IDA, but it seems that underspends were also common in the early part of the MSSIF programme.

We had limited information on the expected future track of MSSIF spending. MFAT does budget out to 2014/15 (using years to June) for Advisor funding. The SIG budgets out to 2015/16 for MFMR as part of its standard government process. As far as we saw, there is nothing detailing the expected level of grant funding beyond 2014. The initial Programme Design has no financial information.

1.5 2013 Strategic-level evaluation

The 2013 *Evaluation of New Zealand's fisheries sector work in the Pacific* was a MFAT-led strategic-level evaluation that sought to assess the impacts of the various fisheries sector Activities that were funded by New Zealand over the 2003-2010 period. The evaluation was undertaken by Sapere Research Group.

With respect to MSSIF (and its predecessor SIMROS), the evaluation involved:

- Document review.
- Interviews with stakeholders in New Zealand and Solomon Islands.
- A case study of the support for a rural livelihoods development scheme in Gizo, Western Province.
- Data gathering and analysis.

Several recommendations from the evaluation have particular relevance to the design of the next stage of MSSIF:

- Consider the appropriate balance of support between support for oceanic and coastal fisheries.
- Design institutional strengthening programmes to run less intensively but over longer time frames, and use international best practice to meet local needs.
- Look to ensure better pre-assessment of viability of prospective economic development projects.
- Simplify and improve monitoring and reporting of programmes.

Since 2010, MFAT has been undertaking a number of internal changes that pick up on some of these recommendations. This project, involving the assessment and design of the activities in MSSIF, provides an opportunity to further test and implement these recommendations. At the point of writing, the report remains confidential to MFAT so the full recommendations are not included here.

2. Purpose, scope and objectives of the assessment

2.1 Purpose and scope

The goal of this review is to assess the progress of the MSSIF programme over the period 2010 to 2013. We will then use this assessment as a basis for design changes to the overall MSSIF approach. The design will outline a new suggested approach for the period from 2014 to 2018.

The outcomes to be achieved from the assessment and design work are:

1. An Assessment report.
2. A draft Activity Design Document (ADD).

2.2 Objectives and assessment questions

The objectives of this assessment are as follows.

- Assessing the general performance of MSSIF to date, drawing on desktop analysis completed by MFAT consultants.
- Assessing progress on capacity development (CD) to date, assessing key organisational needs in this area, and making any associated recommendations for consideration for design of the support over 2010 to 2018.
- Recommending potential areas where New Zealand can best add value to Solomon Islands fisheries via the MSSIF programme for 2014 to 2018.
- Reviewing modalities of assistance to date, including the nature and structure of international and local technical assistance, and the delivery and performance of subcontracted third party projects.
- Assessing the application and functionality of the MSSIF monitoring and evaluation plan and linked MFMR performance framework, and recommend improvements to the plan.
- Recommending options for collaboration and harmonisation with current and proposed activities supported by other development partners and MFAT regional programmes.

Following approval of this Assessment report, we will develop a draft ADD to describe the nature and extent of New Zealand's support for fisheries under the MSSIF programme until the end of 2018.

2.3 Structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 3 summarises the approach used for this assessment, with methodological limitations explained in Section 4.
- Findings from interviews and document review are presented in Section 5. We discuss the objectives, outputs and impacts of each component of the MSSIF programme.
- Our analysis of these findings and of the data and other information we gathered is set out in Section 6.
- In Sections 7 and 8 we present case studies on two particular activities for which further MSSIF support is being considered – the seaweed livelihoods project (funded to date by the European Union and supported by MSSIF); and the Provincial Fisheries Centres.
- Our recommendations are set out in Section 9.

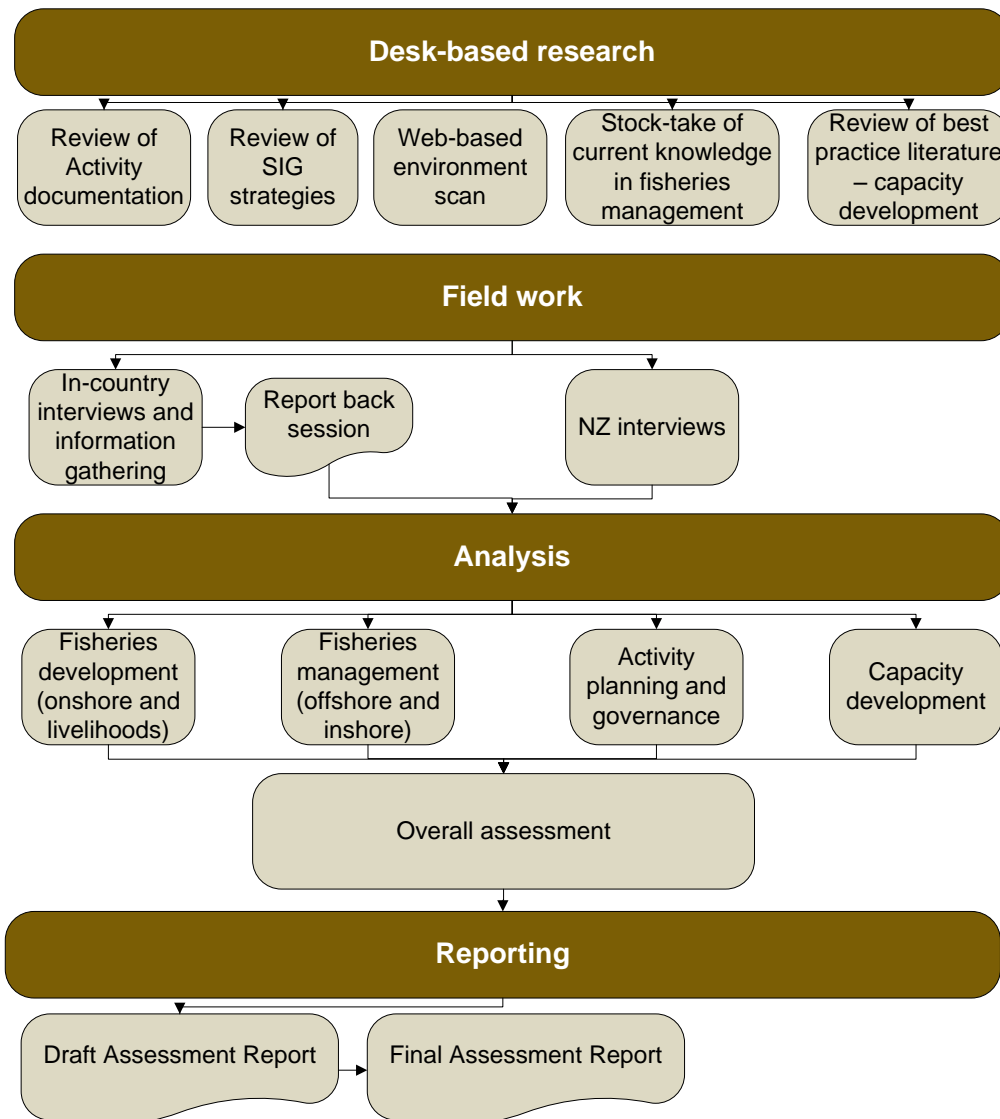
3. Methodology

3.1 Overall approach

Our approach comprised desk-based research, data and information collection and analysis, and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in Solomon Islands and New Zealand. At the conclusion of our field work in Solomon Islands, we conducted a report back session in Honiara with the MFMR Permanent Secretary and Division heads, and the New Zealand High Commission. The purpose of this session was to present our preliminary findings, and test our emerging recommendations for the design of MSSIF 2014-2018.

The following diagram sets out the components and stages of our work.

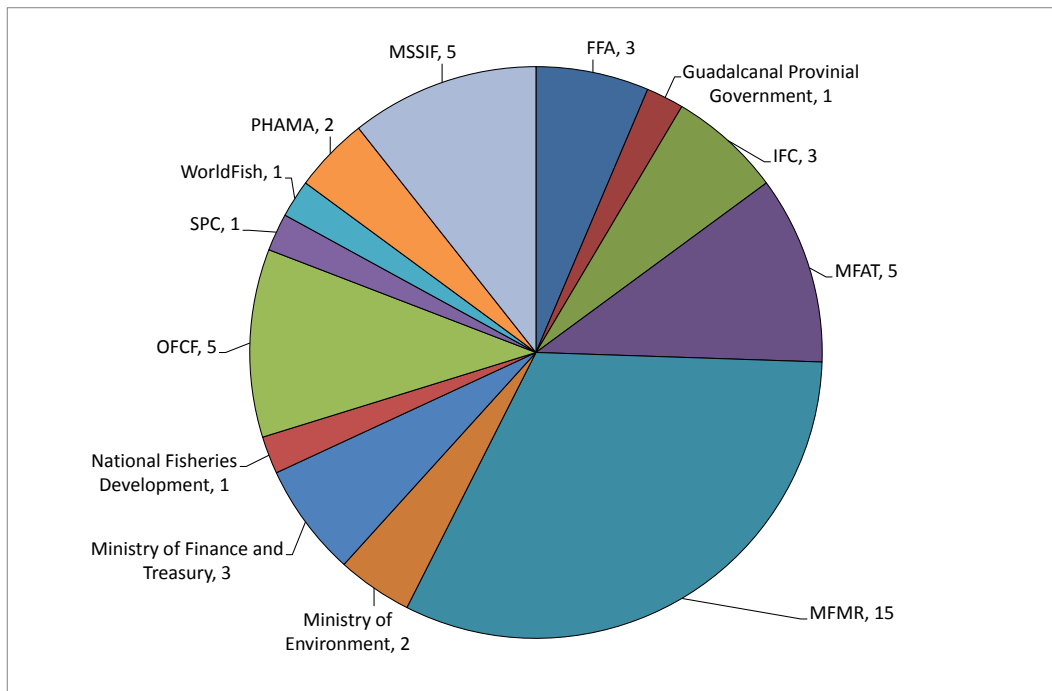
Figure 3 Overview of approach



3.2 Profile of interviewees

We interviewed 47 stakeholders, 43 of these in Solomon Islands (and two by email). The profile of these stakeholders is illustrated in the following chart.

Figure 4 Profile of interviewees



The topic guide for our interviews is provided in Appendix 3 .

3.3 Work components

The strategic evaluation referred to earlier in Section 1.5 looked at the 2003-2010 time period, and therefore focused more on SIMROS than on MSSIF. The first step in this review was to undertake a stock take of all information held by Sapere, and determine any gaps.

We then prepared an information request to fill the identified gaps for distribution to MFAT, Post and MFMR staff. This information request covered programme documentation as well as other information necessary to complete the other work components. We also gathered more documentation during the field work.

We reviewed the documents collected:

- To identify what has been achieved through MSSIF.
- To get a sense of what has worked well and not so well, and lessons learned.
- To understand where efforts are already in train that would fit with our developing recommendations.

The achievements and lessons gleaned from this review are incorporated into subsequent chapters in this assessment report.

We will distribute a list of all the documents we received, including those that we sought but did not secure. We will also make our organised set of documents available electronically to MFAT, in case it is useful to have a single store for this information.

3.3.1 Fisheries development

There are two main fisheries development activities: efforts to boost investment in onshore processing facilities, and work to build a larger and more sustainable seaweed farming industry.

Our analysis of both of these endeavours can be found later in this report. In both cases we looked at:

- The design and implementation process (including how the projects were selected, scoped and appraised, and the structure of decision-making), as well as the alignment of the projects with stated SIG priorities.
- What work was done compared to the intentions in the design documents.
- The likely commercial viability of the currently selected projects, based on:
 - Review of any supporting economic analysis or business cases, checking that such analyses (1) have been produced, and (2) are robust.
 - A desk-based review of documentation

In the case of Provincial Fisheries Centres, we had access to useful work from previous analysts, as well as reasonably extensive commentary from our interviewees. MFMR has not as yet embarked on any real investments in these Centres, although those plans are in prospect, and so our analysis mostly takes the form of guidance from others' experiences that might be useful as MFMR approaches these issues in the coming months.

3.3.2 Fisheries management

The 2013 strategic-level Pacific fisheries evaluation highlighted coastal fisheries as a particular gap in terms of both New Zealand's support and the work programmes of the regional agencies (FFA and SPC). And in Solomon Islands we found particular concerns with capacity at the provincial level, both within MFMR and in provincial government. Sustainable management of coastal fisheries is critical for food security and sustainable livelihoods, and underpins sustainable economic development in the sector.

This section focuses on the fisheries management work under MSSIF, and comprised review of Solomon Islands progress in offshore and inshore fisheries management. This involved reviewing documentation and policy papers, with a particular focus on progress in MFMR since 2010. We conducted interviews with MFMR staff, MSSIF advisers, market survey project team members, other Government agencies and WorldFish. The interviews sought to establish the impact on the quality of Solomon Islands fisheries management, the contribution of MSSIF to MFMR offshore and inshore management and capacity, and ideas for new work areas for MFMR that MSSIF could support.

Ideas for future support were then mapped against a standard fisheries management framework, to confirm their value and to identify gaps that the next phase of MSSIF should look to address.

3.3.3 Capacity development

This work component focused on the capacity development dimension of MSSIF, and comprised three components.

1. **Review of best practice literature** on CD in a development context (summarised in Appendix 5). This review was not exhaustive, but focused on the best practice guidance available via the World Bank Institute's portal. The material we reviewed provided the theoretical basis for considering the design of CD support in the next phase of MSSIF.
2. **Review of capacity development support.** We conducted one-on-one interviews with the MFMR counterparts who have worked alongside MSSIF-funded Advisors (or as part of their teams). These interviews sought to establish the impact of the support they have received, and how this is reflected in their confidence to do their job. We sought views on the quality of the support, the way it was delivered, and ideas for ways in which such support could be improved in future.
3. **Review of Advisor recruitment process** – we were unable to access documentation relating to any particular recruitment process. Instead, we constructed a picture of the process via interviews, and reviewed the Terms of Reference (ToR) for some advisor positions and other general documentation that was made available to us. We then compared these materials against the original design and stated objectives of MSSIF, and to standard HR recruitment protocols and practices.

3.3.4 Activity planning and governance

We assessed the design and set-up of MSSIF planning, governance and reporting processes, how they are working in practice, and how they could be improved.

We looked at four matters:

- **Work programme planning and donor harmonisation** – we looked for evidence on MFMR internal processes to determine annual work plans, and how the resulting plans are aligning with broader SIG priorities and strategies, as well as with the work programmes of other development partners (including other donors as well as the regional agencies).
- **Governance arrangements** – we investigated the structure of decision-making, and the nature of delegations and contractual arrangements. We include an analysis of decision-making rights using the 'funding and accountability analysis tool' that was developed in the 2013 strategic evaluation.
- **Reporting** – we looked at the nature and frequency of project and Activity-level reporting, reviewing who prepares what reports for whom, and what happens to them.
- **Monitoring and evaluation system** – we reviewed the work of the MSSIF-funded Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor (MEA), and existing practices in MFMR and MSSIF in relation to reporting of progress against indicators.

4. Limitations of the assessment

4.1 A 'lite' approach to assessment of capacity development

We did not have the time or resources allocated within this project to comprehensively implement any of the available assessment and design tools identified in the review of best practice in CD. However, we sought to synthesise and draw on the key elements of the frameworks we reviewed in our assessment of MSSIF, and recommendations for the design of the next stage of the programme. We did this by:

- Seeking to identify and interview MFMR's key external stakeholders.
- Interviewing both advisors and their counterparts, in a one-on-one basis. Our interview prompts (set out in Appendix 4) sought to cover key performance metrics of CD, based on the best practice assessment guidance.
- Reviewing documentation on any formal evaluations of training/CD activities.

4.2 Review of advisor recruitment process

In light of the concerns raised about advisor appointments in the strategic evaluation, we sought to undertake a process review of the advisor recruitment process. Ideally, this would have involved review of documentation and interviews with members of the selection panel/s, exploring:

- The job specification.
- The advertising process.
- The selection criteria, and any weighting applied (e.g. to specific competencies).
- The selection process, including:
 - Any assessment tools used
 - How the views of MFMR staff were sought and incorporated
 - Reference checking
 - The decision (comparing the credentials of the successful candidate with those who were unsuccessful).
- The satisfaction of all stakeholders with the successful candidates.

We were unable to access this documentation due to concerns about confidentiality. Instead, we garnered general information about the recruitment process through stakeholder interviews.

4.3 Analytical comparators

Our assessment is confined to consideration of how MSSIF has performed against the objectives and intentions in the Design Document. We are not comparing its performance

against commensurable programmes in other Pacific Island Countries (PICs), or the performance of MFMR against other fisheries agencies in the Pacific.

4.4 Absence of well-defined results indicators or baseline data

A key constraint in our assessment has been the absence of a baseline, or well-defined results indicators (or a complete intervention logic) for the programme. We sought to retrospectively construct some idea of the pre-intervention strength and capacity of MFMR, and thereby the impacts that can be attributed to MSSIF, through qualitative interviews.

4.5 Availability of key people, documentation and financial information

We did not manage to secure all of the documents that we would have liked, although we think the picture is sufficiently complete that our analysis is not imperilled. As noted above (and as was also the case for the 2013 Strategic Evaluation) available financial information was adequate but not especially insightful.

5. Findings

5.1 Programme-level findings

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5.1.2 ...but competing demands are stretching it too thin

In a way, the reinvigorated MSSIF programme has been a victim of its own success. Demands on the programme resources are high, with advisors being diverted into *'firefighting'* activities and absorbed in day-to-day project management and programme administration. This results in *'key people spread too thin'*.

Several interviewees were of the view that MSSIF should be more focused in its activities:

I'd 'rather see something done at the end of the year, than everything half done'.... MSSIF should 'concentrate on a few things that would be done at the end of the year'.

The TL/IDA has estimated that he spent 25% of time during 2013 on programme/financial administration (compared to a planned 14%) and just 9% on capacity development (compared to an expected 18%).⁴ And the Project Management Unit Technical Advisor (PMUTA) has spent most of his time to date project managing the completion of a lengthy

⁴ Simon Diffey (2014) *MSSIF Annual report (February-December 2013)*, p.8.

questionnaire on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing for the European Commission, at the request of MFMR. (Note that we are not debating the importance of this work, which was critical to maintaining SI export access to the European Union).

Compounding this, Advisors frequently feel pressure to undertake technical work themselves, particularly when their MFMR counterparts are absent. Unexpected/unexplained and unmanaged staff absences were repeatedly raised as a particular concern to the success of MSSIF and the sustainability of its outcomes more generally.

5.1.3 Level of funding considered about right

Interviewees were of the view that the level of funding provided by MSSIF is about right. Some cautioned against increasing funding levels, warning that this would place stresses on the organisation, due to the limited absorptive capacity (cited as being a combination of skill levels and under-staffing).

As noted earlier, we see what looks like an enduring high level of underspending against the budget, particularly in the consulting line item. This is worth monitoring in case it means that resources are over-allocated to MSSIF. We were told that the underspend was caused by the gap between TL/IDAs, meaning it may be a transitory issue. But we note that the 2014 consulting budget is substantially higher even than the underspent 2013 figure.

5.1.4 General satisfaction with modalities

Interviewees also expressed satisfaction with the modalities of MSSIF – in particular the long-term nature of support (less intensive than the fly-in fly-out model), and the combination of grant funding and in-country advisors.

'MSSIF really helps because it's budget support – at least we achieve most things – the Ministry cannot do it on its own'.

MSSIF 'failed in delivery – but at least it set up an architecture for how it should be delivered'.

The OFA and Inshore Fisheries Advisor (IFA) were originally conceived as part-time positions (comprising 120 days a year in-country and 30 days out of country). The OFA was recast as a full-time position in 2011, but from 2014 it will revert to part-time. We encountered general support for this planned level of support, as it provides MFMR staff room to implement learning and try themselves out – and an incentive to retain knowledge. However there were some provisos:

- Counterparts also need access to on call support as day-to-day issues arise. Full-time support is good in this regard, but it can be provided by part-timers via email etc.
- It takes time to build relationships and embed CD benefits, and continuity is important in this regard. Gaps between advisors is a particular problem, and (at the time of our field work) was occurring once again with recruitment for the next OFA and IFA still in progress after the departure of the outgoing Advisors.
- Staff can *'forget everything'* when the Advisor leaves; and progress may stall in their absence. We also heard that advisors are *'pushing you too hard'*, particularly when they are only in-country for a limited period and expect staff to *'get too much done in the short time they are here'*.

It was suggested to us that the CD support provided by Advisors could usefully be supplemented with more secondments to MFMR (e.g. from the Ministry for Primary Industries) as a way of resourcing it up, and of accessing people with both fisheries expertise and public sector experience.

5.1.5 External blockages hampering the benefits of MSSIF

Interviewees cited a number of influences external to MSSIF that are inhibiting full realisation and sustainability of its benefits:

- Broader SIG processes – in particular the Public Service Commission (PSC), which interviewees considered opaque and slow-moving for staffing approvals; and dealing with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury processes for payment approvals, which interviewees said have caused repeated programme delays (such as the organisation of provincial training workshops).
- Related to this is the high number of unfilled vacancies, in particular the PMU has only one staff member and at the time of our field work the Division had no policy staff.⁵ We were told that, at the time of writing, there are currently 20 unfilled positions across MFMR.
- The quality of the political oversight of offshore fisheries management. As one interviewee noted, MSSIF is good, but *‘the Solomon Islands government needs to play its part’*.
- The commitment and engagement of MFMR counterparts and decision makers. As discussed below, repeat, unexplained and unaddressed staff absences hamper the ability of Advisors to build capacity, and promote the temptation for them to do the work directly themselves.

5.1.6 Donor and stakeholder co-ordination a challenge in inshore

A host of donors and stakeholder organisations are involved in inshore fisheries: WorldFish, the Coral Triangle Initiative, the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, SPC, and the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MoE). Environmental NOGs tend to focus on:

- Working with communities to establish marine managed areas (MMAs) or marine protected areas (MPAs).
- FAD projects with selected communities.

These activities create co-ordination challenges for MFMR in what is already a relatively complicated and multi-layered policy, legal and funding framework for managing inshore fisheries. Relationships with some operators in the inshore sector have been a challenge for MFMR and MSSIF. Interviewees cited the lack of clarity around MFMR’s mandate in the

⁵ We understand that four graduates subsequently started in February 2014, two in the PMU and two in the Policy, Planning and Project Management Division.

inshore space, and the ‘*turf warfare*’ between NGOs as inhibitors to effective co-ordination – MFMR is ‘*really tentative around programming*’.

Some efforts have been made around the Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Area Network (SILMMA), but this has been ‘*patchy, and difficult in the context*’. Distance is an inhibitor as travel to the provinces is difficult and expensive.

A similar, though probably less complex, picture exists in for offshore fisheries with the following organisations involved: FFA (different divisions), the International Finance Corporation (IFC – part of the World Bank), SPC, and WCPFC. The World Bank is likely to provide donor support from the end of 2014 through its Pacific Regional Oceanscape Programme (PROP) which is likely to fund selected projects directly for MFMR and via FFA services.

The original MSSIF Design Document envisaged a high-level governance body (a Programme Committee), being chaired by the Fisheries Advisory Council. Despite advisor efforts (beginning under SIMROS) to revive this peak body, it remains dormant at present. A paper prepared by the OFA is currently awaiting management approval.

In both sectors, MSSIF has played a role in supporting MFMR co-ordinate the range of donors and organisations in Solomon Islands fisheries. Some players are more amenable to leadership and co-ordination than others, which reflects the variety of policy and funding drivers.

5.2 Capacity development

5.2.1 Goals and objectives

The objective of the CD component of MSSIF is:

To build the capacity of MFMR to coordinate and lead sustainable development and management, and the capacity of stakeholders to participate in sector development.

The high-level outcome is: ‘a strong and positive enabling environment for the development and sustainable use of fisheries resources’. Specific outcomes sought are:

1. National and Provincial Government are providing an enabling policy and regulatory framework and resources for sector development.
2. Fisheries stakeholders are actively participating in sector management and decision making processes.
3. MFMR is providing effective leadership and support to communities, NGOs and CBOs, and the private sector to achieve fisheries sector goals.

These goals are designed to be achieved via:

- Advisors who will develop capacity.
- An allocation for training that MFMR staff and other stakeholders can access to meet specific needs or to fund workshops or training courses.

The Team Leader is responsible for overall MSSIF programme co-ordination as well as being the Institutional Development Advisor. According to the Design Document, ‘all advisor positions would require development of capacity development strategies and a process for localizing the positions’ (p.31).

The Design Document also states that:

Support will have a strong orientation towards mentoring and training to develop leadership and responsibility within MFMR staff while at the same time transferring skills, experience, and knowledge.

Technical assistance under Offshore and Inshore components will also have a focus on institutional strengthening and capacity development for MFMR (p.13).

5.2.2 Outputs

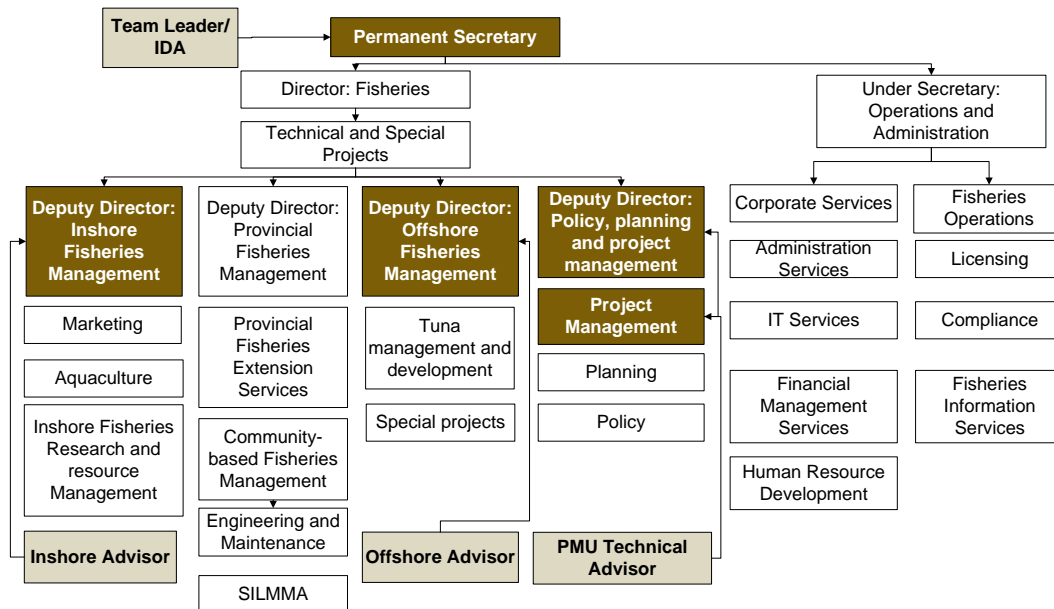
Capacity development has been ad hoc and opportunistic

The following advisor positions have been funded during MSSIF to date:

- Team Leader/Institutional Development Advisor.
- Offshore Fisheries Advisor.
- Inshore Fisheries Advisor.
- Project Management Unit Technical Advisor.
- Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor (a short-term position).
- Commercial Fisheries Investment Advisor (COFIA) (contracted part-time through SIG).
- Seaweed Development and Management Advisor (contracted part-time through SIG)

These Advisors have been responsible for mentoring and capacity development of MFMR counterparts as indicated in the following diagram.

Figure 5 MSSIF Advisors and MFMR counterparts



To date, the Advisors, as well as technical specialists that have been engaged (such as the Fisheries Economist), have delivered or arranged the following formal training:

- Geographic Information System (GIS) training course to MFMR staff.
- Training for MFMR staff on undertaking a survey of Provincial Fisheries Centres.
- Provincial Fisheries Officers workshops (small business planning and Hapi Fis project design)
- Training for MFMR policy and planning staff in the use of MFMR Performance Framework and MSSIF Programme Results Framework.
- Supported training inputs by Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP) consultants for MFMR.

There have been four secondments to the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) (funded and facilitated by MSSIF, but funded under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MPI and MFAT that provides MPI staff time). However, further overseas training is hold pending the repayment of allowances by the last two secondees who absconded while in New Zealand.

The TL/IDA has provided on-the-job training for the Programme Administrator and her assistant. This has included budgeting/financial management systems, preparing meeting agendas and minutes and organising meetings and training with Provincial Fisheries Officers (including the associated logistics such as bookings and transport).

We were told that the OFA provided mentoring to the senior management, in relation to (inter alia) presentational skills and techniques for regional negotiation meetings; and that the OFA, IFA and TL/IDA have provided individual coaching in general skills such as speech writing, report writing and personal time management. Provision of both appears to have

been primarily opportunistic and ad hoc, relying on counterparts to seek advice or in response to the immediate needs of particular projects/meetings.

We heard calls for CD to focus more on generic skills such as personnel management, policy advice and processes (including SIG procedures), report writing in English, as well as information and document management systems:

The 'fundamental thing that needs addressing here is management practices'.

Interviewees expressed a desire for more one-on-one coaching (as opposed to formal training such as short courses), so that counterparts are able to take the lead when the advisor leaves:

CD 'still needs to be done... [it] needs to happen on a one-on-one basis, on the job coaching – so staff learn by doing'.

And we consistently heard the need for a more structured approach to CD – there has been no formal CD assessment, and there is currently no plan for where CD efforts will focus or how support will be delivered.

Some investment in organisational systems

According to programme documentation, MSSIF undertook a review of MFMR operational and technical systems. One interviewee told us that MSSIF has continued the work on information management systems that was initiated under SIMROS, such as ensuring more secure storage of confidential documents by putting locks on filing cabinets.

MSSIF also developed position descriptions of MFMR staff positions and Performance and Development Statements for Senior Officers. However, staff we interviewed did not seem to be aware of these documents, so we suspect they never gained currency.

Support for organisational planning and restructuring

MSSIF supported the development of the MFMR Corporate Plan 2011-2013. This document is no longer current, but we understand MSSIF advisors will similarly provide assistance with the development of its replacement.

MSSIF has also advised on organisational restructuring matters, including advice on the establishment of the Project Management Unit which was followed by the appointment of a PMUTA. Interviewees were divided on the origin of the proposal to split Provincial Fisheries out of the Inshore Fisheries Division (one interviewee suggested it was MSSIF's idea).

Initial successes in cross-agency collaboration

MSSIF funded a consultancy to develop Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines for onshore investment, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment. These are now complete, and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Guidelines (which will include guidance for the consideration and assessment of gender impacts) are currently being prepared.

5.2.3 Impacts

Staff have grown in confidence and skills

As far as we could determine, only the Fisheries Centres business planning and Hapi Fis training workshops were subject to evaluation (comprising participant feedback sheets).

However, we gleaned feedback from MFMR counterparts and staff regarding the benefits of the training and coaching they have received from MSSIF. A number of staff feel they have gained skills such as report writing in English, speech writing, personal time management, managing staff, planning, how to escalate issues, and administrative procedures (including SIG processes):

'We learn a lot – gain more experience.'

'We learn new things we haven't come across before.'

'We really enjoy this work.'

Some staff noted that the skills they've gained are transferable (i.e. to other roles/positions).

Interviewees noted the generally good quality of MFMR managers, though only one ascribed this to MSSIF. One interviewee considered the IFA to be *'really good'* and was a *'go to person for technical advice, like a supervisor'*. MSSIF has also done training for provincial fisheries officers who are understood to have *'gone back with skills and knowledge'*.

However, the gains to date are considered by some external stakeholders to be *'a work in progress'* and ephemeral. One interviewee stated that if MSSIF were to cease tomorrow, MFMR would quickly revert to previous levels of performance and *'the gains made would be lost'*. This underlines the both the modest gains in capacity since 2010, but also the extent of the task confronting MFMR and MSSIF.

But support for performance management and results monitoring appears ineffective

The MSSIF MEA developed a MFMR Performance Framework and MSSIF Programme Results Framework developed by the MEA. However these have never been implemented, partly because the two MFMR staff who were trained in their use left shortly afterwards. Furthermore, the view of the assessment team is that the products were not fit-for-purpose/suitably contextualised for the environment– a matter which is likely to have hindered their application and which is discussed further under section 5.6.

Lack of clarity in MFMR organisational structure

The separation of Provincial Fisheries Management from the Inshore Fisheries Division appears to have generated less clarity rather than more. Every interviewee we spoke to had a different understanding of the organisational structure (the chart in the Corporate Plan is out of date) – *'we are a bit confused ourselves'*.

Roles and responsibilities are blurry – *'and that's where our problem lies'*. There were suggestions that work areas could be either duplicated or fall between the cracks, for instance Provincial Fisheries Officers, who sit within the Provincial Division, do work under Inshore. And we

were unable to ascertain who in practice is leading the co-ordination of SILMMA (which we understand sits ostensibly within Provincial).

In addition, the Director of Fisheries, who is the nexus for the offshore fisheries management decisions, has no MSSIF advisor counterpart. The development of the capacity in this position is critical to achieving MFMR and MSSIF outcomes. One interviewee said: ‘a glaring omission in MSSIF is that Director does not have an advisor as a mentoring counterpart.’

Calls for greater sector leadership

MSSIF has supported some attempts to coordinate with NGOs, but we were told that MFMR’s engagement with these groups was generally weak.

On the other hand two interviewees noted that MFMR has a good relationship with industry, albeit informal (lacking a formal consultation process; and with discussions mostly held offline). The relationship with NFD/SolTuna/TriMarine was cited by one interviewee as one of the best industry-government partnerships in the region – ‘a good example of the way things are supposed to work’.

The MSSIF funded EIA guidelines have been well received by stakeholders and are noted as an example of successful inter-agency cooperation.

But there is a desire from some stakeholders to see MFMR take a greater role in sector leadership. In particular, interviewees expressed a view that MFMR should lead the coordination of CBFM work, via existing for a (e.g. SILMMA and the NCC).

5.3 Offshore fisheries management

5.3.1 Goals and objectives

The objectives of the offshore fisheries component of MSSIF (comprising both fisheries management and onshore development activities) is:

To facilitate sustainable development and management of offshore fisheries through domestic, international, sub-regional and regional initiatives.

The high-level outcome sought is ‘sustainable development and management of the offshore fishery creates improved livelihood and economic benefits’, and the specific outcome relating to fisheries management is ‘Solomon Islands have the capacity to ecologically manage the offshore fishery on a sustainable basis’.

Capacity development MSSIF activities are discussed separately in this report. Planned MSSIF offshore fisheries management activities comprised:

- Develop and support enactment of the National Tuna Management and Development Plan.
- Implement WCPFC and PNA conservation and management measures.
- Improve tuna data collection and management.
- Implement the PNA longline VDS.

MSSIF employed three principal input modalities to deliver these activities:

1. A full-time offshore fishery adviser embedded in MFMR.
2. Short-term advisory inputs from consultants employed by MSSIF for specific pieces of work.
3. Short-term advisory inputs from consultants employed by MFMR, with funding provided through the funding arrangement between MFMR and MFAT.

5.3.2 Outputs

MSSIF activities supported the following outputs:

- Preparation of a draft Tuna Management and Development Plan, which sets out rules for fisheries management and development. This was prepared by MSSIF/MFMR with FFA assistance. It is still in draft form, awaiting approval by the Cabinet, after consideration by the (yet to be formed) Fisheries Advisory Council.
- Development and adoption of a new longline policy.
- Development and Cabinet endorsement of bilateral access negotiation strategies in 2011, 2012 and 2013.
- Domestic processes completed for implementation of the PNA longline VDS (though the Minister of Fisheries has decided this will not be implemented until 2015).
- Implementation of PNA and WCPFC conservation and management measures into regulations and licence conditions.
- Arranging an attachment for the Offshore Deputy Director to MPI (facilitated and funded by MSSIF but arranged under the MoU between MFAT and MPI).

5.3.3 Impacts

MFMR displaying strong and responsible regional leadership and enhancing its reputation...

MFMR, supported by MSSIF and FFA, has grown in confidence in its participation in regional negotiations regarding tuna management. We were told that SIG now has a keener appreciation of their national interest and are much more vocal in debates. This reflects both the quality of the advice prepared (with the support of MSSIF) and the willingness of MFMR to act on this advice.

For example, SIG is likely to be one of the first PNA countries to implement the longline VDS. MSSIF advice succeeded in securing a Cabinet mandate for its introduction in 2014, but this has been deferred due to bilateral pressure from foreign fishing nations. This was nevertheless recognised by external stakeholders we spoke to as an example of excellent regional leadership:

This 'reflects a willingness to accept economic advice that's been given' and 'shows a willingness and ability to take action'.

Solomon Islands is 'up to speed' with its WCPFC and PNA conservation and management measures, having translated these measures into licence conditions from 2014.

The SIG keeps to its purse seine vessel day limits and interpretations of limits (e.g. by closing its fishery in 2010 when it reached its limit) and looks to preserve the integrity of the vessel day scheme (for example by refusing to enter into bilateral agreements where access is not denominated in vessel days).

It effectively capped, limited and adopted a conservative approach to its national catch allocations in FFA and WCPFC negotiations on albacore management. This generated goodwill needed in the negotiations, which were (and are) fraught with difficulties within the FFA membership and with fishing nations.

Solomon Islands was also the only Pacific Island country to implement the four month FAD closure of the purse seine fishery in 2012, which aimed to reduce the bycatch of young bigeye tuna (which are currently overfished).

...and policy changes have contributed to increased economic returns

Returns from the purse seine fishery have jumped, due to the application of PNA benchmark prices for vessel days. The benchmark VDS rate was actually triggered by Solomon Islands; other PNA countries were charging lower rates. The negotiated price led to a significant increase in government revenues, which has been recognised by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. MSSIF provided the support, commitment, encouragement and helped to make the decision.

‘that’s the confidence we have with MSSIF standing along with us... I was proud that this was triggered by Solomon Islands.... It’s a testimony to how we and MSSIF have worked together’.

The 2012 longline policy was a contributor to a more conducive business operating environment which may have assisted recent SoITuna and IFC investments in Noro, Western Province.

Summary statistics on the economic performance of the offshore fishery are presented in the following table.

Table 1 Economic performance of Solomon Islands offshore fishery

Indicator	2010	2011	2013	% increase (2010-2013)
Number of SI nationals employed by fishing industry, including processing	No data	1,380	1,831	33%
Government income from access fees and administrative fees (SBD million)	106.0	135.6	172.7	62%
Value of fish (not just tuna) exports (SBD million)	196.8	341.1	423.0	115%

Sources: Peacey (2013). Note that employment figures from three largest tuna companies. The SI 2009 Population and Housing Census provided no data on employment by sector.

But MFMR hamstrung by other nations' negotiating strategies...

However, the SIG can be 'hamstrung' and their negotiation position undermined by the dynamics of other PICs offering access to their waters. For example, the negotiations around the PNA benchmark price for purse seine licensing fees concluded with a price much lower than the MSSIF-commissioned advice recommended, and than MFMR would have liked. Some interviewees thought Solomon Islands could be getting larger returns in 2014 through better negotiating ('US\$500 to \$1,000/day or more'). But others noted that Solomon Islands' negotiating strength was still being undermined by other PNA countries who treat the benchmark price as the upper limit rather than as the lower limit when negotiating access deals.

The longline policy is also considered a good start, but '*there are still too many licenses*' and priority is not accorded to those investing in onshore facilities. License numbers and who holds them is '*a political issue*.'

And while MFMR's confidence in participating in regional meetings has increased (being better prepared and contributing more), we were told that staff will still defer to MSSIF Advisors when it gets very technical (or the Advisors will step in). Some interviewees were of the opinion that this balance between supporting and doing is better managed now under MSSIF than it was under SIMROS – with Advisors finding '*a pretty good balance most of the time*' – it is not yet as effective at building capability as some other programmes in the region, such as Nauru.

... which impact on the status of fish stocks

Solomon Islands tuna fisheries are part of very large region-wide complex of stocks (see context discussion above). As shown in the following table, while the status of key stocks has remained largely unchanged over our assessment period, there are concerns around albacore; and overfishing has not been addressed.

Table 2 Status of key offshore fish stocks

Stock	2010, 2011 and 2012	2013
Skipjack tuna	No overfishing; not overfished	No overfishing; not overfished
Yellowfin tuna	No overfishing; not overfished	No overfishing; not overfished
Bigeye tuna	Overfishing; not overfished	Overfishing; not overfished
Albacore tuna	No overfishing; not overfished	No change in formal status but increasing concern for poor economic situation of fishery
Oceanic white tip shark	Overfishing; overfished	Overfishing; overfished
Silky shark	Uncertain	Overfishing; overfished

Source: Peacey (2013), citing SPC reports to FFA.

5.4 Inshore fisheries management

5.4.1 Goals and objectives

The objective of the inshore fisheries component of MSSIF (comprising both management and development activities) is:

To facilitate the sustainable development and management of inshore fisheries resources.

The high-level outcome sought is ‘Sustainable development and management of the offshore fishery creates improved livelihood, food security, and economic benefits for communities’.

The three specific management outcomes are:

1. Solomon Islands have the capacity to ecologically manage the inshore fisheries on a sustainable basis.
2. Communities are actively managing their inshore fisheries and benefiting from sustainable use.
3. Increased capacity at national and provincial levels to support community efforts to obtain sustainable benefits.

These specific outcomes have some crossover with the inshore fisheries development outcomes (‘an increased contribution from inshore fisheries to the economy’), which drives a lot of MSSIF work in inshore fisheries (e.g. Provincial Fisheries Centres, seaweed farming).

MSSIF employed four principal input modalities:

- A part time inshore fisheries adviser embedded in MFMR.
- Short-term advisory inputs from consultants employed by MSSIF for specific pieces of work.
- Short-term advisory inputs from consultants employed by MSSIF, with funding provided through the funding arrangement between MFMR and MFAT.
- Specific projects contracted by MFMR, with funding provided through the funding arrangement between MFMR and MFAT.

5.4.2 Outputs

Capacity development MSSIF activities are discussed elsewhere in this report. Specific MSSIF outputs aimed at improving Solomon Islands inshore fisheries performance have been:

- Bêche-de-mer stock assessment, with technical support from SPC.
- Draft bêche-de-mer management plan, with technical support from SPC.
- Funding for a FAD project, conducted by WorldFish.

- Funding for a Gender in Fisheries research report, undertaken by WorldFish⁶.
- Two provinces were provided with support in drafting fisheries ordinances.

5.4.3 Impacts

Modest contribution to inshore fisheries management

Interviewees were non-committal as to whether MSSIF had supported MFMR to make improvements to Solomon Islands inshore fisheries management.

A draft bêche-de-mer management plan has been prepared, based on a stock assessment funded by MSSIF. SPC assisted with the survey design, training in survey method, analysing the data and developing a management plan. As a consequence, there is now a ban on the export of bêche-de-mer (which is enforced at designated ports). However this ban was lifted by Ministers for a period of time last year. The lifting of the ban had a demoralising effect on MFMR staff that had put together the advice to Ministers on the export ban.

The WorldFish FAD project (supported by SPC⁷) aimed to relieve pressure on reef fisheries. The project deployed FADs and developed criteria for their design, deployment, and monitoring. There were relatively high levels of vandalism and theft of FADs, providing lessons on the need to increase community awareness of the value of FADs.

The extent to which the FAD project has successfully reduced impacts on reef fisheries and habitat is not clear from project reporting, and the project did not include measurement of a baseline. One interviewee commented that it was unclear whether anything new had been learnt by the project. Another noted that, though *‘WorldFish produced good quality reports’*, it would have been good if more time had been invested in working through the ‘lessons learned’ from each project (e.g. local engagement, site selection) with MFMR staff. This would have been consistent with the MSSIF activity to develop a national FAD programme and policy.

CBFM appears to be a gap

MSSIF may have contributed aspects of the overall programme of CBFM that WorldFish rolled out in Malaita. External interviewees were unclear who in MFMR has responsibility for CBFM, despite an institutional support strategy for CBFM being an activity within the MSSIF work plan.

The confusion outside of MFMR on who has responsibility and leadership of CBFM work appears to be a consequence of the restructuring of MFMR (which one interviewee said was suggested by MSSIF but another interviewee said was suggested by MFMR), which placed CBFM in a different division to inshore fisheries management. This means that CBFM, which is essentially a fisheries management capacity building and planning exercise, was

⁶ Joelle Albert and Ann-Maree Schwatz (2013) *Strengthening community-based management of inshore fisheries towards gender equity in Solomon Islands*.

⁷ SPC provided information on FAD design, followed by training in rigging and deployment.

placed in a division principally concerned with fisheries commercialisation and the future of Provincial Fisheries Centres.

Interviewees involved in inshore fisheries management policy and implementation were concerned that MFMR was not fulfilling key role in implementing CBFM by either:

- Taking a lead co-ordinating role in inshore marine management, via the SILMMA and the National Co-ordinating Committee (which MFMR co-chairs with the MoE), or
- Building the capacity of provincial fisheries officers to work with communities to develop CBFM.

Yet to see any tangible progress on gender issues

The WorldFish gender report looked at increasing women's participation in marine resource management. The project appears to have had difficulties in operation and learning – the following text box contains a self-explanatory extract from the report on this project.

Though the gender project is considered '*useful*' by MFMR staff, the project does not appear to have built gender awareness and mainstreaming into MFMR. MSSIF did not actively engage to ensure that this capacity was developed. This appears to have been remedied in 2013, unfortunately when the project was ending.

The one potential bright spot is the development of the SIA guidelines which will provide guidance for assessing inward investment (in the development rather than the fisheries management arena).

Extract from WorldFish Gender Project Final Report

'This project was designed in 2010 to support priority areas identified in the revised New Zealand funded institutional strengthening program; MSSIF. The intent was that WorldFish would undertake technical action research in support of and in partnership with MFMR and MSSIF activities, in this case gender mainstreaming. In reality, the capacity had yet to be built within MFMR to allocate staff to work with WorldFish on this project and so expectations of MFMR involvement were unrealistic. The timing of contracting WorldFish and planning this work did not coincide with contracting of MSSIF advisors or the development of the formal workplans for MSSIF; both of these happened after the contract with WorldFish had been agreed with NZAID and MFMR.

Partly as a result of this disconnect there has been poor communication amongst the three parties until recently. As a consequence, in order to implement this project WorldFish has had to put a relatively greater emphasis on the activities we could implement independently rather than as designed..., in partnership with MFMR. Communication in the latter part of the project improved and the new MSSIF co-ordinator has recently been encouraging a more active role for MFMR staff to follow up on activities and be engaged in decision making around the activities. Unfortunately this has come about only as the project ends.'

Source: Joelle Albert and Ann-Maree Schwatz (2013) *Strengthening community-based management of inshore fisheries towards gender equity in Solomon Islands*.

5.5 Onshore fisheries development

5.5.1 Goals and objectives

High level goal to increase income and employment

The specific outcomes sought from offshore fisheries development are:

- Increased income and employment from fishing, onshore processing and related activities.
- An increased contribution from the offshore fishery to government revenue and the economy.

The issue rates a very brief mention in the SIG National Development Strategy 2011-2020, which says that SIG ‘wants to see foreign investors set up processing and value adding establishments in the country’.

Non-specific outputs in the Programme Design

The Programme Design does not refer to rule changes to make onshore processing more attractive to fishing companies, but it does propose some short term inputs that might help generate interest from investors and improve the returns to SIG in the event that investment was forthcoming. The options include (all subject to further development):

- Ongoing support to SIG and the Chairperson of Soltai (now SolTuna), building on the issues work done during SIMROS.
- The provision of commercial and financial expertise to SIG to ensure that the country’s interests are protected during any commercial negotiations,
- Assistance to make the environment more conducive to onshore ventures, including ‘marketing strategy, review of regulations and incentives, assessment of viable locations and environmental impact’.

The Programme Design suggests support from an Offshore Fisheries Adviser as well as a Fish Marketing Adviser who would review the requirements for the Ministry of Health as the Competent Authority, to maintain EU certification.

The MFMR Corporate Plan 2011-2013 is much more specific about activities. Under its fourth priority ‘Grow the economy through sustainable fisheries investments’, the object is to increase revenue and employment in the formal fisheries sector, and three projects are specifically mentioned, loining plants at Suafa Bay and Tenaru, and a canning factory at Ndoma. It aimed to have these three completed by 2013.

Three main inputs

MSSIF used three main inputs to advance these objectives:

- A full time OFA embedded in MFMR, a small amount of whose time was devoted to onshore processing work. This role is moving to part time (150 days a year) from 2014.
- More recently, a Project Management Unit (PMU) was established in MFMR, with a part-time (150 days a year) advisor starting work from October 2013. This advisor’s

only role is in establishing more onshore investment, working within the Policy Planning and Project Management Division.

- Short-term advisory inputs from consultants employed for specific pieces of work, notably a contract with Richard Banks to provide economic analysis of the establishment of tuna processing facilities, and a contract with Louisa Hodge-Kopa to advance the various investment proposals. There was also an FFA-funded Investment Facilitation Advisor helping out for a period.

There has also been evident input from the TL/IDA on these issues. There is no information on exactly how much time or money was expended on onshore processing efforts, but it has clearly been a significant focus of the programme, particularly in recent times.

Two key outputs

The two key outputs that we have seen are the two reports from Banks (2013a and 2013b) on the economics of Solomon Islands tuna resources and onshore processing. We were told that guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment have been completed, although we did not see them, and that guidelines for Social Impact Assessment for onshore processing facilities that were planned for development in early 2014.

There is clearly much to do on this work. The long list of outputs from the approved 2014 MSSIF workplan on onshore processing includes:

- Securing land for a loining plant at Suafa Bay, and land for a canning factory at Ndoma.
- Securing an investor to build a loining plant at Tenaru.
- Proposals for onshore tuna production operations evaluated and supported as appropriate.
- Developing a template for a development agreement.
- Supporting the CA to meet EU requirements for tuna exports.
- Completion of investment planning work initiated by the IFC in 2013 (and due to be completed in March 2014)

as well as three tasks that we understand have already happened:

- SSI packing and exporting high value tuna.
- SolTuna able to increase production, adding a second shift.
- Development of a national tuna investment strategy.

5.5.2 Impacts

This work is apparently still at an early stage, but there are some encouraging early signs of progress on the goal of boosting government revenue and increasing formal employment. At the heart of this is the policy link between cheaper fish supply and onshore investment, as well as apparently extensive efforts by MSSIF to implement the policy in practice.

In particular:

- SSI has established packing plant for export of high value tuna from Guadalcanal, and we understand that three other firms now have export licences (Peacey, 2013).

- IFC has lent SolTuna \$10m to fund plant expansion and improvement. This investment was facilitated by the MSSIF OFA, who also provided help to the SolTuna side.
- There is growing interest from investors as a result of the policy. As noted in the Corporate Plan and the MSSIF 2014 Workplan, there are three active options: loining plants at Suafa Bay on Malaita, and Tenaru on Guadalcanal, and a cannery at Ndoma on Guadalcanal). Interviewees also spoke to us of other investments, and Diffey (2013), page 25 discusses Solong and SolFish.

We note that MSSIF efforts in this area build on the previous work under SIMROS, which assisted in saving SolTuna (then SolTai) from imminent bankruptcy. SIMROS advisors also helped to create 500 new jobs by ensuring more catch from the longline fleet was landed for local processing, for which a second shift at the processing facility was established.

There is also high-quality information and analysis available of the options and design of onshore processing facilities. This includes the economic analysis of Banks (2013a, 2013b), and also the EIA guidelines for developers of fish processing plants.

Related to this, there has also been substantial MSSIF effort to ensure continued access to the EU market for Solomon Islands tuna products (Cusack 2013).

5.6 Activity planning and governance

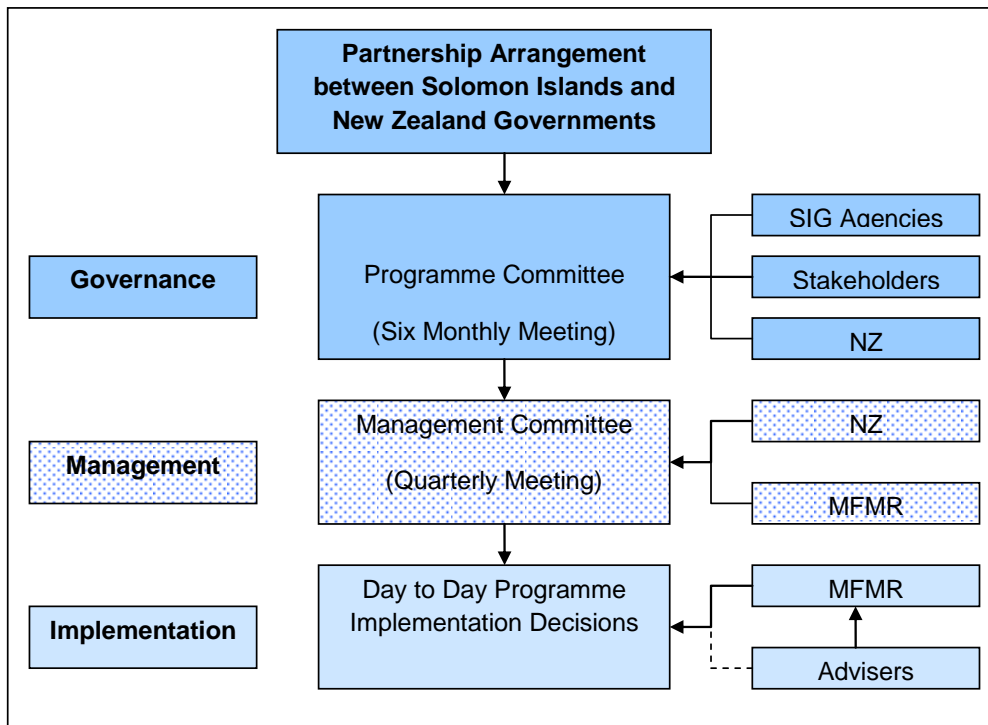
5.6.1 Goals and objectives

Four parts of the Design are relevant to this part of our assessment.

The governance framework defines the overall programme structure

The figure below shows the core elements of MSSIF governance from the original Programme Design Document. The three levels are a Programme Committee to meet every six months for high-level governance, a quarterly Management Committee to provide overall management, with day to day implementation by MFMR, advised by MSSIF advisors.

Figure 6 MSSIF programme governance structure



Source: MSSIF Design Document

A Monitoring and Evaluation framework should define what success looks like

The Programme Design Document says that the indicators used for judging success will be MFMR’s indicators, and that if they had not been developed (which they have not), ‘one early activity should be to work with relevant MFMR staff to build realistic performance indicators into MFMR planning documents (at both the output and outcome levels)’ to ‘enable MFMR to track progress against its plans and report periodically to the Solomon Islands Government and other stakeholders on what is being achieved’.

There was recognition in the Programme Design that development of the monitoring and evaluation system had not been a focus for SIMROS. In line with standard monitoring and evaluation theory, the Programme Design Document noted that:

The process of identifying indicators will also require identification of what information needs to be collected for each indicator, who will collect it, when it will be collected and where it will be stored.

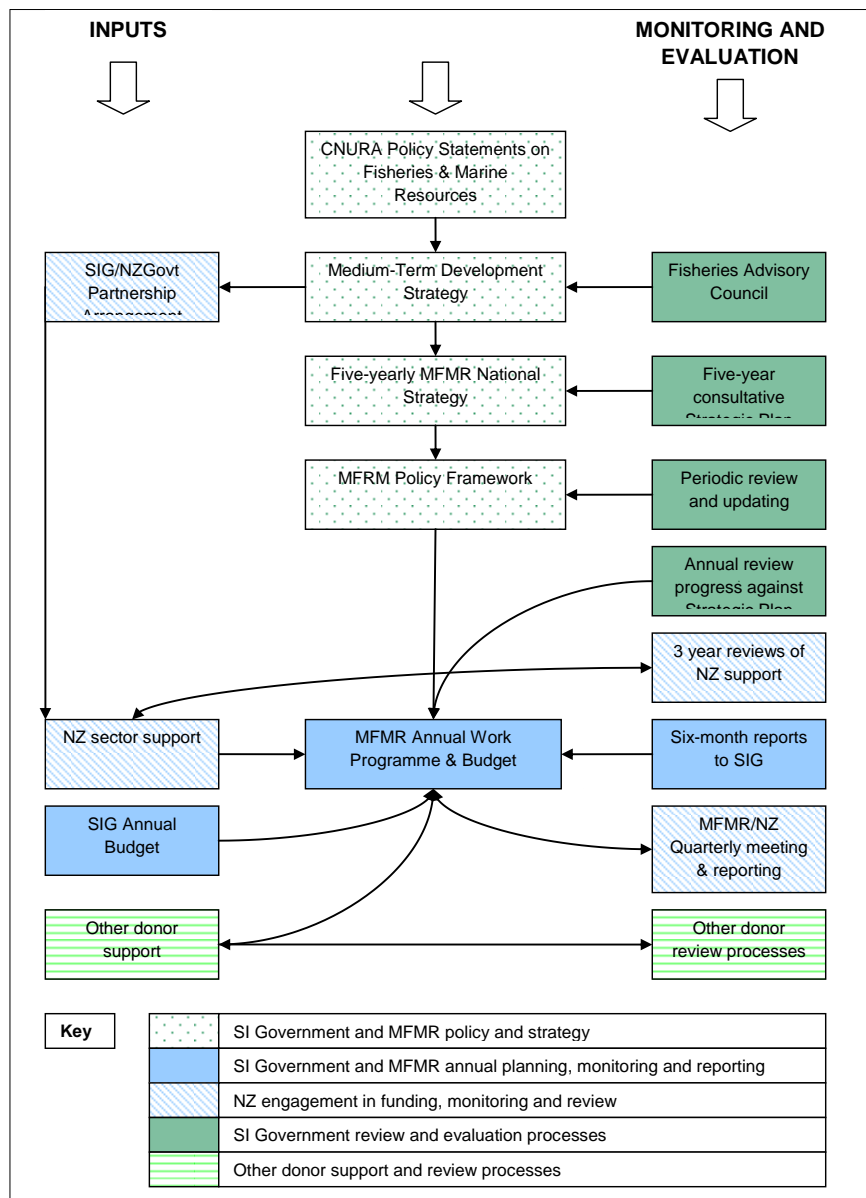
and

A baseline needs to be established and mechanisms put in place (indicators, data collection) to enable MFMR to make its own assessment of its progress and revise plans accordingly.

The reporting arrangements for MFMR and MSSIF Advisors are central to accountability

The Programme Design Document outlines the monitoring and evaluation structure set out below, with a medium-term strategy from a Fisheries Advisory Council, a multi-year strategy from MFMR with annual reporting, and reports every six months to SIG on progress.

Figure 7 MFMR monitoring and evaluation structure



Source: MSSIF Design Document

The reporting arrangements between the MSSIF Advisors and MFAT are specified in individual advisors' Terms of Reference (TORs), which are agreed with each contract. These TORs are not part of the governance framework set out in the Programme Design Document, but they are central to overall performance, transparency and accountability.

From our review of the various ToRs, it seems that reporting is gradually being brought under the TL/IDA over time, whereas earlier the three Advisors were reporting separately to MFAT. We were told that the next OFA and IFA will formally report through the TL/IDA to MFAT. Financial control and accountability for MSSIF funds remains with the TL/IDA, as required by SIG processes.

Work planning by MFMR is an important part of the design

The MFMR Corporate Plan, budget, and Annual Report are the main planning documents for MFMR and therefore for MSSIF.

The latest Corporate Plan was for 2011-2013, and so has now expired. We were told another is under preparation. The last Annual Report was for 2012. We assume the 2013 report is in progress. There are some related strategy documents, like the draft Tuna Management and Development Plan, and the Inshore Fisheries Strategy 2010-2012.

The risk management framework defines the main areas of potential trouble

The Programme Design Document sets out an initial risk assessment table (p40-41) and indicates that they should be monitored regularly and ‘considered in annual reviews and periodic evaluations’.

5.6.2 Outputs

The key outputs have been:

- Advisor reports – there used to be a quarterly report from each of the three Advisors, one of which doubled as an annual report. In addition, Advisors also produced mission reports after each in-country visit, which outlined inputs from the visit. We were told that process and input oriented reporting has now stopped, and that there will now be a single quarterly report put together by the Team Leader, plus the mission reports.
- Meeting minutes – we have minutes from a monthly Implementation Steering Committee. There are also regular reports from the new TL/IDA since his appointment that list activities completed in the previous period.
- Monitoring and evaluation advisor reports – we had access to three papers from the Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor contracted in 2011 to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for MFMR and MSSIF

While not technically a MSSIF output, the Grant Variations are also an important source of information on what is done and how much was approved to have been spent. In the general scheme there is one agreed each year between MFAT and MFMR that sets out the workplan and the approved budget for the year to come. In practice there have been additional variations to make changes to the budget and the terms of support during the year. The budget and workplan for 2014 are contained in Grant Variation Number 8, agreed 24 December 2013.

5.6.3 Impacts

The activity planning and governance efforts are important for the overall performance of MSSIF but by their nature there are few evident impacts on MFMR performance or activities from these outputs directly. We were told that a MSSIF-contracted national consultant, with support from MSSIF advisors, worked with MFMR staff to prepare its Annual Report for 2012 (and provide training in report preparation), and that another Corporate Plan was under development.

As noted elsewhere in our evaluation, the frameworks the Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor developed have never been used nor, in our view, are they capable of being used by MFMR at this point in its organisational development. And so they have made no positive contribution to the performance of the programme.

6. Analysis and conclusions

6.1 General performance

Text removed to protect the privacy of natural persons

6.1.2 MSSIF needs to lift its focus

MSSIF has been diverted by day-to-day fire fighting and project management, and spread across numerous activities. In our view, the programme needs to focus on a few key projects/areas, with mutual clarity and agreement on what MSSIF will do and what it won't do. The TL/IDA needs to be able to step back from day-to-day contract and project management, and focus on overall strategic programme management (within the constraints of the financial approvals process required by the SIG). This will require MFMR counterparts to increasingly take a greater lead on matters of their core business (with Deputy Directors continuing to assuming greater responsibility for project management), which calls for clearer understanding and commitments on the part of both partners (which are detailed below).

6.2 Modalities of assistance

6.2.1 Architecture good in theory...

Based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter, we see no reason to fundamentally alter the structure of MSSIF support. Both the level of funding and the mix of modalities (as designed) appear appropriate and well suited to the receiving environment. In particular, the long-term and in-country presence of Advisors is theoretically conducive to sustainable CD outcomes.

In our view, MFMR's absorptive capacity has been about reached with current funding levels. Given the high number of unfilled vacancies, as well as the current skill level of MFMR staff, we consider that additional funding injections would cause undue pressure on the organisation, and resulting products (such as consultants' report) would not be actively used by staff (so would constitute wasted effort and poor value for additional money).

Text removed to protect the privacy of natural persons

6.3 Donor co-ordination

Time spent co-ordinating donors and their activities can have the unwelcome effect of detracting MFMR from its goals. The activities of MSSIF, SPC and (mostly) FFA are generally well aligned with what MFMR is looking for to support achieving its goals and build its capacity. But the numerous training opportunities, while well-meaning and rewarding for participants, can distract staff from performing their core roles.

The largest challenges in donor co-ordination exist in the inshore fisheries sector. Two coordination mechanisms have been established that MFMR participates in. These do not appear to have been satisfactory and better performance is sought from MFMR. The complex legal, policy and financial arrangements that enable governance of inshore fisheries mean that MFMR should aim to play a coordination and leadership role. MSSIF's support for this is discussed below.

Donor co-ordination is less challenging in the offshore sector, but the potential for distraction of MFMR focus still exists. Ideally, new donors (e.g. the World Bank) should propose activities that are worked through principally at an MFMR corporate and annual planning level.

6.4 Capacity development

6.4.1 Need for reciprocal understanding and objectives

The literature we reviewed used the term 'capacity development' to refer to the suite of dimensions of capacity strengthening – including individual (i.e. individual staff), organisational, institutional, and external environment; and spanning skills, systems, processes and relationships. We have therefore used the term capacity development to refer to the suite of past and future activities of MSSIF that seek to build the capacity and capability of MFMR to be able to lead the sustainable development and management of Solomon Islands fisheries, ultimately without on-going donor support. We recognise that this

end state will not be a Ministry that directly undertakes all its work – as with any government department it will still contract out some discrete items of work where either capacity is lacking or it does not make sense for MFMR to retain specific technical expertise.

The design for the next phase of MSSIF should include clearer expression of the objectives, scope and desired impacts of CD activities. The subsequent work plans and ToRs for advisors also need to provide greater direction on the pathway and interim steps for CD efforts. For CD of individual staff, this includes the expected shift over time from hands-on ‘getting the job done’, to supporting counterparts to lead work themselves. For organisational CD activities, it would include the pathway from assisting with designing systems and processes, and initial implementation, to supporting MFMR to be able to continue with implementing these systems over time.

6.4.2 Capacity development has been crowded out...

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the capacity development work of MSSIF has been crowded out by day-to-day fire fighting and project management. We recommend refocussing MSSIF back to its original capacity development objectives, which remain valid today. This would involve increased time and explicit emphasis on CD.

6.4.3 ...and there are gaps in the mentoring arrangements

The previous chapter identified the absence of a counterpart for the Director of Fisheries as a gap in MSSIF’s mentoring arrangements. The head of Human Resources Development also does not have a counterpart (the MEA advisor was a short-term contract). In light of the blockages identified with respect to performance management, and our overall recommendations for CD, we suggest that the design of the next phase of MSSIF considers introducing additional mentoring roles.

In terms of whether any additional advisory support is provided by way of in-line positions or TA, we are guided by the advice of Baser (2007) who compared the use of the two modes in Solomon Islands.⁸ She analyses the pros and cons of each approach, as well as the risks and the situations in which each might be most appropriate. She states that advisory positions bring the ‘possibility of focusing on capacity development in a concentrated way not usually feasible in in-line positions’ and are most appropriate in circumstances where ‘a clear need exists for a capacity development plan or activities that nationals cannot carry out’ (Baser 2007, pp.22 and 24). Our interpretation of her analysis is that, on balance, a TA position is more suitable than an in-line position in the MSSIF/MFMR environment.

⁸ Heather Baser (2007) *Provision of technical assistance personnel in the Solomon Islands: what can we learn from the RAMSI experience?* A case study prepared for the Study on promising approaches to technical assistance. Discussion Paper No.76 (European Centre for Development Policy Management: September 2007).

Mentoring of the Fisheries Director could be incorporated within the scope of the TL/IDA role, supported by secondments from MPI. However TA for Human Resources would imply a different skill set and suggests the need for an additional Advisor.

6.4.4 No evidence of gender issues being systematically considered

We did not uncover any evidence of gender considerations being systematically infused in the approach to CD. One interviewee noted that female staff were *'already up against it'* in the arena of stakeholder engagement in the Solomon Islands context, by virtue of their gender, but we did not encounter any specific strategies to assist and empower women in their role (though MSSIF advisers were able to assist managers who, because of they were women, were having issues with male staff). That said, the women we interviewed were unanimously positive about the interactions they have had with MSSIF Advisors and did not raise any problems from a gender perspective.

We suggest that the future approach to CD includes an assessment of the issues, barriers and opportunities for female MFMR staff operating in the context of Solomon Islands culture, and identify any ways in which MSSIF should tailor its support (e.g. in the delivery of individual CD, in the design of organisational system responses or in the development of stakeholder engagement strategies).

6.4.5 Need for more structured approach...

We recommend that the approach to CD be founded more on best practice principles. In our view, the priority is to undertake a formal capacity assessment. This would inform the development of an organisation-wide CD plan as well as individual staff development plans. It would also drive the focus of support provided by MSSIF, by informing the ToRs for Advisors, as well as the advisor recruitment process and performance management.

We recognise that a training needs assessment is in the process of being commissioned. It appears that this is intended to focus on the delivery of CD via formal training such as courses. Drawing on our review of best practice, we recommend that this capacity assessment and subsequent CD plan comprise the following features:

- Spans the three dimensions of organisation (systems and processes, including data and information management); individual staff (skills, expertise and confidence); and stakeholder engagement.
- For individual CD, encompasses both technical (fisheries management, economics etc) and generic skills (such as personnel management, report writing, meeting facilitation), as well as SIG and generic policy processes and principles.
- Includes a variety of skills transfer methods (mentoring, coaching/peer-to-peer, formal training etc), tailored to individual staff needs.
- Is contextualised for the SI and MFMR context and environment, for instance it must be cognisant of the constraints in the working environment, and be simple to implement. It should have sequenced priorities and implementation steps over several years – for instance individual CD activities may focus initially on the Deputy Directors, and on a few skills at a time, such as personnel performance management. And

organisational CD may focus initially on information (data and documents) management systems and processes.

- Is fully documented, and is approved and led by the MFMR Permanent Secretary.
- Is systematically monitored and evaluated, drawing on best practice methods and indicators.

The annual MSSIF work programmes should then specify how the programme will contribute to these plans. The ToRs and performance expectations on MSSIF Advisors will need to reflect this approach, through:

- More explicit focus on CD, including more outputs-based deliverables, with specified metrics. This may include clearer expectations around the stages of coaching – e.g. from staff watching and learning – through to taking the lead themselves, with the advisor role shifting over time to increasingly more of a peer review role.
- More realistic and pragmatic expectations around the benefits from CD and the pace at which they will be realised. For example, if the MFMR counterpart is taking the lead on writing a report, MFAT should recognise that this may take longer and require more iterations than if the TA was holding the pen themselves.

We acknowledge the literature around emergent versus linear approaches to capacity development and change management in a development context. However, in our view the need for MSSIF to be able to (for example) respond, adapt and evolve to complex and changing circumstances, systems dynamics and emerging learnings should not be used as an excuse for vaguely specified interventions or lack of clear performance metrics. In fact the need to benefit from continuous learning reinforces the need for better and more useful design, monitoring and reporting of CD activities.

6.4.6 ... and tailored monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of MSSIF CD efforts should then dovetail with the overall CD framework that is developed. As mentioned in the previous chapter, to our knowledge only the Provincial Fisheries Officers workshops (business planning training and Hapi Fis project design) were subject to any kind of evaluation. It sought participant feedback on aspects such as usefulness of content, pace of presentations and knowledge gained. We recommend that standard feedback forms be developed for future workshops/courses, covering additional dimensions such as mode of delivery ('the workshop was a good way for me to learn this content') and results ('I will be able to apply what I learned in this workshop').⁹

Monitoring and evaluation of individual staff CD should cover aspects such as:

- Understanding of role, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Knowledge and skills to perform the role.
- Confidence to perform the role.
- Provision of necessary support to perform the role.

⁹ Standard dimensions to cover off in training evaluations include: content, design, delivery, instructor and results.

- Usefulness and timeliness of feedback received on work.
- Availability of equipment and materials to perform the role.
- Skills and knowledge acquired via MSSIF.
- Opportunities to apply skills and learnings acquired through MSSIF.

6.4.7 Relationships are critical

We heard repeatedly, both in this assessment and in last year's strategic evaluation, that the personality of Advisors is critical. Cultural competence is also important, as cultural differences can mean that Advisors are seen as too demanding or too pushy, making the conditions for capacity building more challenging. Advisors also need to be able to operate in a working environment where decisions are made informally and much is uncodified.

Realising the full benefits of CD requires trusting relationships to be built up over a period of time. The long-term nature of the MSSIF commitment is appropriate in this regard, as is having advisors in-country for extended periods of time. However improvements can be made to both the Advisor recruitment process and to the transition between Advisors, which we detail below.

6.4.8 Scope to strengthen the recruitment process

We were told that the TA recruitment process comprises the following stages:

1. Terms of Reference developed by MFAT and discussed with MFMR PS.
2. Expression of Interest (EoI) lodged on the New Zealand Government Electronic Tenders Service (GETS) and distributed through informal networks.
3. Selection panel meets (MFMR PS, MSSIF TL/IDA, MFAT Post, MFAT Wellington) and scores applicants against agreed criteria.
4. Shortlisted applicants are invited to submit a more detailed proposal.
5. Shortlisted candidates interviewed by teleconference, Skype or in person.
6. For the current and most recent appointment round, referees were sent a template questionnaire to complete and return. For some previous appointments the referees were telephoned.

We were provided with the ToRs for the outgoing OFA (dated 12 July 2012), the incoming OFA and IFA (dates October 2013) and the PMUTA (dated 9 May 2013). The earlier ToR, from 2012, had explicit, if not emphasised, CD expectations. Under 'duties and responsibilities', the third listed priority is that

'the role will have a strong orientation towards mentoring and training to develop leadership and responsibility within MFMR staff while at the same time transferring skills,

experience, and knowledge. The role will have a focus on institutional strengthening and capacity development for MFMR'.¹⁰

This focus appears to have been diminished in the more recent ToRs. CD appears as the fifth item out of six in the 'general tasks and duties' for the incoming OFA and IFA, and is specified as 'support and actively contribute to the implementation of an agreed MSSIF capacity building training plan, in addition to providing ongoing mentoring and coaching support'.¹¹ The 'specific tasks and duties' list 'lead implementation of the [inshore/offshore] component of MSSIF' as the first priority. While mentoring and coaching are the next two items, the duties also specify oversight of technical deliverables and the IFA is to 'take a lead role in developing, community based management initiatives'. Demonstrated experience in CD appears last in the list of eight essential characteristics, and does not feature in the 'experience' section. The PMUTA role is entirely focused on technical deliverables, and does not make reference to CD.

While we understand that efforts have been made to connect into broader, global networks, a theme that emerged in the 2013 strategic evaluation was that there is untapped talent within New Zealand. Based on feedback from interviewees in this assessment, we see scope to also diversify beyond technical fisheries expert networks.

We note that no formal assessment tools are used to screen for the desired personal characteristics (e.g. psychometric testing) or skills; selection relies on the judgment of panel members (who we were told may not be experts in either the technical specialty or capacity development) and is largely based on the CV. Interviewees were divided on whether interviews with candidates and referees have been routinely conducted in the past.

Exit interviews are not conducted on the conclusion of an advisor's contract. We were told that 360° performance management is being introduced, though review of advisor ToRs suggest that this has been intended (if not implemented) at least since the 2012 appointments.

In order to address the shortcomings with recruitment discussed in the previous chapter, and to improve the likely 'hit rate' of the process, we recommend the following improvements:

- Commit to better planning and earlier commencement of the recruitment process (on the MFAT end), to avoid gaps opening up between advisors, and the subsequent disruption and loss of momentum this causes.
- Develop ToRs that include a higher focus and clearer expectations around CD deliverables.
- Consider broader dissemination of EoIs to reach a wider talent pool, e.g. via LinkedIn (including the MFAT discussion groups on LinkedIn) and other media/tools.
- Verbally interview all shortlisted candidates and all referees.
- Broaden the selection panel to include relevant specialists (including CD).

¹⁰ *Terms of Reference for Offshore Fisheries Advisor, Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries*, draft 23 July 2012, p.5.

¹¹ *Terms of Reference for Inshore and Offshore Technical Advisors to the Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources*, October 2013, p.3.

- Conduct exit interviews with outgoing advisors.

6.4.9 Need for reciprocal responsibilities

Support to MFMR institutional development will be based on strong organisational development principles. It requires the commitment of senior staff in MFMR to implementing the Corporate and Strategic Plans... active management of staff to motivate and instil a new work ethic; and performance management including incentives for performance and training/mentoring opportunities for staff (Design Document, p.13).

The previous chapter identified a number of blockages to the success of MSSIF, including its CD efforts. There is little MSSIF can do about the factors external to MFMR, such as the PSC processes. But for MSSIF to be effective, commitments are required by both partners to address the blockages internal to the Ministry and to the Programme.

As expressed by Baser and Morgan (2008):

progress on capacity development depends critically on the level of ownership, commitment and motivation of country actors, i.e. their ability to commit and engage. In the cases [considered in their report], participants who were determined to develop their capacity overcame all sorts of obstacles and constraints, while those with less resolve made little progress. This basic point has led over the last two decades to an increasing emphasis on the need for country ownership and commitment in some form... Country actors, it is said, must be in the 'driver's seat' and must ignite and energise the process of capacity development.¹²

For MFMR, these commitments include:

- Developing a robust Corporate Plan (to replace the one that has expired), alongside which MSSIF can structure and focus its support.
- Committing to proactive staff performance management, including addressing unexplained and prolonged staff absences. MSSIF itself can assist with building management capability. This could be assisted by proactively engaging the SIG-wide initiatives in public sector management such as the new performance management framework, the Human Resources manager forum and professional development opportunities.
- Clarifying and codifying the organisational structure, and roles and responsibilities (particularly between the Inshore Fisheries and Provincial Fisheries Divisions). We note that support for any restructuring is beyond the scope of MSSIF (the TA/IDA's 2013 Annual Report recommends that this is addressed by the World Bank PROP).

On the part of MFAT, this involves:

- Committing to more timely advisor recruitment processes, to avoid gaps between transitions (ideally allowing for some overlap and handover between advisors).

¹² Heather Baser and Peter Morgan (2008) *Capacity, change and performance: study report*. Discussion Paper No.59B (European Centre for Development Policy Management, April 2008), p.59.

- Implementing improvements to the recruitment process.
- Accepting realistic expectations around the realisation of CD benefits, to mitigate the temptation for advisors to do the work themselves.
- Ensuring that the formulation and development of new activities is aligned with MSSIF governance and planning processes, and encouraging other donors to do likewise.

6.4.10 Potential for more structured approach to stakeholder engagement

To strengthen the stakeholder engagement dimension of CD, and to meet stakeholders' calls for greater sector leadership by MFMR, we recommend a more structured approach to consultation and engagement. This would involve:

1. Clarifying internal MFMR roles and responsibilities for stakeholder fora such as SILMMA and the CA Working Group.
2. Conducting a stakeholder analysis and developing a stakeholder engagement plan.
3. In relation to engagement on draft policies and so on, we recommend that MFMR (with MSSIF support) develops and promulgates a consultation timetable, so that stakeholders are aware of what is being consulted on, and the timeframes and format for input.

We agree with interviewees that no new stakeholder forum should be established; rather engagement with the sector should be conducted via existing groups and networks.

We expect that CD for stakeholder engagement would feature in the CD assessment and resulting development plan.

6.5 Offshore fisheries management

6.5.1 Strong progress, with potential to deliver future gains

MFMR's performance in offshore fisheries management has seen substantive improvements, and has enabled it to substantially meet 2010-13 Corporate Plan objectives on the health of offshore fisheries resources.

The MSSIF advisers and contracted support made an important contribution to these achievements. Short term technical advice was obtained or organised when needed, either via FFA (for the longline policy) or directly (to underpin the bilateral access negotiating strategy).

MSSIF was able to assist MFMR maximise the services received from the FFA. These services are set out a service level agreement between FFA and the SIG and contain 15 priority areas of assistance grouped under three headings (management, development, and monitoring, control and surveillance).

6.5.2 Inhibitors to sustained success

MSSIF's building of sustainable MFMR offshore fisheries capacity has been relatively less impressive. In addition to the generic challenges discussed above, CD in offshore fisheries management has faced the following inhibitors:

- The lack of policy staff. The OFA has been performing a great deal of what are predominantly policy tasks, with no counterparts to mentor or coach.
- The key decision-making position in offshore management – the Director of Fisheries – also does not have a counterpart for mentoring and coaching.
- The difficulty in promptly mobilising MSSIF funds (due to MSSIF planning and funding processes) and FFA input (due to delays on FFA's side) for people and systems development in licensing, data management and catch reporting.
- The difficulties for staff for whom English is not the first language, which is a particular difficulty in offshore management as they must work with and draft highly technical text to implement the Conservation and Management Measures promulgated by WCPFC.

6.5.3 Identifying areas for future focus

MSSIF has focused on the key features of the fisheries management framework, with achievements assisting MFMR performance predominantly in the law and policy and management decisions components, but also to a lesser extent in across information and science, and monitoring control and surveillance.

The outcomes of the work of the Offshore Division of MFMR are positive, and future efforts can focus on capacity development, implementing reforms and extending further into selected priority areas.

Ongoing and new activities can be invested in to improve the programme's overall coverage and effectiveness across the basic fisheries management framework (as set out in the following table).

Figure 8 Offshore fisheries management: framework and status of work

Framework Component	Information and Science	Law and Policy	Management Decisions	Monitoring, Control and Enforcement
Status	Achieved: Review of information systems	Achieved: Longline Policy implemented Draft TMDP prepared Negotiation strategies (ongoing)	Achieved: WCPFC and PNA measures in regulations and licenses Review of licensing systems	Achieved: IUU National Plan of Action
	Ongoing/New: Catch reporting systems (with SPC)	Ongoing/New: Fisheries Bill enacted Licensing Guidelines promulgated Archipelagic waters management Fisheries Advisory Council appointed	Ongoing/New: Implementation of new licensing systems (with FFA information systems)	Ongoing/New: Port boarding and inspection Observer systems (with FFA information systems) IUU Plan of Action implementing procedures

6.5.4 MSSIF should help implement current priority reforms...

Current activities, which are consistent with the above framework, should be continued under the next phase of MSSIF:

1. Support the passage of the new Fisheries Bill through Parliament and support Cabinet approval of the draft Tuna Management and Development Plan.
2. Support analysis and development of negotiating strategies for longline and purse seine access discussions with foreign fishing nations.
3. Support the roll out of FFA information technology modules into the MFMR (licensing, observers, VMS, catch reporting), including using SPC expertise available to improve the currently poor data input, and other aspects required to implement the findings of the review of the licensing system
4. Strengthening of the operational aspects of fisheries compliance, including implementing the procedures required for the IUU National Plan of Action.
5. Support the revival of the Fisheries Advisory Council and the approval of Licensing Guidelines. The Council’s role is to advise the Minister on a range of issues, including Licensing Guidelines. The guidelines can be built off current annual tuna licensing decisions by the Director of Fisheries and their promulgation will strengthen the legal position of MFMR on those decisions (should they be challenged or judicially reviewed).

6.5.5 ... and assist with extension into selected priority areas

New activities that will assist MFMR complete priority areas of the fisheries management framework should also be included in the next phase of MSSIF:

1. Support analysis to underpin the tightening of the implementation of the longline policy to maximise returns from this fishery, including by reducing licence numbers (as a proxy for catch), improving catch reporting, and enforcing priorities (to onshore processing).
2. Develop policy and implementing systems for sustainable management and maximising returns from of archipelagic waters, covering all gear types and including consideration of opening of access to foreign vessels, with the aim of increasing returns and ensuring coherence with regional tuna management measures (WCPFC, PNA). This may require revisiting elements of the draft Tuna Management and Development Plan. It will involve developing specific systems to implement the policy (licensing, fee collection, reporting, monitoring, enforcement).

6.6 Inshore fisheries management

6.6.1 Little progress in a difficult area

Within MFMR and MSSIF programing, inshore fisheries management is inextricably tied to fisheries development activities including aquaculture development and commercial extension services (e.g. Provincial Fisheries Centres).

It is not clear that MSSIF has contributed to improved inshore fisheries management per se, though there have been some improvements in the capacity of MFMR managers to manage inshore fisheries in the past 12 months. MFMR has several inshore fisheries management objectives in its Corporate Plan 2010-13: 'the Ministry will develop fishery management plans for key commercial species and support the roll out of community based resource management plans in selected provinces'. Specific objectives are:

- Community-based resource management operating in selected provinces.
- FADs reducing impacts on reefal fisheries and inshore habitat.
- Fishery management plans for key commercial species approved and implemented.

MSSIF assisted MFMR develop a fisheries management plan for one commercial species -- bêche-de-mer . MISSF has also funded projects on FADs through WorldFish, and while valuable lessons were learned, did not appear to achieve their objectives.

Effective inshore fisheries management is hard in a decentralised system of decision-making with low levels of capacity and funding at provincial and national levels. Furthermore, there is insufficient economic surplus generated from inshore fisheries to justify elaborate taxpayer funded management systems. The use of two co-ordinating mechanisms, the SILMMA network and the National Co-ordinating Committee of the Coral Triangle Initiative, are a promising if underutilised attempt by MFMR to overcome its own capacity and resource constraints.

MFMR appears to be trying to partner with NGOs to further CBFM approaches. This has the added costs of coordination with NGOs who often have distinct policy drivers based on the use of specific tools (e.g. MPAs) which can complicate effective coordination and engagement in the provinces.

6.6.2 Need for a more defined role for MFMR

MFMR’s approach can be tightened and improved so that it takes:

- (a) A more effective strategic leadership role; and
- (b) An implementation support role in inshore fisheries management.

MSSIF, as was originally intended, can support MFMR assuming these two roles. MFMR should be supported by MSSIF in carrying out specific tasks, which are outlined in the figure below (above the diagonal line) and sit within the legal frameworks established by law. These tasks revolve around leadership, information, coordination and facilitation, backed up when required with enforcement action. MFMR should be enabling and supporting Provincial Governments and local communities to carry out their roles in inshore fisheries management (tasks below the diagonal line).

Figure 9 Framework for inshore fisheries management: roles and tasks

		Framework					
		Information and Science	Law and Policy	Management Decisions	Monitoring, Control and Enforcement		
National Government Responsibility	Stock surveys and assessments	Management Plans	Export Licences (ability to limit and ban)	Monitoring exports and enforcing licences	Provincial Government/ Local Responsibility		
	Market surveys	Inshore fisheries strategy	Information and support on CBFM	Export licence systems			
	Information to Provinces on stock issues	Training for Provincial Fisheries Officers	Coordination between provinces				
		Coordination of donors and other organisations					
		Fisheries Bill enacted					
		Funding mechanism to finance CBFM	Coordination between local communities	Assisting local/village enforcement			
			Implementing CBFM	Enforcing fishing rules (catches, closed times and places)			
	Collecting catch data	Management Plans					
		Ordinances (recognising customary rights)					

This role and consequent tasks suggest the following priority activities to be incorporated into the next phase of MSSIF support to MFMR:

1. Clarify the roles within MFMR in inshore fisheries management. It is suggested that conservation and management activities (CBFM, research, inshore fisheries management advice) be placed in one division and development and extension (aquaculture, marketing, provincial fisheries centres) in another division. Provincial fisheries officers, as MFMR representatives in the region, would be required perform tasks for both divisions. Their roles would not therefore be solely tied to operating provincial fisheries centres; they would now be required to work with local communities to develop and implement CBFM approaches.
2. Support MFMR managers taking a leadership role in the co-ordinating inshore management efforts through NCC and SILMMA mechanisms. These co-ordination efforts would be aligned with a new Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy (see below). This means investing in capacity in policy leadership including drafting papers, making presentations, and conducting effective meetings.
3. Support the development of a new Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy, to replace the one that ran from 2010-12. MFMR should take the lead in developing this, in collaboration with stakeholders in the NCC, SILMMA and Provincial Governments. The Strategy should include: objectives for inshore management, policy and legal framework (national, provincial, local), threats and constraints (funding, capacity, resource depletion, habitat degradation), approaches that will work with these constraints (i.e. CBFM, provincial fisheries management plans), and agreed roles in implementing preferred approach (MFMR, provincial governments, NGOs).
4. Support investment in data collection and analysis:
 - (a) Information on fish caught is an important foundation for effective fisheries management. There is little or no data on inshore fish caught, apart from export figures. Efforts to collect data should be continued, with an emphasis on gaining as much information as possible (species, size, location of catch) to aid developing a portrait of inshore fisheries. Presently this involves collecting data at the Honiara markets. This should be continued and extended so that data collected as close to the fishing activity as possible (e.g. in provinces). The connectivity of this approach with CBFM to encourage locals to provide information on fish catches could also be explored.
 - (b) MFMR capacity should be built on taking the data and analysing it, and turning it into useful information for fisheries management purposes. This information can then be used to activate decisions in fisheries management plans (national and provincial), licensing decisions, and informing CBFM decision-makers at the local level who can make their own management responses (e.g. tabu, closed seasons).
5. Investigate funding for inshore fisheries management. Inshore fisheries management needs to be sustainable so that it can continue when donor funding ceases. Management system design can go a good deal of the way to ensuring a cost-effective approach is used. But funding from elsewhere is still going to be needed in the future. (An option that was raised by one interviewee is to provide provincial governments with a share of the returns from the offshore tuna fishery adjacent to their waters. However, we note

that revenue hypothecation¹³ of this nature poses issues for the integrity of the tax system and would not be supported by them Ministry of Finance and Treasury).

6.7 Onshore fisheries development

6.7.1 New policy for onshore processing

The Solomon Islands government has recently put in place policies to encourage onshore processing of tuna caught in the EEZ and archipelagic waters. The policy gives first right of refusal for the purchase of fishing days to firms with onshore processing facilities up to the volume of catch needed for their facility. Any remaining days are auctioned to firms without facilities. There is a process to enable firms who are considering building facilities, of which there are now several, to secure confirmed access to fish prior to completing their facilities.

The policy was first implemented for longline vessels, and is now in place for purse seine vessels also. As we understand it, the proportion of catch that is required to be processed onshore is intended to gradually be increased over time, but we are unsure what those proportions are and how they compare with available processing capacity.

To compensate for the fact that Solomon Islands is less economically competitive as a location for fish processing than PNG, Thailand or the Philippines, there are a range of tax exemptions available for approved investors. This includes exemptions for export duty for processed tuna products, and import duty and goods tax exemptions for raw materials and machinery needed to construct the plant and for fish bought from other suppliers.

The effort to put in place this policy has been a significant focus for MFMR and therefore for MSSIF. Of the 47 interviewees we spoke to, seven referred substantially to the efforts to develop onshore processing.

6.7.2 Uncertain provenance

We are not sure how the policy to require onshore processing came about. We did not have access to a policy paper that proposed the change and examined its costs and benefits. From the one document we do have, a Cabinet paper, the policy was clearly motivated by the view that onshore processing was value-adding for the nation as a whole, and in particular that it would generate local employment directly (in the processing facilities and on board vessels) and indirectly (in the supply of services to the processing facilities and vessels) (Solomon Islands Government, 2013, page 3). The paper says:

A 2007 Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) study estimated that US\$71 of value was added for every tonne of fish processed in a domestic loining operation and US\$577 for every tonne of fish processed in a domestic canning operation. While it is difficult to verify the figures, it is clear the potential benefits to Solomon Islands are large.

¹³ That is, tagging a government revenue stream for a particular spending purpose.

6.7.3 Economics well investigated

We note that no less an authority than the World Bank says that there is no value in unnecessary, high-cost, local processing. From a global economic point of view this is doubtless true: it is least cost overall to have Thailand do tuna processing in the Western and Central Pacific than to have many sub-scale, high-cost facilities dotted on various PICs. But from the point of view of Solomon Islands national interest, this analysis is not necessarily persuasive. Solomon Islands own the fish but get only a low return from that sovereignty at present by leasing catch rights, they are the nearest to the resource, and they have a large and underemployed local population willing to work for only modest recompense. In fact we were told in one interview that in this regard, Solomon Islands ‘probably has a comparative advantage relative to other places in the region’.

It is heartening to see that MSSIF has, over the past two years, done some important analyses of the economics of the catching sector and cost-benefit of developing the onshore processing sector. These show the distinct promise of onshore processing as a means of economic development:

- There are very large potential employment impacts of up to 8,540 additional jobs for local processing of all Solomon Islands tuna catch (Banks 2013b) compared with 3,000 employed in the industry at present (WCPFC, 2013, page 22). Roughly we can say that a requirement for 100% local processing would quadruple employment in the industry. Local crewing quota could push this number still further north with enormous direct and indirect economic benefits.
- There is also the potential for very significant increases in exports. Banks (2013b) says they could reach USD 300m a year. The World Bank says that total Solomon Islands exports were USD 492m in 2012, which gives a sense of the size of the opportunity.

6.7.4 The balance of investment and incentives is the important lever

MSSIF-commissioned research (Banks 2013a) shows that some of the proposed sites are commercially unviable, and also that the total production capacity proposed to be built exceeds the local fish available for processing; the facility at Ndoma, proposed by the Korean company Dongwon, alone would take 64% of the available purse seine days. This means that not all the facilities will be built unless the operators can attract fish from elsewhere in the region for processing (which would require the provision of global sourcing), and it strengthens the hand of Solomon Islands Government in negotiations over tax concessions.

It is concerning that MFMR has apparently not run a transparent bid process to seek expressions of interest in processing facilities. Instead it is following up bids as they have come in through a bilateral process. There still seems to be scope to even up the approach to the various proposals through a single coherent process and policy managed through the PMU. This should ensure that the proposals and in particular the tax exemptions (or preferably rebates) and any government investment required treats each licensee on the same basis.

We were told that the playing field is not yet level. *‘There is no certainty in the investment climate. Whenever a new investor comes along, incentives are offered. But these incentives place existing investors at a relative disadvantage’.*

It seems very helpful that Solomon Islands already has a significant committed facility, in the shape of SolTuna. This can help keep alternative investors in processing facilities honest, at least for the longline fishery. Two interviewees, not including SolTuna itself, told us that SolTuna was presently getting a worse deal than was being proposed to other potential processors. As Banks (2013b, page 1) says, ‘it is evident that a balance of access fees, taxes and derived economic rents [from SolTuna] should be explored more thoroughly’.

Assuming that some of the investments are successful, in the sense of a facility being built and operating on a viable commercial basis, there is still a question of how effectively SIG revenue is used to develop the economy. The appropriate balance between direct job creation, revenue growth and tax discounts needs to be resolved. We were told that MSSIF is working on an investment framework to figure out how to balance the different factors and to guide government choices about what to give away. This will clearly be crucial for future decision-making. There was talk of support from IFC for developing this framework and more generally in the investment facilitation process, although we were also told that IFC would not help if deals did not go to an open tender.

MSSIF has also commissioned vital research on the value of its tuna resources that is used in setting prices, and Banks (2013a) points out some areas where the system appears to give privileged access to some fishers over others, although these are exceptions rather than the rule. Banks compares the large positive impacts of the NFD fleet, which employs 1,100 folks in Western Province, with a locally-based purse seine fleet that is beneficially-owned offshore and does not process its fish locally and therefore generates almost no benefit for Solomon Islands, but still has access to fish for the same price.

6.7.5 Many challenges remain

There are many potential difficulties with this move to onshore processing, and it will be interesting to see how they are dealt with in the coming period:

- There are clearly significant hurdles still to overcome. Two interviewees repeated to us that some of the proposed sites will not work, and that other places should be and are being considered. Again the site at Ndoma was mentioned; it will require massive infrastructure investment, presumably from SIG, before any processing could occur.
- There are gaps with enforcement that must be repaired. Banks (2013a, page iii) indicates that MFMR may not be charging the adjustment fee or enforcing the license conditions that require landing fish for processing. We were told in interviews that fees from 2012 have not yet been collected.
- Targets set for timing have not been achieved or even approached. The MFMR 2011-2013 Corporate Plan targeted 2013 for the same three facilities to be built. In fact by 2013 even land availability had not been resolved. From our review, there are difficulties with land access particularly, but also with finding money to spend on associated infrastructure (roads, ports, electricity, water), and coordinating multiple branches of the occasionally quixotic SIG bureaucracy. Major infrastructure efforts are required and the complexity is evident even from our brief review. We note that even for established firms like SolTuna, ongoing operations are not simple. We see from Peacey (2012) that NFD, who supply SolTuna fish, were struggling to secure boats to match their licence numbers.

- We did not encounter any targets for employment or revenue growth in the documents we reviewed or the interviews we held. The measures for success are simply stages along the way to putting in place the facilities. It would be helpful to have a better sense of the prize. This may fall out of current analyses.

6.7.6 EU market access a continuing challenge

EU market access is crucial to ensure good returns from locally processed tuna. We were told that a mock audit in 2012 revealed a number of deficiencies in the operations of the Ministry of Health (the relevant Competent Authority for exports to the EU), and that PHAMA, MSSIF, FFA, the CA itself and NFD have been working together to bring it up to scratch.

We were also told that one major barrier is uncertain funding for the CA. The function is presently being supported by donors, but a longer-term solution needs to be found. One such solution could be greater cost recovery: Banks (2013a) calculates that the current management requirements cost only 2.2% of the current access fee revenues, which suggests that there is scope to increase cost recovery. We were told that some initial steps towards cost recovery have commenced with residue testing, required for the EU market, being funded by NFD/SolTuna already through a trust account model that could be developed into a sustainable financing model for the CA over time.

6.7.7 Overall MSSIF making a significant positive difference

We see regular quality reporting on progress on the various onshore investment projects (Diffey 2013, page 36). We also noted what looks like a very tidy dovetail and handover between the efforts of the COFIA, retained by MSSIF, the Investment Facilitation Advisor provided by FFA, and the new PMUTA funded by MSSIF (Diffey 2013, Cusack 2013).

MSSIF has made and continues to make a crucial contribution on the onshore processing work. It is unclear whether local staff have sufficient capacity at this point, and whether building MFMR capacity is actually a MSSIF objective on this part of the programme. We note that the ToR for the PMUTA are entirely technical in focus, and that his appointment follows on a line of external advisors from MSSIF and FFA.

The PMUTA's first task on appointment in October 2013 was an urgent response to an EU IUU compliance inquiry, which was important but not within his official remit. This does beg the question of what would have happened if he were not there. We were told that the Offshore Fisheries Advisor was also critical in making this response happen on time.

Based on what we heard and saw, we have low confidence in the MFMR core capability in this area and concern about the broader environment, but high confidence in the people involved from MSSIF and assistance external to MFMR, like PHAMA.

6.7.8 Areas for future focus

Onshore processing is a crucial priority for MFMR – and while there is not much evidence of realistic timeframes, the need for MSSIF support is apparent and should be continued. In terms of activities, we suggest it may be helpful to step back in order to move forward on

onshore processing, by developing: a consistent process; consistent, published rules; and (if possible) publishing progress and terms for public support once agreed. It appears this work is in progress, and we would recommend that the consideration of future sites and future proposals occur in light of these rules. This could include a relook at SolTuna situation in light of the rules, recognising that their money is already sunk but that they are a useful competitive tension to new proposals.

In terms of timeframes, we suggest setting timelines and targets for employment and revenue and staging that can actually be achieved, and then reporting against these.

We also suggest that MSSIF continues to support the joint process to improve CA functioning, and consider helping by:

- Facilitating MFMR taking a lead in the industry working group.
- Contracting in of technical expertise to support the CA if required.
- Addressing ongoing CA funding, through assisting MFMR and the Ministry of Health to secure recurrent funding or through developing cost recovery mechanisms.

6.8 Activity planning and governance

Generally the structures and systems set out in the Programme Design Document have not been implemented.

6.8.1 Governance is not working as designed (which is not a huge problem in the short-term)

The design in Figure 6 and Figure 7 is straightforward. But what happens in practice is quite different. Indeed, no one we interviewed was aware of the governance structure in the Design. There is no Programme Committee, the Fisheries Advisory Council is dormant or defunct, and there is no medium term development strategy for fisheries (although there is a SIG National Development Strategy that mentions fisheries in its review of the whole economy). There is no updated MFMR strategy, although the 2011-2013 Corporate Plan is useful even if many of the actions have not been completed. As far as we know, there is no six monthly reporting to the SIG as planned.

There is one MFMR Annual Report from 2012, and there are regular reviews of New Zealand's support, of which this assessment forms a part. The core of the governance and management of MSSIF is a quarterly Implementation Steering Committee, chaired by the MFMR Permanent Secretary, and involving staff from Post, the MSSIF Programme Administrator, and the MSSIF Team Leader. There are also monthly meetings of MFMR, MSSIF and staff at Post that deal with more day to day issues management.

In our view this system works effectively, i.e. it ensures good communication between MFMR, MFAT and MSSIF, and helps in planning, prioritising, setting targets and checking on performance. This was also the view of those that are involved in the Implementation Steering Committee and the monthly management meetings, although clearly effectiveness does depend on personalities, and the Committee has worked far better since the arrival of the new TL/IDA.

We are not sure precisely what role the higher levels of government envisaged were intended to play, but they may be scope to bring in a body with a broader mandate into the governance picture. In particular, it may be help bring more engagement with other important actors and more external legitimacy to MFMR's activities if there was a forum that involved provincial government, industry and NGOs in a consultative or information role. MFMR may find this helpful as it starts to deal with the more difficult and nuanced challenges of inshore fisheries management, where it has neither a major role at present nor natural credibility with stakeholders.

We also think that there is scope to systematise, simplify and structure reporting to the ISC, without going overboard on complexity or bureaucracy. We will present thoughts on both these ideas in our draft Design.

More broadly, there are evident difficulties in integrating with broader SIG processes and institutions. We were told especially of difficulties in using the processes of the Department of Finance and Treasury to seek approvals for day to day spending, like booking training and travel, and delays in the process have meant difficulties in scheduling and delayed or bounced payments. However, we were told by other interviewees that most delays are caused by administrative errors at the line agency end. We were also told that these 'errors' were not assisted by regular changes to the rules that were imperfectly communicated. Interviewees suggested that the overall process would be easier if donor budgets were decided prior to August, in time to put together the government budget for the coming year. This would avoid the need to washup appropriations once the actual figures become clear.

It is hard to know what if anything can be done about these broader process challenges by MFMR.

6.8.2 Reporting required from Advisors seems overly onerous

We share the view of several of our interviewees that there is unnecessary reporting required from advisors to MFAT. Given the context, with management of the project at Post and regular management engagement between staff at Post and MSSIF Advisors, it makes little sense to have Advisors spend their expensive time writing long reports on what they have done.

Our investigations show that typically just three people read the Advisor reports outside of MFMR itself, one in Wellington and two in Honiara. The two people in Honiara are quite close to what is going on in MSSIF because they are involved in day to day management. The one person in Wellington is interested only at a high level because MSSIF is generally going well unless:

- There is some kind of trouble disclosed, e.g. when two MFMR staff on a work trip to New Zealand absconded, or when a quantity of seaweed farming equipment was misappropriated, or
- If there is Ministerial interest.

The Advisors are motivated to do the reporting, despite the time that it takes, because they need to do it to get their invoices paid.

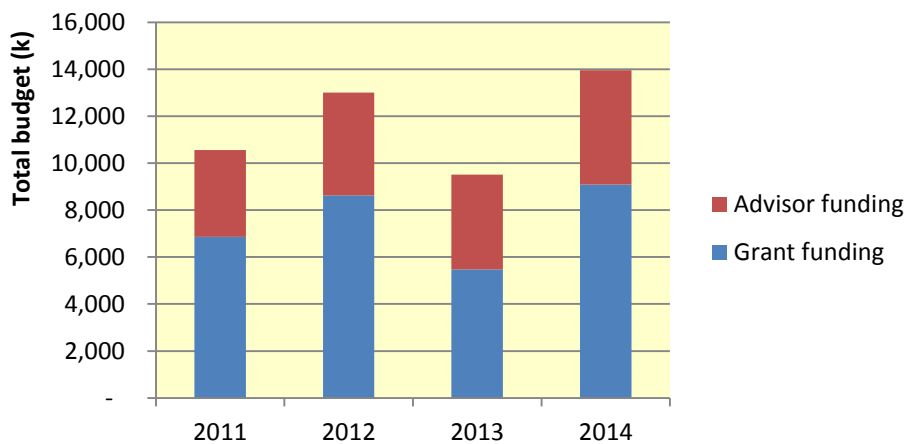
Matters have clearly improved with regard to advisor reporting over time. One MFAT interviewee said that reporting historically from MSSIF was *‘just terrible’*, with a *‘prolonged fight’* between MFAT and the Advisors about what good reporting looked like. Another told us that reporting used to focus heavily on inputs and detailed accounts of process, whereas today’s reporting is more meaningful and more clearly related to MFMR priorities. But we think there must be ways to streamline requirements further that should be pursued.

We were told that reporting is being simplified so that Advisors will write mission reports after each visit, and will report quarterly through the TL/IDA, who will put together a consolidated report. This sounds like a sensible solution. As noted above, we think more structured reporting to the Implementation Steering Group, as well as less detailed task-oriented management, will also be helpful.

6.8.3 MSSIF budget is very large relative to MFMR

The approved MSSIF budget for 2014 is SBD 14m, made up of SBD 4.9m in fees for the MFAT-funded MSSIF Advisors and SBD 9.1m in grant funding. The SIG-funded MFMR budget (not counting one-off items) is around SBD 26m for the same period, meaning that MSSIF will represent about 35% of total MFMR spending in 2014. The chart below shows total budgeted MSSIF spending over time.

Figure 10 MSSIF budget over time



Source: MFAT, Grant Funding Arrangement and Letters of Variation

There are two questions from this simple comparison of MSSIF and total MFMR resources. The first is as to absorptive capacity, i.e. at what point does the organisation reach the limit of its ability to tolerate change and usefully take advantage of externally-funded activity. And the second is as to what happens to MFMR as its capability improves and this boost to its resources is reduced over time. We are not sure when the peak year for MSSIF activity will be, or whether it has already passed, but these seem to us to be issues for MFAT and MFMR to be thinking about as we enter the last five years of the programme, whatever form any assistance might take after that point.

As far as we can see, there is no official consideration of future year funding for MSSIF other than in the discussions that lead to the budget, workplan and grant variation each year. As noted above, we do not understand the link between the annual MSSIF priorities and

MFMR priorities since we did not see a standard MFMR planning process. It might be helpful to put a multi-year view in place, particularly since MSSIF itself is engaging in efforts that run for more than 12 months and recruiting Advisors on multi-year renewable contracts.

6.8.4 Regular work planning required from MFMR at minimum

The Corporate Plan is a helpful document, and it was referred to by interviewees as the authoritative source on the goals and activities of the Ministry. It is not clear how well it works as an assistance with prioritisation. It comes across more as a list of activities to pursue rather than a set of prioritised efforts with budgets attached and reporting on progress.

We struggled to determine how activities ended up on the Corporate Plan or in the various strategy documents. Nor was it clear to us how systematic the process was for tracking progress against these plans and reporting. We have not checked progress against all the goals, but to take one example, the Plan says that by 2013 there should be loining plants at Suafoa Bay and Tenaru, and a canning factory at Ndoma (p18). The latest report from the PMUTA makes it obvious that, while some progress has been made, none of these facilities is yet in place. The 2012 Annual Report does not refer to the Corporate Plan goals, instead describing activities under the output ('Progress the development of onshore processing facilities') without referring to the goal.

We were also uncertain as to how important the MSSIF Advisors were in deciding on the allocation of MSSIF funds and effort. The grant funding approach is intended to promote MFMR ownership of activities and funds, and to ensure MSSIF activities are aligned with MFMR priorities. Central to this are MFMR decisions on what priorities should be and the development of a plan and a budget. What we seem to see instead is a more hybrid model, where Advisors are central both to actually getting work done and in deciding what gets done with MSSIF resources, with technical assistance plus Advisor support accounting for almost all of the MSSIF budget.

A more pure grant funding model would put MFMR staff in control of the MSSIF funds and decision-making, as well as MFMR being responsible for the recruiting, performance management and accountability of any Advisors that were retained. This would require MFMR to regularly define its priorities, and decide which of those it can pursue with its own resources, and which will require MSSIF assistance.

In time, growing capability and familiarity with systematic planning and reporting could mean that MFMR would take on more of the goal generating activities and deciding how to progress against those goals. At this point MSSIF Advisors are appropriately doing a lot of idea generation and action planning, and the TL/IDA is central to MSSIF operations. We have recommended that the TL/IDA do less project management and take a higher-lever programme management approach. One way to advance this is for the TL/IDA to seek to gradually hand over project management, planning and financial reporting for MSSIF activities to MFMR staff.

We will consider in our draft Activity Design how funding, accountability and reporting arrangements might need to develop over the next four years to support a transition in New Zealand's support, and what the triggers for those developments should be.

6.8.5 Grant funding arrangement appropriate

We assess below the appropriate funding and accountability arrangements for MSSIF using the analytical tool we developed in the 2013 strategic evaluation. This tool is a series of questions that help guide the allocation of decision-rights and responsibilities between donors and partners. The original tool is described on page 82 of our 2013 evaluation report.

Table 3 Assessment of funding arrangements

Criterion	Assessment
Relevance	MFAT does not have strong views on what activities are best to pursue beyond supporting fisheries development and management activities, but MFMR seems to have only limited capability to determine, manage and report on its own priorities and progress against them
Efficiency	MFMR appears to have quite strong incentives to control and report on its own spending, and to improve its efficiency over time
Effectiveness	MFMR is best placed to decide on which activities will be most effective although its capability to do that is uncertain at this stage. MFMR is well placed to decide how to change the activities pursued over time in response to a changing local environment.
Risk of loss/wastage	There is some evidence of limited loss or wastage of resources, e.g., missing seaweed equipment, staff absconding while on secondments in New Zealand, but MSSIF has taken prompt and effective action
Donor visibility	Donor visibility of support does not seem to be a significant issue
Co-ordination and coherence	Local level co-ordination with other donors and activities seems feasible, and there is little apparent need to co-ordinate MSSIF with broader MFAT-funded activities

Our conclusion from this analysis is that the existing grant funding approach is broadly appropriate. There is no justification for tighter MFAT control. As noted above, if MFMR were able to define and report systematically on its priorities through a regular planning process, and put in place a monitoring and evaluation system that gave sufficient confidence that progress was being made, a move towards a more pure grant funding system could be justified.

6.8.6 Monitoring and evaluation framework needs sharp simplification

The monitoring and evaluation framework has not achieved what was planned in the original Programme Design. MFMR reporting is better than it was, and part of the credit for that is certainly due to MSSIF, but reporting needs further improvement. Some data on offshore fisheries and licensing information is good, although data on revenues from fisheries license fees seem to be less easily available. Aside from that, what matters is not measured and there are few baselines. Measurement of inshore fisheries is uniformly weak, although the Hapi Fis project is a very positive and welcome development. If MSSIF came to operate on a purer grant funding model, then these types of differentiations between MFMR and MSSIF would be less relevant.

A partial programme logic

Half of the programme logic is absent – as there is no reference within the diagram to inputs/activities or outputs, and the lists of outputs that are discussed later in the document are not explicitly connected back to the programme logic. This makes it hard to distinguish the work programme of MFMR from that of MSSIF – i.e. to determine how specifically MSSIF contributed towards these outputs.

And the CD component of the programme logic is incomplete, referring to stakeholders and the policy/regulatory framework, but not to the underpinning organisational systems, leadership and governance, or individual staff capacity.

The design of the next phase of assistance should include a more robust programme logic that includes the layer currently missing – linking outputs to impacts/intermediate outcomes. The assessment team will develop a draft framework and supporting indicators, for subsequent consultation and refinement.

Need for a clearer end state...

In order to develop the missing layer of programme logic, a clearer definition of the desired end state is required. This involves specifying what success looks like – i.e. MFMR capacity – and how this will be measured. This will not be a world in which MFMR directly undertakes all its own work – just as for any government department, it will still contract out some work. But there should be clear boundaries and criteria for when MFMR commissions external resources, such as for discrete, technical, time-bound projects.

... and meaningful indicators

Part of the challenge is that the work of the MEA was not helpful. Her report said clearly that measures needed to reflect what data was available, and noted that MFMR ‘undertakes very little monitoring other than in relation to finances’ (MFMR 2011, p1). But the framework proposed ends up with an unwieldy set of 35 unprioritised measures, some of which are undefined, many of which are new, and most of which are unrelated to what was feasible to collect in the Solomon Islands environment. Despite this, the framework goes on to allocate responsibilities to individuals to collect all this data, and to say that baselines will be established in 2011 with the results of the first data collection presented through the annual report in 2011. Overall it is an inelegant, theoretic model that bears no relationship to the real world environment in which it was intended to be put into action.

Similarly, in the MFMR Corporate Plan 2011-2013 the measures tend to be broad statements of direction than measureable goals, and without baseline measurement they are basically meaningless even if well-intentioned. For example, under the goal to ‘improve interisland transport systems’, MFMR says that it will have succeeded if by 2013 ‘rural fishers have better access to fisheries markets in Honiara and other urban centres’.

MSSIF has a different set of measures that should be integrated into a revised and improved set of MFMR indicators. We can see that MSSIF Advisors have put a lot of effort into reporting against the existing MSSIF monitoring and evaluation framework, even though it is not used or useful to anyone as far as we can see. We suggest, as some of our interviewees suggested, that the monitoring approach be radically simplified to focus on the few things that actually matter and try to reduce the level of noise and effort around planning that does not lead to changes in practice.

Another part of the challenge is that there appears to be no clear link between MFMR's strategic priorities and its operational planning and what actually gets done and reported on. We did not manage to figure out how activities end up on the priority list in the Corporate Plan. But we note that the Plan itself like a long list of actions, not a prioritised list with resources attached and measured indicators.

When we asked interviewees how they set priorities, they told us that the priorities were expressed in the Corporate Plan and in the Strategy for the relevant area. But to take one example, the Inshore Fisheries Strategy 2010-2012 lists thirty six actions under five 'pillars', and there is no information available on whether any of those actions has yet been achieved, nor any sense of which are the most important, or how much effort will be put into each one. Nor is there any clear lineup between the activities in the Strategy and those in the Plan.

6.8.7 Generally many gaps between plan design and realities

As is evident from the analysis above, there are gaps between what was envisaged in the Programme Design and what is happening on the ground. We think there is scope to boost MFMR performance by dealing with these matters. MFMR has shown itself capable of creating plans and strategies, but there is still some distance to go before it will be capable of executing on all its plans and, relatedly, only making plans for things that it realistically expects to be able to do.

To be clear, we are not saying that MSSIF should add more items to the wishlist or make more plans: the issue is about focus and delivery, not the conception of things to do. If anything we would suggest that MSSIF (and MFMR in general) be less ambitious, more focused, and look at how to improve its capability to deliver on real change.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can say that the Programme Design was never viable in its entirety. We note that the same is true of the SIMROS design; the first conclusion of those showing up to implement it was that between what was envisaged and what was possible was an unbridgeable chasm of reality.

The first report of the PMUTA is an excellent example of the difficulties on the ground: when he arrived he had no office, no furniture, and the librarian was on leave and so there was no one to move the library to make space for his team as planned. He was told he would be working in a team of six, in fact only one had been approved at the time of our field work (a further two have subsequently been approved). Our analysis suggests he will need to devote substantial effort to CD, but his ToR have a long list of technical deliverables related to onshore processing without any mention of these very real world factors.

This gap between intentions and reality is also obviously a challenge for the next phase of our work. We will need to come up with a design that too will be tested in the real world.

Two other matters we mention in passing that we will come back to in our design.

- As noted above, the Programme Design has a risk matrix and suggests there should be annual reports against these risks and updates. This is basic management practice, but is not happening. We can see that MSSIF advisors list risks in a general sense in their reporting to MFAT.

- MSSIF budgeting is generally based on inputs when outputs would be much more useful – this is not hard to do in a general way, since it is mostly about allocating staff plus MSSIF funds to a relatively few buckets, but it could be helpful in getting a sense of where resources are being applied within MFMR. We note that there appears to be something to build on in the Budget documentation, where MFMR spending is divided up by division and shown over time, and that these divisions were also made in the reporting from the previous TL/IDA.

7. Case study 1: seaweed

7.1 Goals and objectives

The original MSSIF Programme Design mentions the EU seaweed cultivation effort in passing as part of the inshore fisheries objective to ‘facilitate sustainable development and management of inshore fisheries resources’, with a specific outcome of ‘an increased contribution from inshore fisheries to the economy’. On possible short-term inputs it refers to a range of aquaculture and other livelihoods activities saying:

The economic benefits and potential of these projects need to be documented to identify lessons learned and whether they provide economic opportunities in the future. Support could be provided to expand successful projects, or those that show potential.

The proposal (MFMR 2012, page 4) says the goal of the three-year activity is to ‘enhance and expand the seaweed farming sector to increase the livelihood of coastal communities where seaweed production is sustainable’. The expected outcomes are set out below, although we note there is some uncertainty around the production figure, with the proposal (page 13) citing 897mt as 2011 production, and the Activity Progress Report (MFMR 2013, page 13) putting this at 779 mt. We were told that efforts were being made to improving the monitoring of production and exports.

Table 4 Seaweed farming project objectives

Measure	2011	Project goal
Seaweed farms	800	>1,000
Individuals involved	3,500	5,000
Production (tonnes)	897	1,000 - 1,500

Source: MFMR (2012)

The project lines up directly with the MFMR Corporate Plan Priority Two ‘grow livelihoods through aquaculture development’, and the Plan specifically refers to ‘seaweed production occurring in suitable provincial locations’.

The work is led and run by MFMR, with periodic short-term input from a MSSIF-funded technical expert. The day to day running of the work is part of the operations of the MFMR Aquaculture Development section, which has staff dedicated to seaweed (MFMR 2012, page 18).

The core problem that is being solved here, aside from the general desire to improve community income levels, is said to be a lack of access to finance and technical information that would enable communities to develop a seaweed industry (MFMR 2012, page 9).

The plan is to expand farming at existing sites further, and to establish farms at other likely locations, all of which are said to have been previously evaluated in through ‘several donor funded projects’, are suitable for seaweed cultivation, and all of which have community

support (MFMR 2012, page 6). There is to be a process of community engagement to decide on the exact number and location of farms.

The project started in August 2012, and runs through until August 2015.

7.2 Outputs

The main output is the provision of equipment and training to new and existing farm sites. The annual report records visits in the first 12 months to the three existing farming sites, and assessments of the prospects for nine potential new farming areas, as well as the establishment of five new farms.

There were four training courses, with a total of 43 attendees, split evenly between men (17) and women (16), and with 10 youth also involved.

The total budget for three year is SBD 3.74m. The largest components of that spend are on farming supplies and consultant time. The time of MFMR staff is not specifically valued in the annual report, but is notionally budgeted at SBD 210k over the three year life of the project, or just under 6% of the total project spend.

The MSSIF-funded Advisor made four visits to Solomon Islands in the first year, and MFMR staff report having made two visits to farming areas, as well as developing a seaweed manual for farmers, and engaging with seaweed buyers to ensure that there are folks available in each farming area to buy whatever is produced.

7.3 Impacts

7.3.1 Too early to see substantial impacts from MSSIF-funded efforts

Overall production and export of seaweed seems reasonably well established already based on historic efforts. At this point, one year in to a three year activity, it is too soon to identify sustained impacts of MSSIF-funded efforts specifically, although the overall trend of growing production is encouraging

Current production is highly concentrated on one community and, from the annual reporting, it seems that interest in farming is strongest in areas where farming is already popular. That said, there is some evidence of growth in production over time, and early signs of progress with five new farm sites reported being established in 2013.

There is also some cause for optimism based on the results of the evaluation of the EU-funded effort in Wagina. This shows that on average households in engaged in seaweed farming were SBD 10k a year better off than those families that did not, a 52% positive difference. It also says that income from seaweed is more regular and stable than other fishing income, and that commercialisation has been successful with high involvement from private sector buyers.

On wider impacts, the evaluation says that women play a significant part in seaweed production, that the development of seaweed farming has had positive impacts on a range of metrics apart from income, including gender equality, livelihood development, and health,

and that there have been benefits from a reduction in pressure on reef fish resources in communities with seaweed farming (MFMR 2013, p13).

The table below shows seaweed production over time. The project proposal cites a current export value of SBD 11k a tonne (USD 1.5k), with a farmgate price of SBD 5-6 per kg, implying that farmers secure around 50% of the export value. We were told that 2013 production for the full year exceeded 1,600 tonnes, and so the 2013 figure may not be accurate.

We note that the direct cost of the project is estimated at SBD 3.7m over three years (MFMR 2013, page 19), i.e., excluding staff time at MFMR, or around a quarter of the total farmgate value of seaweed production each year.

Table 5 Seaweed farming production (tonnes)

Site	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 (to Aug)
Wagina	463	871	753	855	849
Other	33	15	26	16	10
Total production	496	887	779	871	859
Estimated value to farmers (SBD k)	2,727	4,877	4,287	4,793	4,725

Source: MFMR (2013)

We were told in interviews that the MSSIF efforts in seaweed have been very well received, but that the project continues to need supporting at this stage. There was particularly positive feedback about the TA, who is described as ‘awesome’ and a ‘really good role model’. We were told that MFMR staff are very engaged with the project ‘because it’s small and controlled and theirs’.

We also picked up concerns about how attractive the activity will ever be. One interviewee described seaweed farming as ‘hard work for not a lot of money’. There may also be limits to the scale of the activity. Lindley (2007), contracted by SIMROS to look at rural livelihoods options, said:

Seaweed will not provide widespread income earning activities for rural households. At best it will provide livelihoods for a small number of rural people in areas which are suitable for seaweed culture.

7.4 Analysis

7.4.1 Building on history

Seaweed farming has a reasonably long history in Solomon Islands, having been supported by donors in one form or another in various places since the late 1980s. In the early 2000s, EU funds were used for the Rural Fishing Enterprise project in two locations, and following growth in exports as a result of that programme, the EU ran a longer, five and a half year

project (COSPI) to develop a commercial seaweed farming industry in Solomon Islands (MFMR 2012, page 11). This project was run throughout by MFMR with external technical assistance. It is not clear from the information we have why the EU no longer funds this work.

The current project builds on these EU funded projects, and benefits from the work done to build the seaweed farming industry and to evaluate the earlier efforts. There were some evident troubles, external to the project, that affected the success of the EU's efforts, including unusual weather patterns, price reductions in the international market, the earthquake and tsunami in April 2007, and the opening of the beche-de-mer fishery, which reduced interest in seaweed farming.

Note that we secured only three documents related directly to the seaweed project, none of which are independent of the project. Of the 47 interviewees we spoke to, five referred to the seaweed project directly and three of those only in passing. In this environment, we have little data on which to form an assessment.

7.4.2 Overall a better design

Here we compare what we know of this seaweed project with the lessons from the clam and coral livelihoods project we evaluated in our previous Pacific Fisheries Evaluation. That was a more troublesome project, funded under SIMROS and delivered by WorldFish, that did not achieve its goals for a number of reasons, including that it was begun at a difficult time soon after the end of the ethnic tensions. But it is helpful as a comparator and seems to show that many of the lessons from the earlier project have been learned in the case of this seaweed work.

While the sustainability of this project is not assured, it is encouraging to see that it stacks up better than the earlier livelihoods project. There are already reasonable volumes of seaweed being cultivated, and successfully sold and exported, and the project seems by its nature to involve a high proportion of women as farmers. The challenges are to see whether there can be growth in production, whether a substantial number of new farms can be established in areas outside of Wagina, and whether a sustainable model can be found where farmers do not require ongoing financial support.

The annual report provides a reasonable level of detail on activities and the volume of equipment distributed. Some of the metrics, like those for number of people involved and income derived, must await further data.

Table 6 Comparison of livelihoods projects

SIMROS ornamental marine products project (delivered by WorldFish)	MSSIF seaweed project (page references are to MFMR Proposal for Donor Support, or the 2012-13 Progress Report)
Challenges	
Oversold as a significant part of rural livelihood improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally modestly described with proportionate targets (p4) • Links through to wider strategies (p7)
Technically difficult relying on hatchery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technically more straightforward • System tested before by EU, and farming has been happening in Solomon Islands for many years (p11)
Poorly planned, especially with no market analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop including exporters and buyers • Tried sites with other donors • Realistic about the effort required and the payoff for farmers(p9)
Never economically viable at volumes achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier product choice (p11) • Some commercial troubles or difficulties with buyers apparent • Farmers charged for inputs (but not very much)
Very well evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some initial numbers from EU evaluation, and historic production figures • Value chain analysis and evaluation already done thanks to EU (p12)
Conflicting objectives of poverty and commercial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear focus on productive farms and farmers and avoiding uneconomic areas (p3, Progress Report) • Put assistance to Rarumana on hold (as did EU) for lack of interest (p4, Progress Report)
Never had a realistic exit strategy (connected with commercial unviability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Said to be a path to sustainability and donor exit (p18), although not clear how realistic it is • Some expectation of ongoing help (p7, Progress Report)
Lessons	
Build from what the community does already and is interested in, do not impose new products on them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting 90 new farms, with engaged in dialogue to decide where • Say that sites supported by communities
Selection of participants is crucial to ensure motivated, capable farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on economic areas and enthusiastic farmers

Sources: Sapere (2013), MFMR (2012), MFMR (2013), Sapere analysis

7.4.3 The project may not solve the core challenge

The first annual report indicates that even successful farmers are not motivated (or able) to put aside money to replace equipment, preferring to secure what they need from the project at highly subsidised prices. If farmers cannot create sustainable businesses, which is to say, cannot eventually cover their full costs of operation without MFMR contribution, then this project will only continue so long as MFMR is willing to subsidise it.

One interviewee worried about this point, saying that farmers do not maintain their equipment even if they are making money. MSSIF is trying to respond to this risk by providing business training to try and develop a business mindset and reduce donor dependence amongst farmers.

This concern about sustainability is not universal. Another MFMR interviewee said the project is sustainable in that it does not rely on continued donor support and there is a clear donor exit strategy. We did not see much evidence to support that view from our work.

We note the comments on Lindley (2007) para 184, writing at the time of the mid-term review of the EU project:

At present seaweed offers the best hope in aquaculture as a rural income earner, and the [EU] project is considered to be a limited success.

It remains to be seen what will happen once the [EU] project finishes, though the involvement of the private sector in buy [sic] and selling is encouraging.

In fact, as we now know, once the flow of EU funds stopped, so did farming activity.

7.4.4 The project has sharply overspent the budget

Spending in the first year was SBD 2.4m compared with a SBD 1.4m budget for that year and a SBD 3.7m three year total. We were told this is because MFMR has bought most of the equipment up front (although it has not yet distributed it all). It also seems that the external expert made four visits rather than the budgeted two.

7.4.5 There may be commercial troubles

It is hard to get a sense of this from the documents, but there are regular mentions of difficulties with buyers. This seems to come down to ensuring buyer availability in every area where there is farming, and buyers shifting costs onto farmers that they should cover themselves under the agreed model. This latter point seems to have been a challenge even in Wagina, where seaweed farming is widespread.

It is not mentioned directly in the project reporting, but we see from broader MSSIF reporting that there was also trouble with misappropriated seaweed farming equipment, which has now been resolved. This is not related to the pre-purchase of equipment, but was an isolated incident involving a single individual.

8. Case study 2: Provincial Fisheries Centres

8.1 Goals and objectives

The original Programme Design mentions support for provincial fisheries under the inshore fisheries objective of facilitating ‘sustainable development and management of inshore fisheries resources’.

The design suggests the need to improve offices and accommodation in the provinces in order to improve ‘support for and monitoring of fisheries management and livelihoods activities at provincial and community level’. It says that the responsibility for establishing and maintaining provincial fisheries facilities lies with MFMR and the provincial governments, but that ‘as part of a wider programme of support, New Zealand will consider ways it can assist MFMR and Provincial Governments to rehabilitate premises and build new accommodation’. Any solution ‘would need to be aligned to proposed plans for Fisheries Centres’, for which a study will be completed in 2009. This date may be a mistake, since the Design Document dates from February 2010, and the study referred to may be the Taylor-Moore study (completed in 2011).

In the MFMR Corporate Plan 2011-2011 the first priority is ‘Improve market access for our rural fishers’, and says it plans to ‘improve fisheries services to provinces and rural communities’ as part of that. It commits to developing fisheries centres ‘to provide the services needed to promote growth and investment in community based fisheries’, and suggests it will integrate its activities with those of the Provincial Governments, and work with other donors.

8.2 Outputs

The two outputs that we can see are the Taylor-Moore review in 2011, and the development of an August 2012 proposal for MSSIF funding that is now under action. The proposal sets out work to:

- Plan to improve fisheries centres (based on a model design and on community input in each area).
- Train rural fishers and Fisheries Centre Officers.
- Develop case studies of options for Fisheries Centres.
- Model small scale producer networks.
- Help push the development of fishers’ associations.

We can see from the 2014 budget and workplan that MSSIF has budgeted money for this work this year, perhaps as much as SDB 2m for infrastructure spend. The proposal calls for spending SBD 8m over five phases on this effort: it is not clear on the exact timeframe of the phases.

MFMR has also established the new Provincial Development and Extension Division to drive improvements in services to the provinces.

8.3 Impacts

It is not clear yet that anything has been done in response to the intentions set out in the Design Document or the MFMR Corporate Plan, and so it is too soon to see any impacts in terms of improvements in the Provincial Fisheries Centres as yet.

8.4 Analysis

8.4.1 Long history with Provincial Fisheries Centres

There is a long history of both support for the centres and analysis of their performance in Solomon Islands.

SIMROS funded a report (Lindley 2007a) that analysed the context, status and performance of Provincial Fisheries Centres, and reviewed the long history. The important findings of that report include:

- Provincial Fisheries Centres are important to support local economies, particularly to enable the trade of fish from rural areas to markets in Honiara, which had an estimated value (in 2007) of SBD 5.5m a year. Solomon Islands is unusual in having fish provided to the capital from such a variety of rural locations and on such a regular basis.
- Many services beyond ice provision have been tried from Provincial Fisheries Centres, and almost universally these services have now ceased. As Lindley puts it (para 110):

[Provincial Fisheries Centres] were established with a host of objectives and under a variety of management regimes.... There is no doubt that they have universally failed to achieve most of these objectives.

- That said, even in very difficult operating environments most Provincial Fisheries Centres continue to run and to produce ice. This is a victory of sorts, which Lindley describes them with a strong sense of understatement as not being “complete failures”. He says (para 120):

It is certainly a result, even if not the result that the planners were expecting and hoping for. It falls far short of expectations. [But] It is a result that exceeds many other rural developments – most of which leave no development footprint at all.

- Provincial Fisheries Centres cannot cover their full costs from the sale of ice. But the economic benefits associated with ice production outweigh the fiscal costs of the subsidy required to ensure its provision. Provincial Fisheries Centres can cover their direct costs (i.e., electricity) from fees for ice. It is the indirect costs, i.e., salaries and maintenance) and the return of capital, i.e., depreciation, that must be funded from elsewhere.

Lindley also gives a useful history of other efforts to assist provincial fishers, including through the provision of boats and shipping services, none of which achieved their objectives. And he makes the interesting point that few if any people fish as a full time

occupation, and that few people would embark on an activity that relies on ice provision or other services from the Provincial Fisheries Centres because they have historically been so unreliable.

8.4.2 Be modest in expectations and targets; do not expect financial viability

The root cause of all of these failures is that interventions were just too ambitious. In particular, experience is that Provincial Fisheries Centres are not commercially viable, and so plans that call for that are doomed.

Gillet (2010) says that 30 Provincial Fisheries Centres were established over the years in the provinces with support from Japan, the USA, Canada and The Nature Conservancy. They were (page 30) ‘intended to serve as market outlets (for fish caught by rural fishermen), sell fishing gear, and provide training in new fishing techniques’, but ‘most fell into disrepair as soon as funding ceased, mostly in the early 1990s.’

Lindley, writing in 2007, said that of the 30 Provincial Fisheries Centres, 11 were reasonably successful and six could be made so with repairs. Eight were marginal, and may be able to be saved with effort, and five were already abandoned. He provides another status report in Lindley (2007b), a few months later.

The experience of Solomon Islands appears to be reflected in other PICs. Gillett (2010) is a brief paper that draws together lessons learned from fisheries centres across nine PICs in recent decades. The key points to take from that paper are:

- Do not expect financial viability – if a Fisheries Centre were viable, the private sector would already be establishing them (as they have in some places, notably near Honiara). Gillett also suggests not crowding out private sector operators if they are in the market, because it will cost more in the long run.
- Think long-term about subsidies – handing Fisheries Centres over to provincial governments is often a solution once the costs are seen as having got too high. This may generate positive press, devolving authority and assets to local decision-makers, but the reality is that Fisheries Centres usually require substantial financial assistance and that the burden of these costs eventually falls on the community itself
- A Fisheries Centre is not a panacea – ‘The insertion of fisheries centre infrastructure into a rural community typically does not alter the underlying economics of catching fish in isolated locations and marketing them in rural areas’.
- Centre design can reduce operating costs – the essence of this is to make sure the Fisheries Centre is the right size for its catchment, that it is built to be scalable (e.g., with many small freezers that can be turned off if not in use, not one large one). Bear in mind that larger upfront capital costs may reduce operating costs over time and therefore improve longevity.
- Centres are useful places to spread the word on fisheries management – as well as being a home for fisheries officers and a place for advice and some limited services, they can be useful in local conservation and management. For Centres that have a trading function, Gillett notes ‘he who controls the buying at the centre can exert considerable positive influence over fishing practices in the area’.

Lindley and Gillett also point out that Provincial Fisheries Centres are politically very important, in some cases because they are the only visible national government assistance in an area, and so proposals to reduce the level of service from any Centre are likely to be controversial.

8.4.3 There is reasonable information already on the state of the Centres

The first MSSIF team leader conducted an extensive survey of the Provincial Fisheries Centres in 2011 (Taylor-Moore, 2011). We were told that this took upwards of a year, and involved interviewing around 200 people face to face across the country, as well several workshops to develop the questionnaire, training for MFMR staff in interview techniques, a trial questionnaire, and MSSIF funding for the survey itself.

We find his report of the survey results an odd document that makes no reference to previous reviews and uses self-developed criteria to assess Provincial Fisheries Centres that are not obviously related to any objective standards for what makes for success. Nevertheless the report delivers useful data on each Provincial Fisheries Centre, including the population serviced, its type, its distance from markets, and its condition. We have not checked how Taylor-Moore's assessments measure up to those of Lindley.

Taylor-Moore recommends:

- A further assessment in 2012 of the Fisheries Centre building and equipment in each province (although why the survey was not sufficient evidence is not explained).
- Building a model sustainable Fisheries Centre at Bahana 'based on services needed by local stakeholders, provincial government and requirements of MFMR'.
- Conducting a training needs analysis and delivery for provincial staff in how to operate and provide basic services, and training for local fishers covering essentials of small-scale commercial fishing.

Generally these last two points have flowed through into the plan for Provincial Fisheries Centres that MFMR is in the process of implementing, with MSSIF support.

Interviewees generally supported the points above; i.e., that ice provision is valuable and can provide '*tremendous advantages*' for local fisheries, but it needs to be regarded as a service for the local community rather than a viable commercial enterprise.

Although we did not have the chance to interview the Inshore Fisheries Advisor, the Provincial Fisheries Centres were a popular topic in interviews, with eight of our 47 interviewees mentioning them to a greater or lesser extent.¹⁴

¹⁴ We call them Provincial Fisheries Centres in this report. In other materials they are called Regional or Rural Fisheries Centres. This distinction is not material for our discussion.

8.4.4 The question is (still) what to do with the Fisheries Centres

The Programme Design essentially kicks down the road the hard question of what to do with Provincial Fisheries Centres, where, and when. This is the same approach taken by Taylor-Moore (2011), and no progress has been made in the time of the MFMR Corporate Plan despite its apparent intentions, and so the same question still faces MFMR now.

The long history in various PICs, including Solomon Islands, says that trying to provide anything other than ice making and fisheries management services will not be sustainable in normal circumstances, and that even ice making will require a permanent subsidy for all costs other than the costs of electricity. Given the state of the Provincial Fisheries Centres infrastructure and equipment, there is an evident need for programmed maintenance. But even if MSSIF does spend the significant resources required to upgrade the Centres, it is not clear where funding for ongoing operations and maintenance would come from once MSSIF's budget was no longer available.

On our visit to Lambi there was talk of the Centre as being a service hub for local fishers, and the suggestion that beyond ice it could provide fuel, equipment or training. And from the results reported by Taylor-Moore of workshops held with communities, the list of issues raised includes repair of buildings, maintenance and repair of equipment, supply of boats and fishing gear, management training, operational budget support, marketing, and inter-island transport and logistics.

We conclude that there is no shortage of community enthusiasm for extended services from Provincial Fisheries Centres, and so holding to a more restricted set that focuses just on ice provision may be difficult. We do not have a good sense of how these expectations might vary from place to place.

We were also told in interviews that provincial staff are helpful to other government agencies, in particular the interviewees from the Ministry of the Environment said they appreciate the opportunity to deliver their training to Provincial Fisheries Officers and feel that this gives the Ministry some reach into the provinces.

Infrastructure renewal is a delicate political task also, given the importance of the Provincial Fisheries Centres to the provinces. And it is clear that MFMR cannot directly shut down operating Fisheries Centres. Even in the unoperational one we visited, the provincial government was paying the salary for the worker who lived there, although we were told that the budgets provided by provincial governments were inadequate.

8.4.5 The best plan in each place depends on local circumstances, including local economic circumstances

It is clear that some Provincial Fisheries Centres will work better than others, and that a model that works in one location may not suit other places and other communities. Even if the focus is just ice provision, there are multiple models including making the ice on-site, bringing ice to the centre and just keeping it chilled (which would be less energy intensive), or having a fish buyer come to the centre, ice the fish, and take it away to trade.

A quality analysis of broadly what to do and where based on the survey results is a good first step, and that may be the path on which MFMR is currently embarking. That said, it is not obvious to us that spending significant resources on building a model Centre or two is the best way forward if there is wide diversity in designs for different places. Importantly, the design needs to take into account not just the desires of the local fishers and the role that MFMR may wish to play, but also the economic base of the locale and the likely demand for services compared with competing options.

We were told that refurbishing the two model centres will cost SBD 1m. At that rate, the total cost of 30 Centres would be SBD 15m, or roughly the whole budget for MSSIF (not counting embedded advisor spend) for two years. This would be a substantial investment. The Centres have been a popular donor investment over the years. It seems rational from that point of view for MFMR to assume that there will be donors in future willing to fund Centre refurbishments. We interviewed the Overseas Fisheries Co-operation Foundation (OFCF) of Japan, for example, which has funded many ice machines and the maintenance thereof over the years.

Leaving aside the infrastructure, training for existing staff and ensuring that they are well linked in to MFMR's inshore Fisheries Management efforts is a path of low regret. The uncertain organisational responsibilities between the Inshore and Provincial Divisions are not helpful.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

This section summarises our recommendations for the design of the next phase of MSSIF. These will be picked up in our draft ADD, with the details to be further developed, consulted on and finalised by MFAT Post and Fisheries Development Manager.

9.2 Programme design

9.2.1 Level of support

1. Maintain the level of funding and technical support provided by MSSIF at planned levels, including the currently planned levels of in-country Advisor time.

9.2.2 Modalities

2. Maintain the existing combination of modalities of MSSIF, comprising grant funding, in-country Advisors, technical specialists for specific inputs and funding for selected activities that support MFMR priorities.
3. Support MFMR in the regular production of a Corporate Plan that reflects priorities and the resources devoted to them, as well as timely Annual Reports that report on progress towards and spending on those priorities.
4. Consider greater use of secondments from MPI to support MSSIF objectives and MFMR priorities (under the existing MoU between MPI and MFAT).

9.2.3 Focus of support

5. Increase the emphasis on capacity development, freeing up resources to do so by:
 - (a) Focusing MSSIF on a smaller number of key projects.
 - (b) Lifting the focus of the Team Leader to overall strategic programme management, with MFMR Deputy Directors assuming responsibility for day-to-day project management.

9.2.4 Results framework

6. Develop a more robust programme logic and results framework, by:
 - (a) Clearly articulating the middle level of intervention logic (programme-level impacts) that is currently absent.
 - (b) Developing better and more specific indicators that relate directly to the programme's outputs, impacts and outcomes and meet good practice criteria for indicator selection and design.

9.3 Approach to capacity development

7. Support MFMR in commissioning a formal CD assessment that:
 - (a) Spans the dimensions of organisational, individual and stakeholder engagement capacity.
 - (b) For individual CD, encompasses both technical and generic skills.
8. Support MFMR in developing an organisation-wide CD plan and individual staff development plans to address the identified needs, which:
 - (a) For individual CD, include a variety of skills transfer methods, tailored to individual staff needs and learning styles.
 - (b) Are contextualised for the Solomon Islands and MFMR context and environment, by being:
 - (i) Simple to implement, with sequenced priorities and implementation steps over several years.
 - (ii) Suitably tailored to address the gender-specific needs of MFMR staff members.
 - (c) Are fully documented and approved by the MFMR Permanent Secretary (or Deputy Directors for individual staff plans).
9. Ensure that the annual MSSIF work plans specify how the programme will contribute to these MFMR development plans.
10. Create a TA counterpart mentoring role for the Fisheries Director and for the Human Resources Development manager.
11. Strengthen the Advisor recruitment process by:
 - (a) Developing Terms of Reference for MSSIF advisors that include:
 - (i) Clearer and more explicit focus on CD, including outputs-based deliverables with specific metrics.
 - (ii) Realistic and pragmatic expectations around the nature and pace of CD benefits realisation.
 - (b) Consider broader dissemination of Expressions of Interest (including via other media/tools) to reach a wider talent pool.
 - (c) Verbally interview all shortlisted candidates and all referees.
 - (d) Broaden the selection panels to include relevant specialists (including CD).
12. Support MFMR in clarifying internal Ministry roles and responsibilities for stakeholder fora such as SILMMA.
13. Support MFMR in undertaking a stakeholder analysis and developing a stakeholder engagement plan (that is suitably contextualised for the Solomon Islands environment).

9.4 Areas for future support

9.4.1 Offshore fisheries

14. Help MFMR complete current priorities by supporting:
 - (a) The passage of the new Fisheries Bill through Parliament (relates also to inshore fisheries) and Cabinet approval of the draft Tuna Management and Development Plan.
 - (b) Analysis and development of negotiating strategies for longline and purse seine access discussions with foreign fishing nations.
 - (c) The roll-out of the Forum Fisheries Agency information technology modules in MFMR, drawing on Secretariat for the Pacific Community expertise to improve data input, and other aspects required to implement the findings of the review of the licensing system.
 - (d) Strengthening operational aspects of fisheries compliance.
 - (e) The revival of the Fisheries Advisory Council and the approval of the Licensing Guidelines.
15. Assist with extension into the following selected priority areas:
 - (a) Tightening of the implementation of the longline policy to ensure returns are maximised.
 - (b) Developing policy and implementing systems for sustainable management of and maximising returns from archipelagic waters.
16. Continue to support the development and application of onshore investment requirements and processes, and build MFMR's capacity to lead these processes.
17. Assist MFMR in ensuring that the development and application of onshore investment rules considers and addresses the gender and human rights issues associated with such developments.
18. Continue to support the joint process to improve the functioning of the CA, and consider assisting by:
 - (a) Facilitating MFMR in taking a lead in the industry working group.
 - (b) Contracting in of technical expertise to support the CA if required.
 - (c) Addressing ongoing CA funding, through assisting MFMR and the Ministry of Health to secure recurrent funding or through developing cost recovery mechanisms.

9.4.2 Inshore fisheries

19. Help MFMR clarify its internal distribution of roles and responsibilities in inshore fisheries management and development.

20. Support MFMR managers in taking a leadership role in co-ordinating inshore management efforts through the NCC and SILMMA fora, ensuring these efforts are aligned with a new MFMR Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy.
21. Support the development of a replacement Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy, in collaboration with stakeholders in NCC, SILMMA and Provincial Governments.
22. Assist MFMR in ensuring that the development of this Strategy, and the selection, design and implementation of any inshore fisheries projects to support this Strategy, considers and addresses gender roles and impacts in inshore fisheries management and livelihoods activities, including by drawing on research previously commissioned by MSSIF.
23. Support investment in data collection and analysis by:
 - (a) Supporting the continuation of the Hapi Fis project, and its proposed extension into the provinces.
 - (b) Exploring the potential to connect provincial data collection efforts with Community-based fisheries management activities, to encourage locals to provide information.
 - (c) Building MFMR capacity to manage and analyse the data, and use it to inform fisheries management policy and decision-making.
 - (d) Encouraging and supporting MFMR in building a culture that understands and values the role of data and information, and facilitates the sharing and use of that information.
24. Assist MFMR in investigating long-term, sustainable funding options for inshore fisheries management.
25. Continue to support the seaweed farming project as a promising livelihoods endeavour, but formulate a donor exit strategy, whereby farmers cover the full costs of replacement equipment, at least in initially successful areas (or secure another donor).
26. Encourage MFMR to look to other donors to fund the infrastructure investment in Provincial Fisheries Centres.
27. Continue to support training for existing Provincial Fisheries Officers, aligned with a new MFMR Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy and work plan.
28. Ensure that the consideration of a model Provincial Fisheries Centre draws on lessons from the literature on past efforts, noting that the best approach in each location depends on local circumstances and there is no 'one size fits all'.

9.5 Programme planning and governance

29. Consider putting in place a higher-level governance body.
30. Develop a more robust programme logic and results framework, by:

- (a) Clearly articulating the middle level of intervention logic (programme-level impacts/intermediate outcomes) that is currently absent.
 - (b) Developing better and more specific indicators that relate directly to the programme's outputs, impacts and outcomes and meet good practice criteria for indicator selection and design.
31. Use this redeveloped framework to further simplify and improve MSSIF and MFMR planning and reporting.
32. Start to formally plan the shape and scale of MSSIF assistance over a more than one-year timeframe, particularly as the programmed end in 2018 is approached.

9.6 Preconditions for success

The following mutual commitments are considered preconditions for the effectiveness and sustainability of MSSIF:

On the part of MFMR:

- (a) Developing a robust Corporate Plan, alongside which MSSIF can structure and focus its support.
- (b) Committing to practice staff performance management, supported by MSSIF. This could be assisted by proactively engaging the SIG-wide initiatives in public sector management.
- (c) Clarifying and codifying the MFMR organisational structure, roles and responsibilities (particularly between the Inshore and Provincial Fisheries Divisions).

On the part of MFAT:

- (a) MFAT committing to better planning and earlier commencement of the recruitment process to avoid gaps and disruption between advisors (ideally planning for overlap between advisors to allow handover).
- (b) Implementing the above improvements to the advisor recruitment process.
- (c) Accepting realistic expectations around the realisation of CD benefits (to be developed and codified in the Activity Design Document stage).
- (d) Ensuring that the formulation and development of new activities is aligned with MSSIF governance and planning processes, and encouraging other donors to do likewise.

Appendix 1 Terms of Reference for the assessment

Scope of services

The Supplier will assess MSSIF programme's progress over the period from 2010 to 2013, and use that assessment to refine and re-design the overall approach of the MSSIF programme. The updated approach will guide the MSSIF programme's activities over the period from 2014-2018. The assessment will build on the findings of MFAT's *Evaluation of New Zealand's fisheries sector work in the Pacific* and resources held by the Supplier.

The Supplier will also lead a team made up of MFAT's Development Manager (Fisheries) for the Solomon Islands and others from the Solomon Islands fisheries sector to deliver a draft Activity Design Document (ADD) to describe the nature and extent of New Zealand's support for fisheries under the MSSIF programme until the end of 2018.

As part of the services, the Supplier will:

- Carry out a field visit to Solomon Islands.
- Assess:
 - The general performance of the MSSIF programme to date, drawing on the desk-top analysis completed by MFAT consultants and the field visit; and
 - The progress of the MSSIF programme's institutional strengthening to date, assessing key organisational needs in this area.
- Review modalities of assistance in the Solomon Islands fisheries sector to date, including the nature and structure of international and local technical assistance, and the delivery and performance of subcontracted third parties.
- Assess the application and functionalities of the MSSIF programme monitoring and evaluation plan and linked MFMR performance framework, and recommend improvements to the plan.
- Recommend potential areas where New Zealand can best add value to Solomon Islands fisheries via the MSSIF programme over the period from 2014 to 2018.
- Recommend options for collaboration and harmonisation with current and proposed activities supported by other development partners and MFAT regional programmes.
- Provide an assessment report (which will incorporate updated documentation).
- Act as a team leader for the ADD design stage and during the Solomon Islands visit.
- Coordinate contributions from other team members.
- Have the lead responsibility to develop a draft ADD to describe the nature and extent of New Zealand's support for fisheries under the MSSIF programme until the end of 2018.

Without limiting the Supplier's obligation to make its own arrangements and to deliver the services, MFAT staff in Honiara and Wellington will assist the Suppliers by providing

logistical support, inputs into the design (fisheries management component) and finalising the draft ADD.

Overarching goals and outcomes to be achieved

The goal of the services is to assess the progress of MSSIF over the period from 2010 to 2013 and to use that assessment as a basis for design changes to the overall MSSIF approach. The design will outline a new suggested approach for the period from 2014 to 2018.

The outcomes to be achieved by the services are:

- Provide assessment report.
Draft ADD.

Methodology

The Supplier is expected to be in-country for up to 7 working days, preferably from early February.

A stakeholder workshop will be convened by MFAT at the end of the fieldwork to report on assessment progress to date and to test possible modifications to design.

Appendix 2 Assessment plan

Project definition

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to assess the progress of MSSIF over 2010 to 2013 and to use that assessment as a basis for design changes to the overall MSSIF approach. The design will outline an Activity to run from 2014 to 2018.

The key objectives of this project are:

- Assessing the general performance of MSSIF to date, drawing on desktop analysis completed by MFAT consultants.
- Assessing progress on IS to date, assessing key organisational needs in this area, and making any associated recommendations for consideration for design of the support over 2010 to 2018.
- Recommending potential areas where New Zealand can best add value to Solomon Islands fisheries via the MSSIF programme for 2014 to 2018.
- Reviewing modalities of assistance to date, including the nature and structure of international and local technical assistance, and the delivery and performance of subcontracted third party projects.
- Assessing the application and functionality of the MSSIF monitoring and evaluation plan and linked MFMR performance framework, and recommend improvements to the plan.
- Recommending options for collaboration and harmonization with current and proposed activities supported by other development partners.
- Developing an Activity Design Document (ADD) to describe the nature and extent of New Zealand's support for fisheries under the MSSIF programme until the end of 2018.

Scope

The scope of the assessment is the MSSIF programme that has run from 2010-2013. We will not provide assessment of the predecessor programme, SIMROS. The draft Design will cover the next stage of MSSIF, which will run from 2014-2018. The detailed design work will be undertaken subsequent to this project, by the MFAT Development Manager – Fisheries and MFAT Post.

Deliverables

The three deliverables from this project are:

- Draft Assessment report.
- Final Assessment report, incorporating feedback from MFAT.
- Draft Design for the MSSIF 2014-2018 programme.

Method

Programme documentation review

The strategic evaluation looked at the 2003-2010 time period, and therefore focused more on SIMROS than on MSSIF. It is therefore possible that more recent information exists but was not made available to the evaluation team. The first step in this review is therefore to undertake a stock take of all information held by Sapere, and determine any gaps (such as missing quarterly reports).

We will prepare an information request to fill the identified gaps, for distribution to MFAT, Post and MFMR staff. As indicated in the work plan below, this information request will cover programme documentation as well as other information necessary to complete the other work components.

We will then review programme documentation to identify:

- What has been achieved through MSSIF; and
- What's worked well and not so well, and lessons learned.

These findings will be incorporated into the Assessment Report.

Fisheries development

In-depth analysis of the fisheries development aspects of the programme, both inshore and offshore, such as the work on seaweed, tilapia, bêche-de-mer and reef fisheries; and on-shore processing facilities. This will include assessment of:

- The design and implementation process (including how the projects were selected, scoped and appraised, and the structure of decision-making). This will include how information on the consumption and sustainability of fish stocks has informed investment selection.
- Work done compared to the intentions in the design documents.
- The alignment of the selected focus areas with stated Solomon Islands Government development priorities, including any relevant published plans or strategies (e.g. relating to workforce development or infrastructure development).
- The shape of investments across the supply chain.
- The nature of any partnership with industry and/or community organisations.
- The likely commercial viability of the currently selected projects, based on:
 - Independent review of the supporting ex ante economic analysis/business cases (including supply-chain analysis) (checking that such analyses (1) have been produced, and (2) are robust)
 - A desk-based review of documentation
 - A web-based environment scan of relevant, publicly available information and literature.

Fisheries management

The strategic-level Pacific fisheries evaluation highlighted coastal fisheries as a particular gap in terms of both New Zealand's support and the work programmes of the regional agencies (FFA and SPC). And in Solomon Islands we found particular concerns with capacity at the provincial level, both within MFMR and in provincial government.

Sustainable management of coastal fisheries is critical for food security and sustainable livelihoods, and underpins sustainable economic development in the sector. We will undertake the following two work streams:

2. **Stock take of current knowledge.** Review of the quantity and quality of available data on Solomon Islands coastal fisheries, and of any planned stock assessment in MFMR's coastal fisheries work programme, and SPC's Joint Country Strategy for Solomon Islands.
3. **Consideration of New Zealand's comparative advantage** in coastal and indigenous fisheries management. We will assess ways in which New Zealand could make a practical contribution to the development of coastal fisheries management methods in provincial Solomon Islands. This will include assessing how experience from New Zealand could be translated into the Solomon Islands context, and what modalities of support might be most effective.

Institutional strengthening

This work will focus on the capacity building aspects of the institutional strengthening work under MSSIF, and will comprise two components.

1. **In-depth review of capacity building support.** This will seek to identify the MFMR staff who have worked alongside MSSIF-funded TAs (or as part of their teams) and conduct one-on-one interviews with those staff who are still with the Ministry. These interviews will seek to establish the impact of the support they have received, and how this is reflected in their confidence to do their job. We will seek their views on the quality of the support, the way it was delivered, and ideas for ways in which such support could be improved in future. We will also seek to interview their current manager, to explore how the quality of their work has changed. Recommendations will be made in light of a review of the best practice literature in this area.
2. **Process review of the recruitment process** for the current and/or recent TAs. This will involve review of documentation and interviews with members of the selection panel/s, exploring:
 - The job specification
 - The advertising process
 - The selection criteria, and any weighting applied (e.g. to specific competencies)
 - The selection process, including any assessment tools used, and how the views of MFMR staff were sought and incorporated
 - Reference checking
 - The decision (comparing the credentials of the successful candidate with those who were unsuccessful)

- The satisfaction of all stakeholders with the successful candidates.

Activity planning and governance

Review of MSSIF planning, governance and reporting processes, to assess the design and set-up of these systems and structures, how they are working in practice, and how they could be improved. Although these issues were at the heart of the strategic evaluation, we did not go into the detail of Activity planning and governance for any individual Activity. This project will therefore be an opportunity to apply the lessons from the strategic evaluation to a specific Activity. This might be of broader interest and applicability to MFAT's aid efforts. We will consider the following.

- **Work programme planning and donor harmonisation** – review of the internal processes to determine annual work plans, and how the resulting plans are aligning with broader Solomon Islands Government priorities and strategies, as well as with the work programmes of other development partners (including other donors as well as the regional agencies). It will also look at how decisions are made regarding the balance between oceanic and coastal fisheries management and development.
- **Governance arrangements** – including the structure of decision-making, and the nature of delegations and contractual arrangements. This will include assessment using the 'funding and accountability analysis tool' that was developed in the strategic evaluation.
- **Monitoring and reporting** – looking at the nature and frequency of project and Activity-level reporting, and reviewing:
 - Who the reports are prepared by.
 - Who the reports are sent to.
 - Who reads the reports and what happens to them (we could undertake an analysis of email chains and/or MFAT management meeting minutes).
 - Feedback provided to MFMR and TAs.
 - The quantity and quality of reporting, including the usefulness of the metrics/indicators used.

Roles and responsibilities

Figure 11 Roles and responsibilities

Who	What
Jo Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management • Review of key documents • Lead analyst: overall assessment and design • Lead analyst: institutional strengthening • Supporting analyst: economic development • Supporting analyst: activity planning & governance • Field work: up to seven days in-country • NZ-based interviews • Lead writer – Assessment Report and Draft Design
Hayden Glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead analyst: desk-based research • NZ-based interviews • Lead analyst: economic development • Lead analyst: activity planning & governance • Supporting analyst: institutional strengthening • Interim write-ups • Input to Assessment Report and Draft Design
Paul Wallis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead analyst: fisheries management • Supporting analyst: overall assessment and design • Supporting analyst: institutional strengthening • Supporting analyst: economic development • Supporting analyst: activity planning & governance • Input to information request • Field work: up to seven days in-country • NZ-based interviews • Input to Assessment Report and Draft Design • Co-lead (with Luke Kiddle) of detailed design
MFAT Post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling of interviews in Honiara.

Project schedule

Table 7 Work plan

Task/milestone	Due date	Lead
Desk-based research		
Stock take of existing documentation	24 December 2013	Hayden
Draft information request	8 January 2014	Hayden, with input from Paul and Jo
Review documentation provided	20 January 2014	Hayden (Jo to review key docs)
Review published government strategies	20 January 2014	Hayden
Web-based environment scan	20 January 2014	Hayden
Stock take of current knowledge in fisheries management	20 January 2014	Paul
Review of IS best practice literature	31 January 2014	Jo
Interim write-up (internal to project team)	3 February 2014	Hayden
Field work and analysis		
Field work planning	31 January 2014	Post (with input from Jo and Paul)
Field work – interviews and in-country information gathering	10 February 2014	Paul and Jo
NZ-based interviews	31 January 2014	Paul, Hayden, Jo
Analysis		
Fisheries development	17 February 2014	Hayden
Fisheries management	17 February 2014	Paul
Institutional strengthening	17 February 2014	Jo
Activity planning and governance	17 February 2014	Hayden
Overall assessment	17 February 2014	Jo, with input from

Task/milestone	Due date	Lead
		Hayden and Paul
Reporting		
Draft Assessment report	21 February 2014	Jo, with input from Hayden and Paul
Final Assessment report	5 days after receiving comments from MFAT	Jo, with input from Hayden and Paul
Draft MSSIF design	14 March 2014	Jo, with input from Hayden and Paul
Project management		
Project management	On-going	Jo
Project closure		
Debrief with MFAT	Following project completion	Jo, with input from Hayden and Paul

Appendix 3 Interview topic guide

General questions for all stakeholders

1. What parts of the programme have gone well? (and why) Remember that we are primarily interested in efforts since 2010.
2. What parts of the programme have not gone so well? (and why)
3. Do you think the desired benefits are being achieved?
4. Does the programme offer good value for money?
5. How could the programme be improved? Is there anything you would add to or change about the programme?
6. What are the priorities for future efforts in Solomon Islands fisheries management and development? Where is support from MSSIF most needed, and how should it be designed to assist?

Fisheries development

7. What are the main opportunities for fisheries development in Solomon Islands, both inshore and offshore?
8. What are the main activities to develop fisheries by MFMR or others, and how well are they going?
9. Are there any major gaps in the fisheries development efforts that you think need to be addressed by MFMR?
10. How has MSSIF helped with advancing fisheries development efforts?
11. How optimistic are you about future development of Solomon Islands fisheries resources, and do you think there is substantial scope to boost government revenues or employment from further efforts?
12. How well aligned are MSSIF's efforts with broader Solomon Islands government priorities and the goals of MFMR?

Fisheries management

13. What are the key challenges facing effective management of inshore fisheries in Solomon Islands?
14. What are the challenges facing effective management of offshore fisheries in Solomon Islands?
15. How are these challenges being addressed by the Solomon Islands government and fisheries stakeholders?

16. How has MSSIF assisted the Solomon Islands government and stakeholders address these challenges? What are the key fisheries management outcomes that MSSIF has made a tangible and substantive contribution to achieving?
17. Are there key gaps in Solomon Islands fisheries management that are not being addressed? If so, how could MSSIF assist in addressing these?

Institutional strengthening

18. What were the pre-existing institutional capacity or capability constraints that MSSIF aimed to address?
19. In what ways have the Technical Advisors (including the Team Leader) funded by MSSIF helped to strengthen staff and institutional capacity in MRMF? How did they go about this?
20. How was individual staff capability building delivered?
21. What has the impact been on staff skills, confidence and performance? How was this measured?
22. What operational or management policies/processes have MSSIF helped design? Have these policies/processes been implemented? What impact have they had?
23. How does MFMR engage with its stakeholders (including communities, NGOs, and the private sector)? How has MSSIF supported this engagement?
24. What are MFMR's greatest needs in terms of institutional capacity between now and 2018? Are there key gaps or challenges? How can MSSIF best assist?
25. How well did the process of recruitment for the MSSIF advisors work? Do you think the selection process could be improved?

Planning and governance

26. How well does the process of planning and reporting on MSSIF work? Can you think of ways to improve it?
27. Are the governance arrangements and reporting lines for MSSIF effective and efficient?
28. Which decisions are made by advisors, which by MFMR and which by MFAT? Is this allocation correct?
29. (for MSSIF advisors and MFAT staff) Is the nature and frequency of project reporting proportionate to the value it provides? Does reporting work to get/give timely feedback on project progress and coordinate action as required?
30. How well aligned is MSSIF with the aid programmes of other donors?

Appendix 4 Interview prompts (capacity development)

Diagnosis

1. What particular institutional/capacity challenges and constraints were identified?
2. How were they identified and by whom (what process was employed; who was consulted)?
3. What learning outcomes were identified?

Design

4. How was the IS strategy developed (i.e. was a formal capacity development tool used, and if so, which one)?
5. What were the expectations on MFMR in contributing to IS (e.g. what inputs, commitments)?
6. Were you involved in the TA recruitment process? What did it involve and how well did it work? How satisfied are you with the successful consultants?

Stakeholder engagement and ownership

7. Has MFMR done a stakeholder analysis, and is there a stakeholder engagement plan?
8. Were any external stakeholders involved in the design? If so, how were they identified and engaged?
9. Has there been on-going dialogue with external stakeholders regarding MFMR's performance?
10. What support and leadership does MFMR provide for stakeholders? How has MSSIF contributed to this?
11. How have women been engaged in the design, implementation and governance of MSSIF?

Delivery/implementation

12. How many, and which staff (roles, gender) were selected for capability building by MSSIF/TAs?
13. How were these staff selected?

14. Was any capability building provided more widely (e.g. across teams or the Ministry as a whole)? Has gender training for those involved in fisheries development work been provided?
15. How was learning delivered (what methods and formats e.g. tacit knowledge transfer via coaching, formal workshops/seminars)?
16. Were changes made along the way, to how capability building was delivered? Were these documented?

Measuring results

17. Has there been any change in staff attitudes, confidence and motivation?
18. Do you think staff have a more clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities? Have clear job descriptions been developed, training needs and performance measures for all staff been developed and implemented?
19. Has there been any improvement in the quality of staff products (e.g. reports)? Is there any evidence of this?
20. Has there been any impact on staff turnover?

Specific questions for staff

21. Do you have a clear understanding of your role and responsibilities, and what is expected of you?
22. Do you feel you have the knowledge and skills to perform your job?
23. How has MSSIF helped? What have you learned from your TA, and how was this learning provided?
24. Do you have the opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge you have acquired through MSSIF?
25. How does the work you do contribute to the corporate goals of MFMR?
26. Do you have the equipment and materials you need to do your job?
27. Do you receive the support you need to do your job?
28. Do you receive feedback on your work? Is it useful?
29. Do you have more confidence to do your job as a result of MSSIF?
30. Do you think other staff have benefitted from MSSIF? If so, how?

Appendix 5 CD best practice: a variety of models and tools

There is a range of frameworks and methodologies available for designing and evaluating institutional strengthening programmes – broadly referred to as capacity development (CD) in the literature we reviewed. Models include:

- The World Bank Institute’s (WBI) Capacity Development Results Framework (CDRF).¹⁵
- The United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Framework for Measuring Capacity.¹⁶
- The Asian Development Bank’s (ADB) Practical guide to capacity development in a sector context.¹⁷
- The European Commission’s (EC) Toolkit for Capacity Development and standard intervention logic for the evaluation of capacity development support.¹⁸
- The JICA Research Institute’s Capacity Assessment Handbook.¹⁹

The WBI’s CDRF provides a framework and guidance to development practitioners and evaluators to assess and design capacity development programmes. As illustrated in the following diagram, the framework conceptualises the intermediate outcomes of CD interventions in three categories:

1. Stakeholder ownership.
2. Effective policy instruments.
3. Effective organisational arrangements.

The latter two categories could be considered as products (e.g. tuna management plan) and systems (e.g. financial management systems) respectively.

¹⁵ See <http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/document/capacity-development-results-framework-cdrf> , <http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/document/guide-evaluating-capacity-development-results> and <http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/document/intermediate-capacity-outcomes> .

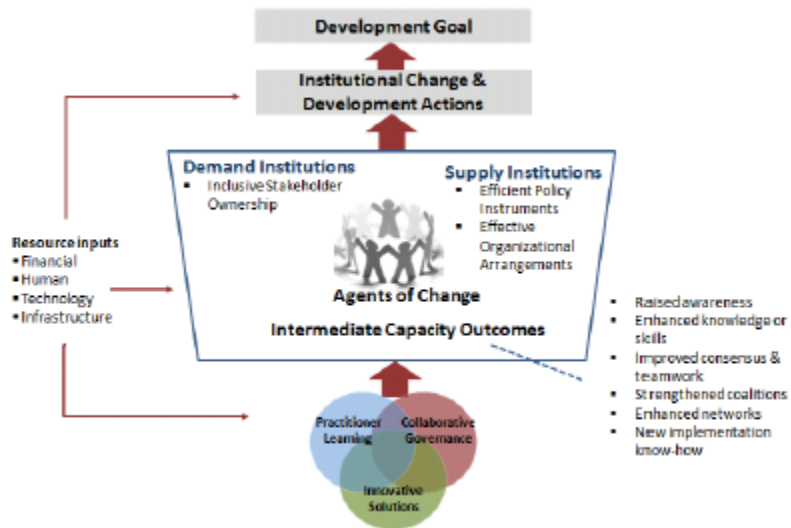
¹⁶ http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/undp-paper-on-measuring-capacity/UNDP_Measuring_Capacity_July_2010.pdf

¹⁷ <http://www.adb.org/documents/practical-guide-capacity-development-sector-context>

¹⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/ensure-aid-effectiveness/documents/toolkit_cd_en_web_en.pdf

¹⁹ [http://gwwweb.jica.go.jp/km/FSubject9999.nsf/03a114c1448e2ca449256f2b003e6f57/3923e49bcc5eb5d54925772800216a5c/\\$FILE/Capacity%20Assessment%20Handbook%20Eng.pdf](http://gwwweb.jica.go.jp/km/FSubject9999.nsf/03a114c1448e2ca449256f2b003e6f57/3923e49bcc5eb5d54925772800216a5c/$FILE/Capacity%20Assessment%20Handbook%20Eng.pdf)

Figure 12 WBI's Capacity Development Results Framework



Source: Dawn Roberts (2013) *Managing knowledge results: an exploration of the systems and practices of development agencies* (WBI, Capacity Development and Results).

Relevant lessons from the CDRF include the following.

CD should be located within a 'results chain' (outcomes framework in our terminology). This involves (1) the intermediate outcomes of CD activities being clearly defined, and (2) the intervention logic showing how these intermediate outcomes contribute to the ultimate development outcomes. WBI identify six learning outcomes at the heart of the change theory for any CD effort:

Altered status

1. Raised awareness
2. Enhanced skills

Altered processes

3. Improved consensus/teamwork
4. Fostered coalitions/networks

New products

5. Formulated policy/strategy
6. Implemented strategy/plan.²⁰

²⁰ Samuel Otoo, Natalia Agapitova and Joy Behrens (2009) *The Capacity Development Results Framework: a strategic and results-oriented approach to learning for capacity development* (WBI), p.17.

These objectives drive activity design, with the process entailing: defining the learning objective>learning method>learning format and tool.

Related to this, is the need for measurable results indicators: ‘the use of the traditional results framework or logic model for assessing the achievement of a capacity change objective too often leads to the problem of the “black box” of capacity development, wherein the needed improvements in the ability or disposition of stakeholders remain undefined and unmonitored’.²¹ The WBI guidance provides a number of checklists with specific indicators for assessing CD, and we have drawn on these in our assessment.

The change process should start by identifying the pre-existing capacity constraints, then developing a tailored change strategy to address them. The role of change agents and the targeted change process need to be identified. ‘CD entails preparing or empowering designated local change agents to initiate and/or manage needed changes’.²²

Stakeholder ownership and engagement is a key plant of CD interventions. This includes:

- Commitment of social and political leaders.
- Compatibility of social norms and values.
- Stakeholder participation in setting priorities.
- Stakeholder demand for accountability.
- Transparency of information to stakeholders.

WBI emphasises that CD efforts need to be tailored to local conditions and the results and performance locally owned, to ensure that successes can be replicated and scaled up by local stakeholders/actors.

The UNPD’s Framework for Measuring Capacity frames the (intermediate) outcomes from CD as improvements in an institution’s ability to:

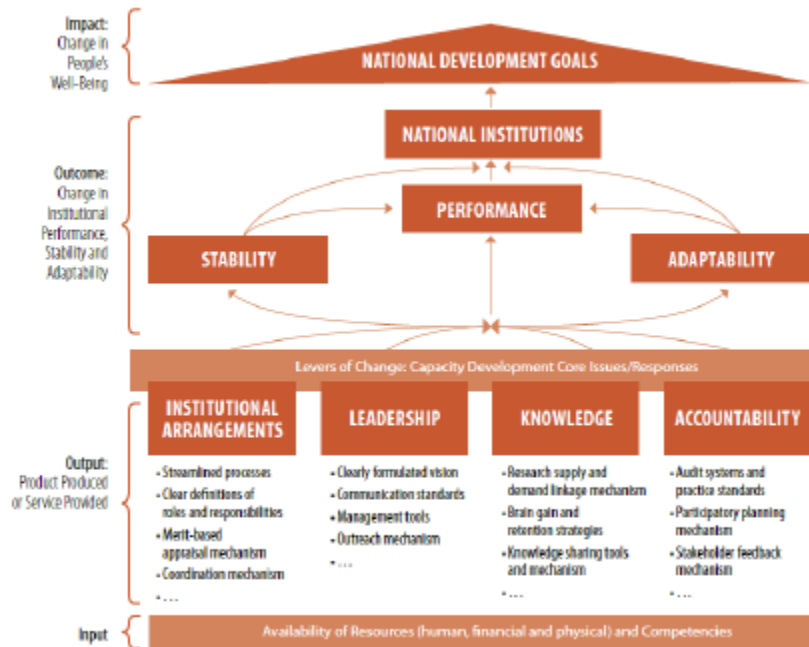
- Convert inputs to productive use (performance)
- Seek resolution to problems and remove barriers (stability)
- Adapt to changing realities and demands (adaptability).

This is contingent on the establishment of the necessary policies, systems, processes and mechanisms. And intervention outputs are structured around institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and accountability.

²¹ WBI (2012) *Guide to evaluating capacity development results*, p.10.

²² Ibid.

Figure 13 UNDP's Framework for Measuring Capacity



Source: WBI 2013, p.6.

Like the WBI, the ADB explains the importance of diagnosis or problem definition:

Assessing organizational performance requires looking at present realities and asking why this is right rather than why this is wrong.

In practice, however, capacity assessments often end up describing what is missing rather than explaining why capacity is currently at an unsatisfactory level....

The typical response from development partners is to introduce elements such as planning – complete with procedures, formats, and training – often to discover that despite the best intentions, plans have not been followed. The limited success may reflect that, due to the real authority structure, senior executives cannot and will not let themselves be tied to a plan... because they need a very wide room for discretionary decisions to keep their place in the power game intact, both upward and downward. Technocratic planning exercises are unlikely to change such root causes to what appears to be 'lack of planning'.²³

The ADB also emphasises the importance of a participatory approach and of local stakeholder ownership of CD efforts:

People and organizations can have strong or weak incentives to change, develop, and learn – coming from the environment or from internal factors – but eventually, the change is an internal process that has to happen in people or organizations.

²³ Ibid, p.6.

As a logical consequence, external partners cannot “do” CD for others....

*Capacity development must be owned (wanted and managed) by those whose capacity is undergoing development’.*²⁴

Local ownership must include inputs from the organisation that is undergoing CD , as well as those provided by the donor and other external parties– ‘ a CD intervention only specifying inputs from external funding agencies maybe [sic] based on poor diagnosis and cannot be expected to be owned by local stakeholders, and is likely not to achieve a lasting impact’.²⁵

The ADB specifies three prerequisites for successful change:

1. Dissatisfaction with the present situation.
2. A credible change process to bring the present situation to a future state.
3. A shared vision of the future.²⁶

With respect to the change process and intervention design, the ADB advises that an incremental design process is more likely to success than one that is defined too precisely in advance, given constantly changing external factors.

In their *Capacity assessment handbook*, JICA differentiate between the different elements that constitute capacity – distinguishing technical capacity, core capacity, and the enabling environment; as well as at three levels:

1. Individual (knowledge, skills, motivation etc)
2. Organisation (leadership, management, decision-making processes, culture etc)
3. External environment (institutions/society) (policy structures, legal systems, political institutions, market institutions etc).

Figure 14 illustrates the interactions between the structural elements of an organisation; and Figure 15 illustrates the elements of human resource capacity.

²⁴ ADB (2011) *Practical guide to capacity development in a sector context*, p. 1.

²⁵ Ibid, p.53.

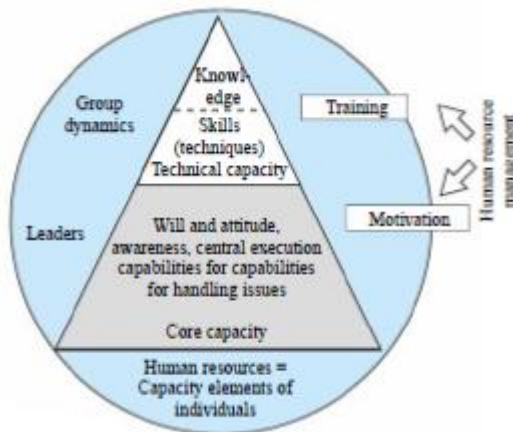
²⁶ Ibid, p.2.

Figure 14 Basic structure of the organisation



Source: JICA Research Institute (2008) *Capacity assessment handbook: project management for realizing capacity development*, p.21.

Figure 15 Human resources and related matters



Source: Ibid, p.22.

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