DONATO-HUNT CONSULTING

Mid-term review of two regional coastal fisheries management projects - SCoFA and PaFMaC

December 2024

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Executive summary

Introduction

Since 2022 the Pacific Community (SPC) has been implementing two key projects within its Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (CFAP). The Sustainable Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture for Pacific Livelihood, Food and Economic Security (SCoFA) project aims to enhance food security, livelihoods and economic resilience in Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) through effective management and sustainable development of coastal fisheries and aquaculture. It is funded by the New Zealand Government (MFAT) with an additional contribution from the Australian Government (DFAT). The second project, Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management and Compliance (PaFMaC), aims to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities that threaten coastal fisheries, biodiversity and local livelihoods across the Pacific Region. It is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Mid-term review

This mid-term review covers these two integrated projects. The objectives of the review were to assess progress towards outputs and outcomes, assess the projects' relevance and identify lessons learnt and challenges. It will inform the remaining implementation and decision making about the future of the projects. The review responds to key evaluation questions examining relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, relationships and cross-cutting issues (gender and social inclusion, climate change and traditional knowledge). A mixed-methods evaluation design was adopted, including a document review, semi-structured interviews with 51 stakeholders and a survey completed by 75 respondents. All attempts were made to ensure the evaluation was conducted ethically.

Findings

Relevance and coherence

The two projects have a high level of relevance and coherence as they are in alignment with regional priorities, the priority needs of PICTS, donor investments and other related projects and strategies. The projects align with regional level priorities, including regional policies relating to coastal fisheries management and aquatic biosecurity. They showed close alignment with Pacific Forum Leaders' vision as articulated in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and relevance with national level priorities given the demand-led model. Both SCoFA and PaFMaC align with other related projects funded by their donors, with active connections with the USAID funded Our Fish Our Future and DFAT funded Coalitions for Change in Sustainable National CBFM Programmes in the Pacific projects.

Effectiveness - SCoFA

Key SCoFA results achieved to date have included comprehensive capacity development across all outputs, the convening of the Community Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD) and regional information materials. The clearest evidence for contributions to outcomes has been through changes in practice resulting from training.

SCoFA's has supported training for 378 people across 33 training events (36% women and 64% men, 542 cumulative attendances across all training), including those jointly funded with PaFMaC and/or the European Union funded PEUMP programme. Support has been provided for drafting or revising at least 10 pieces of legislation and 15 management plans to date, leading to legislative or policy change in five PICTs and new management plans in four. SCoFA has also jointly convened three community-based fisheries dialogues. Awareness raising materials have been developed to support all outputs, including regional platforms Echoes of Oceania (CBFM) and Reeflex (law and policy database). The clearest evidence for contributions to outcomes has been through the changes in practice resulting from training across all areas of SCoFA support (aquaculture, legislation and management). Contribution to outcomes such as new aquaculture business opportunities has seen less progress at the mid-term, as has legislative change.

Effectiveness – PaFMaC

Key PaFMaC results achieved to date have included the delivery of national MCS trainings, the development and delivery of accredited qualifications for MCS and regional information materials. As with SCoFA, the clearest evidence for contributions to outcomes has been through changes in practice resulting from training.

Training effort in coastal fisheries and aquaculture MCS has been substantial with 217 participants (22% women, 78% men) from 10 countries receiving training, including training jointly funded by SCoFA and/or PEUMP. Capacity building approaches include theoretical to practical "hands on" implementation of skills, and accredited and non-accredited training options. Supporting legislative and management frameworks and plans alongside building foundational MCS skills was seen as an effective and holistic approach contributing to PaFMaC's short to medium term outcomes.

Effectiveness

Key factors contributing to the effectiveness of both projects were the design of capacity development including multiple training modalities and strong working relationships with members and partners. Capacity development activities are delivered using a combination of multiple modalities (online, theory based, practical elements, attachments with SPC) that respondents saw as very effective for understanding and retaining information. Difficulties with procurement processes has meant aquaculture enterprises have not received technical support as intended. Challenges relating to staffing levels, travel and communication of opportunities has meant the spread of beneficiaries across SPC's members, particularly for aquaculture support, has not been as wide as expected.

Efficiency

The two projects have experienced barriers to efficient delivery due to the requirements of administering two separate projects. Procurement and travel issues have impacted timely delivery. Implementing two separate projects (with their own budgets and reporting requirements) has meant the full benefit of shared implementation has not been realised. Relying on project funding to support key work areas across CFAP also creates challenges for SPC's long-term planning and delivery. Increasing travel costs, risks and complexity have impacted the efficiency of training related expenses where in-person support is required. Civil unrest in New Caledonia also understandably limited activity and travel in 2024.

Impact

As the projects are at the mid-term it is too early to meaningfully demonstrate high-level longer-term change, particularly as it is just one year on from the baseline assessment. Despite this, evidence to date indicates likely contribution to intended impacts in the longer term. Potential barriers to impact align with key issues noted above in relation to efficiency and achieving broader reach across the membership as implementation continues in the remaining years.

Sustainability

The projects have been designed to support longer-term sustainability and continuity of work at both national and regional levels, however, current funding arrangements present substantial risks to sustainability going forward. The focus on national level capacity development intends to build and embed these capabilities within members' own national systems and processes. The current funding arrangements do not support continuity of work beyond the two project periods. Funding uncertainty also limits SPC's ability for longer term planning.

Partnerships and relationships

The PaCMaF and SCoFA projects rely on, and have developed, strong partnerships which have been instrumental in the results achieved to date. Survey results demonstrate a very high level of satisfaction among implementing and donor partners with partnering with SPC.

Cross-cutting issues

The extent to which the projects contribute to GESI is unclear given their implementation is integrated with CFAP's broader programme of work. Available evidence suggests the projects are gender accommodative, with future results likely to include gender transformative elements (e.g. aquaculture enterprises and community-level results). Across all training conducted by SCoFA and PaFMaC, 32% of participants were women and 68% men. Beyond gender, other elements of social inclusion are not as well integrated. The extent to which the projects are contributing to addressing the impacts of climate change is unclear. Similarly, while stakeholders were able to identify key areas where the projects were contributing to the use of traditional knowledge in decision making, project documentation does not highlight this as an area of focus.

Lessons learnt

Drawn from the strengths and successes of SCoFA and PaFMaC to date, the review has highlighted the following key lessons for the remainder of the projects' implementation and other similar programmes:

- The projects have been intentionally designed in tandem to provide complementary resources for CFAP and leverage support provided through the PEUMP project.
- The implementation approach supports being responsive to member requests and priorities, including the flexibility to tailor support to ensure relevance to members' specific needs.
- The project design and CFAP's relationships with other implementing partners enable SPC to deliver capacity building effectively through a combination of theoretical and practical components through both remote and in-person training.

- Strong trusted relationships are important to facilitate meaningful engagement with countries. The development or relationships take time and consistency, with SPC seen as a trusted and consistent regional partner in coastal fisheries and aquaculture.
- Administrative cooperation between two donors (MFAT and DFAT) enabled SPC to benefit from DFAT's funding without having to meet additional separate reporting requirements.

Recommendations

The mid-term review identified the following recommendations for the two projects to build on the successes and strengths to date and continue to improve.

Table 1: Recommendations for the remaining implementation of SCoFA and PaFMaC

	Recommendations for remaining project implementation	Evaluation criteria
1	Continue to strengthen coordination between PaFMaC and OFOF projects.	Coherence
2	Greater connection between the three donor partners – MFAT, USAID and DFAT.	Coherence
3	Ensure SCoFA's theory of change consistently includes the added output on data and information.	Coherence
4	Continue to monitor regional spread of support, particularly in relation to aquaculture activities.	Effectiveness
5	Further clarify CFAP's process for prioritising members' requests and work with members to further enhance the request process.	Efficiency and effectiveness
6	Continue to address procurement processes that have impacted timely and responsive delivery of services under the two projects, particularly in relation to support to aquaculture enterprises.	Efficiency
7	Provide a response to addressing recommendations noted in the baseline report on outcomes evidence for the projects.	Impact
8	Improve project specific considerations of GESI, including greater focus on disability and evidence on contributions to GESI.	Cross-cutting issues
9	Explore opportunities to increase the participation of women in training, particularly for national level MCSE training.	Cross-cutting issues
10	Improve the articulation of how the project contributes to climate change adaptation.	Cross-cutting issues
11	Identify whether traditional knowledge is a key area of focus for the project and incorporate accordingly.	Cross-cutting issues
12	Continue to engage with implementing partners to understand their changing resources and time available to commit for the remainder of the projects.	Partnerships

Table 2: Recommendations for future projects and programmes

	Recommendations for future projects and programmes	
13	For future project designs ensure consistently worded outputs and outcomes where implementing is shared.	Coherence
14	Explore opportunities to transition funds to more flexible funding arrangements, reflective of programme-wide support to CFAP.	Efficiency
15	Secure long-term, flexible and appropriate funding to support this work after current projects end.	Sustainability

Abbreviations

CBFD:	Community Based Fisheries Dialogue
CBFM:	Community Based Fisheries Management
CFAP:	Coastal Fisheries & Aquaculture Programme
CFA:	Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture
CROP:	Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific
CSO:	Civil Society Organisation
DFAT:	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade
ECFM:	Effective Coastal Fisheries Management Activity
EQ:	Evaluation Question
EU:	European Union
FAME:	Fisheries, Aquaculture & Marine Ecosystems Division, SPC
FAO:	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
GESI:	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GFA:	Grant Funding Agreement
HoF:	SPC Heads of Fisheries meeting
LMMA:	Locally Managed Marine Area Network
MFAT:	NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MCS:	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MCSE:	Monitoring, Control, Surveillance and Enforcement
MPI:	NZ Ministry for Primary Industries
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIWA:	NZ National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research
NSA:	Non-State Actor
NZD:	NZ dollar
OFOF:	Our Fish Our Future
PacAqua:	Sustainable Pacific aquaculture development for food security and economic growth
PaFMaC:	USAID Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management & Compliance
PEUMP:	EU/Sida Pacific European Union Marine Partnership
PICTs:	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PMEL:	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
REEFLEX:	Pacific Law & Policy Database on Coastal Fisheries & Aquaculture
RTMCFA:	Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries & Aquaculture
SCoFA:	Sustainable Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture for Pacific Livelihoods, Food and Economic Security
SPC:	The Pacific Community
ToC:	Theory of Change
USP:	University of the South Pacific
URI:	University of Rhode Island
UoW:	University of Wollongong
WWF:	World Wildlife Fund
WWF-Pacific:	Worldwide Fund for Nature Pacific

I. Introduction

1.1 Project description

Sustainable Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture for Pacific Livelihood, Food and Economic Security Project

The SCoFA project, funded by the New Zealand Government (with the Australian Government), aims to enhance food security, livelihoods, and economic resilience in PICTs through effective management and sustainable development of coastal fisheries and aquaculture. The SCoFA project started 3 August 2021 and is expected to end 30 November 2027 (plus a 3-month closing period) and has a budget of NZ$15.4 million over 6+ years.

Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management and Compliance Project

The Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management and Compliance (PaFMaC) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is a five-year initiative aimed at addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities that threaten coastal fisheries, biodiversity, and local livelihoods across the Pacific Region. The project focuses on supporting Pacific Island Countries and communities to implement sustainable management practices, enhance monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) in coastal waters, and engage the private sector to promote sustainable supply chains. The PaFMaC project started 30 September 2021 and is expected to end 29 September 2026 with a budget of USD$6 million over five years.

1.2 Review purpose

This mid-term review is of the two projects, SCoFA and PaFMaC, implemented by the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (CFAP) at SPC.

The review has four main objectives:

1. Assess progress towards the expected long-term, medium-term, and short-term outcomes as specified in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Frameworks
2. Assess the two projects' relevance to the priorities of SPC-FAME, members, New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), USAID and other partners.
3. Identify best practices, lessons learnt, and challenges encountered.
4. Inform the remaining implementation of the two projects.

The mid-term review informs decision making about the future of PaFMaC and SCoFA projects, and similar future initiatives in the region, document lessons learnt and identify key recommendations for SPC Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) division. The results of the mid-term review are reported to the funding partners (USAID and MFAT/DFAT) and disseminated to FAME senior management, the CFAP team and national fisheries agencies as key stakeholders. The report will also be published online on the SPC website.

The review covers the five Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for evaluation, with the addition of relationships and cross-cutting issues (GESI, climate change and traditional knowledge), and is guided by SPC's Social and Environmental Responsibility Policy:

a. Relevance and coherence
b. Effectiveness
c. Efficiency
d. Impact
e. Sustainability
f. Relationship between partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders
g. Cross-cutting issues

The review covers the period from project commencement for each of the two projects to September 2024. Examination of longer-term impact may include some activities and results from the preceding MFAT investment to SCoFA, given the continuity of areas of work between the projects.

1.3 Review principles

The following principles for the evaluation were identified by SPC during initial review proposal stage and refined following the consultants' initial inception meeting with SPC and the review committee.

Useful and credible:
The evaluation will deliver useful, credible findings relevant to the purpose of the evaluation.

Transparent and independent:
The evaluation team will be transparent and independent. They must have no vested interest in the outcomes of the evaluation and be independent of those responsible for policy making, design, delivery, and management of the development intervention.

Actionable:
The recommendations will be pragmatic and actionable, and presented in a way that promotes learning that will inform ongoing adaptation and management, and next phase of the investments.

Have shared ownership:
In conducting the evaluation, the evaluation team will work in partnership with CFAP and PMEL teams to increase ownership and use of evaluations.

Stakeholder centred:
The Review Committee will include SPC FAME Director, MFAT, USAID and DFAT who will advise the design and provide feedback on the draft report. The partners, national fisheries agencies and beneficiaries will be key participants in the fieldwork and the final report will be made available to them.

1.4 Report overview

As a combined mid-term review for two projects, most of the findings have been presented as combined results between the two projects given their complementary and joint management. The sections on effectiveness are presented separately for specific analysis on the projects' individual results against their respective theories of change.

II. Evaluation questions

The following evaluation questions (EQ) were finalised based on the inception meeting and the initial document review.

Relevance and coherence

1. How well do the goals and objectives of the SCoFA and PaFMaC projects align with regional priorities?
    a. What opportunities are there to align the work undertaken in these two projects with broader regional investment initiatives (e.g., Sustainable Blue Economy; Sustainable Food Systems)?
2. How relevant is SCoFA and PaFMaC to the priority needs of PICTs (Pacific Island countries and Territories)?
3. How well aligned are the two projects with other related DFAT, MFAT, and USAID projects?
4. Is the design of two projects still relevant for now and the near future? What, if anything, needs to be changed going forward?
    a. Are there any changes in the relevance of all components of both projects?
    b. Are any adjustments required to the theories of change?

Effectiveness

5. What key outputs have been achieved to date? Are they reaching the intended beneficiaries?
6. What progress has been made to date against the short- and medium-term outcomes described in the theories of change for both projects?
    a. How effective have the projects been in enhancing capacity of national and local stakeholders for sustainable coastal fisheries and aquaculture management?
7. What (if any) unintended outcomes (positive and negative) were there? If negative, how are these being addressed?
8. What is working well and why? What is not working so well, for whom, why, and what should be done?

Efficiency (value for money)

9. Have outputs been achieved in a timely manner? If yes/no - why?
10. To what extent are the projects being structured, managed and delivered efficiently? Are there any concerns with efficiency? What improvements can be considered?
    a. Have there been any notable efficiencies or inefficiencies in the coordination and implementation of activities among stakeholders, including regional organisations, other implementing agencies, national governments, and local communities?
    b. To what extent does the model of implementation support efficiency?
    c. To what extent does the model of funding support efficiency?
11. How effective is the process used to prioritise member requests under the two projects? Are there opportunities to improve the prioritisation process?

Impact

12. What positive and negative medium- and long-term impacts at the sub-national, national, and regional levels have resulted from the two projects?
13. What are barriers/gaps for impacts to happen? For the people trained in MCS, it will be critical to know what are the barriers that hampers the trained officers from implementing an effective MCS work or simply to use what they have learned and trained for?
14. Are any adjustments required to the existing indicators to measure success at impact level?

Sustainability

15. To what extent will the projects' contributions continue over time? What critical success factors are in place to ensure sustainability?
16. Do the current funding arrangements support sustainability and continuity of the work going forward? What are the key challenges to ensuring long-term benefits to address these challenges?

Relationships between partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders

17. How well is engagement and partnership with key stakeholder groups (governments, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)/Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)), research and academic institutions, aquaculture enterprises and communities) being managed to ensure shared ownership and sustainability of intended outcomes?
18. How has the implementation approach, and the engagement of MFAT/DFAT and USAID impacted on the delivery?
19. How effective has the coordination been between the SCoFA, PaFMaC, Our Fish Our Future (OFOF) activities and other related initiatives in the region?

Cross-cutting issues

20. Gender and social inclusion. To what extent are the two projects contributing to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and people with disabilities in all their diversities?
21. Climate change. To what extent are the two projects contributing to PICTs being better equipped to address impacts of Climate Change?
22. Traditional Knowledge. To what extent are the two projects contributing to effective use of Traditional Knowledge in decision making?

III. Methodology

3.1 Evaluation approach

In response to the review purpose, the evaluation approach taken was both process and mid-term outcome evaluation. Given the timing available for the review a rapid evaluation model was utilised to meet the needs of the project decision-makers working to tight timeframes[1]. This review included common features of rapid evaluations of this type, including an iterative design, multiple methods and data sources, expediated data collection and analysis and a multidisciplinary team of four consultants. The review approach is described in further detail below.

3.2 Inception phase and evaluation plan

A Review Committee was established by SPC to oversee this review and included membership from SPC, MFAT, DFAT and USAID.

An inception meeting was undertaken with the FAME-PMEL team, to ensure a shared understanding of the review purpose and overall approach, including values and principles that underpin the review.

The evaluation plan was developed, including data collection methods, key evaluation questions, sampling approach, a framework for data analysis, fieldwork (including in-country visits), ethical considerations and associated timeline. The evaluation questions were reviewed and finalised during this phase in consultation with SPC and any relevant stakeholders on Secretariat advice. As part of the framework for data analysis (see annex 3), this evaluation plan identifies how the information needs could be met through current documentation (including undertaking documentary analysis), and what information gaps were needed to be filled through additional data collection, including in-country fieldwork, remote interviews and surveys.

Feedback from the Review Committee and others consulted was incorporated into the finalised evaluation plan. The evaluation plan was approved by the Review Committee prior to the start of any fieldwork or other substantive work.

3.3 Document review and secondary data analysis

A document review was undertaken using background documentation provided by SPC including relevant monitoring and annual project reports, programme outputs, proposals and design documents, and other relevant documentation (see annex 1 for key documents reviewed). Secondary data analysis was undertaken on monitoring data collected by the two projects, including but not limited to training data and evaluation surveys and project monitoring information.

3.4 Sampling and primary data collection

Primary data collection was undertaken both remotely and in person during country visits.

[1] Williams, E. (2021). Rapid evaluation. *Better Evaluation*. Available online: www.betterevaluation.org/blog/rapid-evaluation

3.4.1 Sampling approach

The sampling approach was one of *purposive sampling*, where we invited participation across all the key stakeholder groups relevant to the two projects. Through this approach we achieved *maximum variation*, i.e., capturing diverse and varied experiences and perspectives across the projects to date.

Data collection methods were designed to ensure the inclusion of perspectives from all relevant stakeholder groups through both remote and in-person data collection. Key stakeholder groups included SPC and implementing staff, PICT fisheries and aquaculture government staff, NGOs/CSOs, research and academic institutions, aquaculture enterprises, communities, implementing partners and donor partners.

Four countries were proposed to be included in the data collection phase for deeper contextual understanding and analysis, including case studies. In-person fieldwork enabled the perspectives of communities and aquaculture enterprises to be meaningfully included in the review.

3.4.2 In-depth interviews

Data collection included semi-structured interviews with 51 people. Participants were interviewed in-person during country visits, and remotely online via Zoom, Teams and Google Meet. The consultants worked with SPC and partners to identify specific representatives and other key stakeholders for inclusion to ensure a range of perspectives were included. See annex 2 for a de-identified list of stakeholders interviewed.

3.4.3 Survey

To complement the above data exploring the *depth* of perspectives of those interviewed, a Survey Monkey survey was included to explore a broader *breadth* of perspectives across the two projects and the range of country, partner, government and other implementation contexts. The survey was developed for completion online in English or interviewer administered (telephone or online), although all respondents completed the survey online. The survey addressed key evaluation questions across the DAC criteria.

3.4.4 Country visits

Fieldwork was to be undertaken in four countries. It was aimed to visit Fiji, Palau, Solomon Islands and Tonga. These countries were selected given they represent the range of activities and assistance being implemented across the two projects and provide some geographic spread across SPC members. Confirmation for travel and interviews in Palau did not eventuate, so participants from that country were interviewed remotely. The period for fieldwork was 30 September to 25 October. Country visits provided an opportunity for observation to understand further about work undertaken by the two projects, along with the partnerships, networks and stakeholders at local, national and regional levels.

3.4.5 Maximising stakeholder participation

Given the short time period available to complete this review, a key risk that was proactively managed was getting sufficient stakeholder engagement within the tight timeframes. This risk was carefully managed by:

- FAME staff reaching out to key stakeholders early to ensure there is awareness of the purpose and value of the review, appropriate approvals and confirmation of timing for country visits, and stakeholder support in participating in the review
- Clear prioritisation of the key stakeholders to be interviewed, including during country visits and remote data collection
- Efficient time management and coordination among the review team throughout each phase of the review.

3.5 Online validation and sense-making session

Preliminary findings were presented to the Review Committee and any other relevant stakeholders for reflection, such as the SPC CFAP and PMEL teams. The online workshop focused on sensemaking, validation and an opportunity for participants to provide input into the final evaluation report.

3.6 Data analysis and reporting

All primary and secondary data sources were utilised in analysis, ensuring that all data sources informed valid, robust and credible analysis against the DAC criteria and corresponding evaluation questions. Qualitative and quantitative data was triangulated. The mixed-methods approach utilised ensures evidence and analysis is high-quality and credible, answering evaluation questions and providing useful recommendations (see annex 3 for the data analysis framework).

Qualitative data was thematically analysed. Direct quotations have been utilised for key points to be articulated through the words of respondents themselves. Field work undertaken in the three member countries was analysed holistically and incorporates qualitative interviews as well as observation components. Three case studies have also been included in the report to focus on specific processes or outcomes to provide deeper insights.

3.7 Action planning workshop

An action planning workshop will also be held with CFAP technical staff and other relevant stakeholders to discuss recommendations and identify and how these should be implemented. The workshop will support the objectives of the review through building shared understanding and ownership for adaptations going forward.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The evaluation was conducted ethically and responsibly and met quality standards as described in the Evaluation Policy for the New Zealand Aid Programme, USAID Evaluation Policy, and the DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards. Respondents were invited to participate in interviews or surveys and were provided with the necessary information to provide informed consent. Both written and verbal information was provided to accommodate any diverse language or literacy needs. Where possible, and when consent is provided, interviews were audio recorded by the consultants to assist with data collection. Where recording was not possible, the consultants took notes. Both recordings and interview notes were saved securely and password protected. Recordings will be deleted at the completion of the contract. Privacy and confidentiality are upheld in all instances. Data is aggregated and individual responses are not identifiable in reporting.

3.9 Limitations

There are several limitations to be mindful of in relation to timing and sample selection.

3.9.1 Timing

The mid-term review was undertaken within a short timeframe to ensure it was completed by the end of 2024. Having a limited period for data collection meant that in-country fieldwork was limited to three countries, rather than the initial four planned given the availability and response of those members contacted by SPC. This has meant that the North Pacific is not represented among the countries visited although stakeholders from these members were interviewed remotely and participated in the survey. While a wide range of stakeholders were consulted, some were also not available during the data collection period. This was mitigated by the review team extending the period for remote interviews and survey responses to maximise timing flexibility as much as possible.

3.9.2 Sample selection

While a wide range of stakeholders were sought for inclusion in the evaluation, both through interviews and the survey, evaluations often work with selection bias, where those who elect to participate often have positive experiences with the projects in question. While divergent viewpoints did emerge through the evaluation, almost all interviewed and surveyed were overall positive about progress to date. Further, while the review team had hoped to engage with community members during country visits, feedback from SPC and government stakeholders indicated that those engaged by the projects to date did not include community members in the countries visited.

IV. Findings

4.1 Relevance and coherence (combined)

Relevance examines whether an intervention is doing the right things, and coherence looks at how well the intervention fits. The mid-term review examined relevance and coherence of the two projects in terms of alignment with regional priorities, relevance to the priority needs of PICTS, alignment with MFAT, DFAT and USAIDs' other relevant investments and whether the design of the projects were still relevant now and into the near future.

4.1.1 Alignment with regional priorities

EQ 1: How well do the goals and objectives of the SCoFA and PaFMaC projects align with regional priorities?	*The projects were seen to demonstrate alignment with regional level priorities, particularly through key regional policies relating to coastal fisheries management and aquatic biosecurity.*

The projects reflect strong alignment with *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy* (New Song). The PaFMaC ToC links directly to four overarching outcomes from the New Song on sustainable co-management, improved wellbeing and food security for communities, productive and healthy ecosystems and fish stocks, and reduced IUU. SCoFA's long-term outcome statement reflects the New Song vision statement including food security and economic benefits. Members consulted noted the strong alignment with the New Song, particularly the connection between the work on legislation and policy with New Song outcomes.

Direct alignment between Community Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) and aquatic biosecurity activities were identified with their respective regional-level frameworks. The CBFM project activities were directly aligned with regional level priorities evidenced through the *Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management 2021-2025*, endorsed at the start of the project period. The *Regional Framework on Aquatic Biosecurity*, endorsed before project commencement, was identified as providing the framework through which SCoFA's activities were both designed and implemented. While not necessarily explicitly reflected in the New Song or other regional strategies, the work on coastal MCS and enforcement along with aquaculture were identified as regional priorities through evidence including outcomes from Heads of Fisheries and Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries & Aquaculture (RTMCF) meetings[2]. A new Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy is currently in development and will further support projects to align with regional priorities in this area.

EQ 1a: What opportunities are there to align the work undertaken in these two projects with broader regional investment initiatives?	*Summary: The projects show close alignment with Pacific Forum Leaders' vision, thematic areas and high-level outcomes as articulated in the 2050 Strategy and its implementation plan. Leaders also specifically commended the implementation to date of the Pacific Regional Framework on Scaling-Up CBFM. Given these strong areas of alignment at the Leaders level, there should be opportunities to further align this work with large scale regional initiatives such as the Unlocking the Blue Pacific Prosperity initiative.*

[2] Outcome and meeting documents area available online at https://fame.spc.int/events/SPCFAMEmeetings

More broadly, at the regional level the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (2050 Strategy) sets out Leaders' vision for the Pacific and the long-term approach to working together as a region. The Leaders' vision is "*for a resilient Pacific Region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, that ensures all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy and productive lives*". The 2050 Strategy sets out seven thematic areas, with SCoFA and PaFMaC being closely aligned with the thematic area on ocean and environment, with its goal of *"the Pacific regions' ocean and environment are sustainably managed and are resilient to threats"*. The 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan articulates key outcomes, with the following outcomes most relevant for SCoFA and PaFMAC's areas of work:

- **People outcomes:**
    - 1.0 Improved climate resilience, food security, prosperity and wellbeing of all Pacific Peoples including vulnerable communities and marginalised groups through sustainable management of ocean and land-based ecosystems.

- **System outcomes:**
    - 1.1 Improved sustainable management of fisheries.
    - 1.3 Improved sustainable management of agriculture and food systems.
    - 1.5 Reduced and halted biodiversity loss and risk of extinction of known threatened species, caused by multiple threats on both terrestrial and marine environment.

The following regional collective actions identified in the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan also demonstrate alignment with CBFM and community based MCS:

- **Ocean and environment regional collective actions:**
    - 9. Adoption of ecosystem-based tools and customary approaches to manage and improve ecological integrity, biosecurity, sustainable productivity, and climate resilience of ocean and land-based resources.
    - 10. Meaningful participation of all Pacific peoples, particularly women and girls in all their diversity, in ecosystem-based management, that is in harmony with cultural practices and knowledge and contributes to strengthened sustainable use of land and ocean-based resources.

Aquaculture is not specifically mentioned in the implementation plan although it could be included as part of "ocean-based resources" noted above.

CBFM has also received attention at the Leaders' level, with Leaders noting the following in their communique from the 53rd Pacific Island Forum Leaders meeting in 2024:

> *Leaders further commended the implementation to date of the Pacific Regional Framework on Scaling-Up Community-based Fisheries Management (CBFM) and welcomed its extension for a further five years as a fit-for-purpose tool in coastal fisheries. – Pacific Island Forum Leaders Communique, August 2024*

Given these strong areas of alignment at the Leaders level, there should be opportunities to align this work with large scale regional initiatives such as Unlocking the Blue Pacific Prosperity which includes goals of 100% sustainable ocean conservation and management and healthy Pacific people supported by robust food systems and resilient ecosystems. Thematic Advisory Groups (TAG) are being established for each thematic area under the 2050 Strategy. These are to be led by CROP agencies and will focus on

improving coordination and collaboration in implementation, monitoring and reporting of initiatives. A specific TAG on Oceans and Environment will be established with SPC, the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Secretariat of the Programme Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) playing active roles.

4.1.2 Relevance to priority needs of PICTs

EQ 2: How relevant is SCoFA and PaFMaC to the priority needs of PICTs?	*The projects show a high level of relevance given the model of implementation is largely demand-led through member requests to SPC, with these requests strongly aligning with the areas supported by both projects. These priority areas are also reflected in discussions at RTMCFA, where member priorities noted at RTMCFA6 also include key areas addressed by the projects.*

Activities delivered under SCoFA and PaFMaC are based on requests from members to SPC, and SPC responds with support that is tailored to specific country needs. As such, interviewees from PICTs all agreed that activities undertaken as part of these two projects were directly relevant to their national needs, ministry directions and priorities.

The member-led, request based approach for seeking assistance under these projects means that PICTs received specific and targeted engagement from CFAP. PICTs identification of their needs and priority areas makes the most effective and efficient use of CFAP resources, rather than delivering activities that do not suit the current and contextual environment of that particular member.

> *Very relevant, we have a huge dependence on coastal fisheries resources for livelihood and SPC support is very relevant. SPC engagement is based on our requests and our work is derived from our Sector Plan and the Government's policies – Fisheries agency staff*

Official requests continue to be received from PICTs for support and assistance in areas of work relating to SCoFA and PaFMaC, that demonstrates the ongoing relevance of these projects. In 2021 FAME developed a request management system to track requests from PICTs. A total of 240 requests have been made to CFAP from 2021 to 2024, with 114 requests in 2023. Nineteen PICTs in total have made requests, with the highest numbers coming from eight members: Kiribati (41), Tonga (31), Solomon Islands (20), Cook Islands (17), Fiji (19), Tuvalu (18), Samoa (14) and Wallis and Futuna (17) and French Polynesia (15). The other members each made fewer than eight requests. Categories for the highest number of requests (above 10) to CFAP are listed below with areas represented by the two projects indicated with an *asterisk* (*):

- Aquaculture development (39)*
- Data management (38)*
- Aquaculture – technical (31)*
- Legislation and policy (28)*
- Science (25)
- Fisheries development (22)
- Data collection apps – coastal (21)*
- Information materials (19)Management (18)*
- Aquatic biosecurity (12)

- Socioeconomics (12)

Similarly, the outcomes of RTMCFA6 identify nine common national priority areas, of which the projects directly address the following five: strengthening data management; empowering fisheries agencies particularly enhancing MCS capabilities; policy and legislation review and development; human resources and technical skills in coastal fisheries and aquaculture sectors; and enhancing aquaculture.

4.1.3 Alignment with other DFAT, MFAT and USAID funded projects

EQ 3: How well aligned are the two projects with other related DFAT, MFAT, and USAID projects?	*Both SCoFA and PaFMaC align with other related projects and the development priorities / strategies of their respective donors in the Pacific. The projects have active connection with key projects such as Our Fish Our Future (USAID-funded) and Coalitions for change in sustainable national CBFM programmes in the Pacific (Pathways 2), which is DFAT/ACIAR/UoW funded. More regular donor coordination meetings may be beneficial to support ongoing alignment, coordination and coherence between the donors' respective portfolio of investments.*

MFAT

SCoFA strongly aligns with MFAT aid development priorities. MFAT prioritises sustainable fisheries management and combating IUU fishing, mitigating the impacts of climate change on coastal communities and ecosystems and has a strong commitment to the Pacific region including supporting sustainable development and economic growth in Pacific Island countries. The SCoFA project also focuses on business growth and aquaculture, supporting strong alignment with core principles of a blue economy, which seeks to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability. Having these elements of the project design that connects directly to people outcomes was another key point of coherence with MFAT priorities. Stakeholders confirmed that MFAT's fisheries investments with SPC are in strong alignment MFAT goals and priorities.

DFAT

DFAT contributed AUD$2 million to SCoFA, which was provided to and administered by MFAT. The understanding for this contribution is that it would primarily support the CBFM work of SCoFA (output 5). The association with CBFM was seen to align with other DFAT investment into coastal fisheries in the region, such as the Pathways projects administered through ACIAR and delivered by ANCORS, and the University of Wollongong, which has a CBFM focus working in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu as well as regional components. SPC's CBFM team work across both SCoFA and Pathways projects, supporting alignment and complementarity between the two DFAT investments. The adoption of the framework for scaling CBFM in the region was seen as another factor in ensuring alignment across DFAT's investments, where activities were aligned under the framework. DFAT and MFAT agreed on the performance indicators at the start of SCoFA to support reporting alignment, particularly as DFAT does not directly administer SCoFA.

USAID

For USAID, the other integrally aligned project is the Our Fish Our Future (OFOF) project implemented by University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Centre, Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Network, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the University of the South Pacific (USP). PaFMaC and OFOF were

designed to go hand in hand, one focused at the CSO community level in six countries, and the SPC project at the regional level across the 12 USAID applicable countries. Both projects come under USAID's 2022–2027 Strategic Framework for the Pacific Islands which guides all USAID activities in the region. Under this framework the fisheries projects contribute to *"Development objective 1: Community resilience strengthened"* and corresponding intermediate result 1.2 on sustainable management of natural resources strengthened.

Alignment between the two USAID funded projects was seen to have strengthened in year three of the projects, following a slow start due to challenges with OFOF getting off the ground initially due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, and making connections between key contact points across the two projects. These challenges were seen to have been overcome as implementation momentum has increased and with the appointment of the new chief of party for OFOF who has a long historical working relationship with CFAP. Opportunities for connection that the two projects are now capitalising on include engaging OFOF community contacts for updates to MCS training modules developed under PaFMaC to better tailor to local contexts, as well as sharing information on planned training. Another key example of alignment across the investments is PaFMaC working closely with OFOF to identify community contacts to attend the community-based fisheries dialogue (CBFD).

> *PaFMaC has been also supportive and very instrumental in working with Our Fish Our Future in terms of getting key informants and key resource persons for the community-based fisheries dialogue. Both activities are really working together to make community fisheries be the fore of fisheries work in the Pacific. – Donor partner*

Donor coherence

The intention behind the projects being designed and implemented in tandem was to also further cooperation and collaboration among the donors, particularly as DFAT and MFAT had a longer history of collaboration in the region than their working with USAID in the Pacific coastal fisheries space. This early engagement provided confidence between the donors that the project designs would support coherence between their investments, rather than duplicate or undermine their respective objectives.

The contribution of DFAT funds to the MFAT administered project presented some administrative difficulties for the donors to arrange initially. Operationally the project is managed by MFAT, and largely seen as an MFAT project. The relationship between Australia and New Zealand was seen to be a positive one. As DFAT provided their funds up front, they have not needed ongoing reporting, although they are engaged in the project through the project steering committee and quarterly updates between SPC and DFAT. This has meant that DFAT has less direct engagement with PaFMaC and USAID than MFAT. While it was initially intended that there would be regular donor coordination meetings between MFAT, DFAT, USAID and SPC to support ongoing alignment and coherence between their respective portfolio of investments, these do not appear to have occurred as frequently. For example, elements of SCoFA such as CBFM and CSO engagement, and DFAT's other CBFM investment in Pathways (Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), may have opportunities for greater connection with Our Fish Our Future than has been realised to date. Currently the primary connections between these initiatives are through the associated SPC staff.

4.1.4 Design adjustments going forward

EQ 4: Is the design of two projects still relevant for now and the near future? What, if anything, needs to be changed going forward? Are there any changes in the relevance of all components of both projects? Are any adjustments required to the theories of change?	*Given the strong alignment to member, regional and donor priorities and the focus on tailoring support in response to member-led requests, the design of the two projects is seen to be relevant both now and into the near future. There are some inconsistencies in how shared outcomes between the two projects are worded or phrased. This could be addressed in future projects, however, not significant enough to adjust the current ToCs. SCoFA's theory of change should be consistently updated to include the added sixth output on data and information.*

The designs of the two projects are intended to support key areas of CFAP's programme of work, covering coastal fisheries management frameworks (legislation, policy, plans), MCS, CBFM, data and information, aquatic biosecurity and aquaculture development. SCoFA covers each of these areas across all SPC's PICT members, whereas PaFMaC is focused on coastal fisheries management (MCS, laws, policy, coordination, information) in the 12 USAID eligible countries[3]. Capacity development is included across both projects.

The projects have been designed to be paired in the areas coastal fisheries management and have complementary elements in areas of data and information and CBFM. SCoFA alone addresses aquatic biosecurity and aquaculture development. It may have been simpler to ensure that outputs and outcomes that are directly aligned between the two projects share the same wording. Similarly, while SCoFA provides support across much of CFAP, the wording of FAME's own goals or objectives are not reflected in the ToC, although SCoFA's long-term outcome is closely aligned to FAME's overall goal. While not significant enough to adjust wording in the current projects, consistently worded impacts and outcomes should be considered in the design of future CFAP projects.

A new output was added to SCoFA to cover coastal fisheries and aquaculture data and information being secured and accessible through an online data and information platform (output 6 added in October 2023 with an additional NZD$1.3 million from MFAT). This output has not been consistently included in the project's theory of change diagram, however, is part of routine reporting and monitoring.

The initial designs of the two projects had them with aligned start and end dates. Variations were made to SCoFA to transfer the unspent funds from the preceding Effective Coastal Fisheries Management project into SCoFA (Variation One) and extend the timeframe of SCoFA to allow these transferred funds to be expended first. This meant that SCoFA was extended by 15 months to now end 30 November 2027, with the completion report due 28 February 2028 (Variation Two). As this came after the design of the project, it has required adaptations to both projects to accommodate continuity of staff funding and support to members after PaFMaC ends.

In relation to the design of the MEL frameworks for the projects, both projects have clear and distinct MEL frameworks with evidence of ongoing tracking against the indicators. A baseline assessment was undertaken in 2023 to establish baseline assessments for the two projects as well as the broader SPC FAME Business Plan (Allen + Clarke, 2023). Allen + Clarke noted that many of the indicators in SCoFA and

[3] Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

PaFMaC are identical to those set out in the SPC FAME Business Plan. This demonstrates internal MEL coherence. The baseline assessment included recommendations on improving indicators and information gaps. From the document review, it is unclear whether these recommendations are being considered / implemented and may require a documented management response.

4.2 Effectiveness - SCoFA

Effectiveness examines the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results. The review considered effectiveness in terms of key results achieved to date, the effectiveness of enhancing capacity of national and local stakeholders, unintended outcomes, and what is working well and why. Findings on effectiveness are summarised in the tables below, and subsequently presented in more detail by project area.

EQ 5: What key outputs have been achieved to date? Are they reaching the intended beneficiaries?	*Capacity development has been provided to 378 participants by SCoFA across 33 training events for aquaculture (tilapia and sea cucumber), legislative drafting in coastal fisheries and writing biosecurity components in management plans (542 cumulative attendance across all training). Most trainees to date have been ministry or department of fisheries staff, with legislative drafting also including staff from attorney generals' offices in PICTs. Overall, 90% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they gained new skills or knowledge from workshops or training.* *Support has been provided for drafting or revising at least 10 pieces of legislation and at least 15 management plans to date.* *SCoFA has jointly supported three community-based fisheries dialogues in 2022, 2023 and 2024 alongside other projects (PEUMP, Pathways). The CBFD's have brought together stakeholders from across the region, highlighting the co-ordination role SCoFA has contributed.* *Awareness raising materials to support these outputs have been developed, with regional information platforms such as Echoes of Oceania and REEFLEX supporting dissemination. CBFM materials are accessible to a wider audience of fisheries staff and community members through diverse approaches utilised and available on Echoes of Oceania (e.g., stories in video and print formats, maps and infographics, multilingual print resources).*
EQ 6: What progress has been made to date against the short- and medium-term outcomes described in the theories of change for both projects? *EQ 6a: How effective have the projects been in enhancing capacity of national and local stakeholders for sustainable coastal fisheries and aquaculture management?*	*The clearest evidence for contributions to outcomes has been through the application of knowledge and implementing changes in practice from training and capacity development outputs. Overall, 89% agreed they had taught others in their office skills learned at the training. Thirty-four survey respondents also provided specific examples of what they did differently in their work as a result of the training, with improved practice covering all areas of SCoFA support (aquaculture, legislation and management).* *Since 2022 new coastal fisheries management legislation or policies have been enacted in the Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. New or updated management plans have been adopted in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu.* *Contribution to outcomes such as new aquaculture business opportunities has seen less progress due to factors such procurement and travel challenges noted above. Similarly, while positive contributions to legislative change is expected through the project, these processes are lengthy and beyond the project's sphere of influence once it enters members' parliamentary processes.*
EQ 7: What (if any) unintended outcomes (positive and negative) were there? If negative, how are these being addressed?	*No unintended outcomes were evidenced (either positive or negative) in relation to the effectiveness of SCoFA through the mid-term review. The regional aquaculture strategy being developed is a key output that was not part of the project design but is likely to lead to unintended positive outcomes as the project progresses. Similarly, internships with the legal and aquaculture teams seem to be part of the project, where interns are mentored*

	by CFAP advisers over a longer period of time (i.e., 6-12 months), usually current students or recent graduates. This programme may also have unintended positive outcomes in the longer-term.
EQ 8: What is working well and why? What is not working so well, for whom, why, and what should be done?	*Activities are delivered using a combination of multiple modalities (online, classroom / theory based, practical elements, attachments) that respondents saw as very effective for easier grasping and retention of information. Offering short-term attachments to SPC following training was also seen to be an effective way for staff to focus on completing activities, such as legislative or management plan drafting, in a focused manner under the mentorship of SPC staff.* *Strong working relationships between SPC and PICTs means fisheries agency staff feel more comfortable seeking guidance from trusted SPC advisors for small points of clarification. There were regular examples where interviewees described small or minor interactions that strengthened peoples' lasting understanding of issues. Additionally, engaging implementing partners for delivery of activities was considered extremely effective in progressing approaches and concepts for activities, as perspectives are understood, and partners' linkages to projects are clear.* *Difficulties with SPC's procurement processes has meant that aquaculture enterprises have not received technical support as intended. Barriers relating to staffing levels, travel difficulties and communication of opportunities has meant that the spread of PICT beneficiaries, particularly for aquaculture capacity development outside of Fiji, has not been as wide as it may have otherwise been.*

4.2.1 Aquatic biosecurity

Table 3: Aquatic biosecurity - SCoFA outcomes and outputs

Medium-term outcome	**1. Aquaculture and coastal fisheries are protected from aquatic biosecurity threats.**
Short-term outcome	1. Adoption and application of aquatic biosecurity standards guided by the Regional Framework on Aquatic Biosecurity.
Output	1. Development and promotion of aquatic biosecurity practices. 1.1. Aquatic biosecurity risks assessed, standards developed, and implementation facilitated at regional and national levels. 1.2. Capacity development provided to governments and farmers in aquatic biosecurity and pandemic safety.

SCoFA supports the implementation of the Regional Aquatic Biosecurity Framework and emergent national aquatic biosecurity plans. It was noted that SCoFA is the only regional project addressing aquatic biosecurity, however, it focuses on animal biosecurity without including aquatic plant related biosecurity.

Output 1.1: SPC provides aquatic biosecurity support that is tailored to suit the needs and context of members. Three aquaculture-based risk assessments were undertaken in 2022 for the transfer of sandfish broodstock from Fiji to Kiribati, sandfish translocation within French Polynesia and liaison with SPREP on the risk of ballast water and hull biofouling as pathways for aquatic disease in the region (all in 2022). Aquatic biosecurity advice was provided for aquaculture operations in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, French Polynesia, Samoa, Cook Islands and Kiribati in 2022. Support was provided to three

members (French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Samoa) on aquatic biosecurity matters in 2024. Six PICTs have existing aquatic biosecurity strategies in place, but SPC assessments of these indicate they all need updating, which will commence 2024.

Output 1.2: In relation to capacity development nine government staff from Samoa's Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries were trained in relation to developing biosecurity components of fisheries management plans. SPC training data indicates that no other training on aquatic biosecurity has been supported by SCoFA, indicating that contributions to outcomes relating to biosecurity are minimal at this point in the project.

4.2.2 Aquaculture

Table 4: Aquaculture - SCoFA outcomes and outputs

Medium-term outcome	**2. Aquaculture is more productive, diverse, socially inclusive, and economically and environmentally sustainable.**
Short-term outcomes	2. New business opportunities and jobs/livelihoods in the aquaculture sector created through enhanced business acumen, market information and diversification. 3. Increased uptake and adoption of more innovative, improved, and socially inclusive aquaculture practices at national and community levels.
Outputs	2. Business training and technical support provided to aquaculture enterprises and government. 2.1. Training and mentoring provided to aquaculture operations in business, marketing, and diversification. 2.2. Capacity development provided to governments and farmers in feed, seed, and brood stock management. 2.3. Technology transfer facilitated in feed, seed, and brood stock management.

Outputs 2.1 and 2.3: Aquaculture grants were confirmed by the SPC Procurement Committee to fund five aquaculture enterprises in the Pacific to develop and strengthen aquaculture activities in 2023. The delays in confirming these grants have resulted in some enterprises turning to other providers to assist. Such unforeseen delays can create reputational risk for SPC. Currently the five enterprises are all based in Fiji, indicating limited reach and uptake by other countries. Fisheries staff consulted in three of the countries visited noted they were unaware of advertisement of the enterprise grant schemes and could have shared this among their networks to support others to apply. Beyond the grant scheme SCoFA also supports enterprises through more informal business and technical skills mentoring. To date 10 aquaculture enterprises in Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati and PNG have received this level of support.

Short-term outcome 2: Limited engagement with aquaculture enterprises in relation to both training and technology transfer (outputs 2.1 and 2.3) have meant the contributions to the short-term outcomes from SCoFA on new business opportunities and improved practice at community level are yet to be realised. The project's results framework indicates that in 2021 a baseline of 17 enterprises were being supported with a target of 25 enterprises by 2026, indicating 8 new enterprises are to be supported during the project period with five now engaged in Fiji. The engagement of enterprises is likely to support progress in these areas, although there is risk this is limited to Fiji for those receiving more intensive support via the grants scheme if enterprises from other countries are not engaged. Negative

impacts during and post COVID-19, such as limited availability of brood stock, continue to be felt, and aquaculture operators are slowly returning to operating.

As SCoFA builds on the previous MFAT-funded Sustainable Pacific Aquaculture Project, engagement with enterprises through this project continue to contribute to productive and socially inclusive aquaculture in the region. In 2023, SPC published a video sharing the story of one of the female-led aquaculture enterprises which were supported through the previous MFAT-funded aquaculture project that preceded SCoFA.

Output 2.2: To date, SCoFA has supported training and mentoring for 106 participants (34% women, 66% men) in aquaculture (205 cumulative attendance across all training events). This training effort has been substantial, with the highest level of training attendees across the four outcome areas of SCoFA. Most of the training focused on tilapia aquaculture, including hatchery production, nutrition and feed formulation, pond site selection and farm feasibility assessment and Naduruloulou Research Station hands-on training (161 cumulative attendance). Oyster aquaculture training has been provided to 26 participants (7 women, 19 men) on tropical rock oyster and hexcyl oyster basket construction and deployment (29 cumulative attendance). Training was also provided on sea cucumber aquaculture where participants attended a workshop in the Philippines on hatchery and grow out (10 cumulative attendance), three attachments to SPC for species identification for compliance and one person was trained on determining wet and dry size limits.

Most participants receiving aquaculture training were from Fiji (93), with others from Kiribati (2), French Polynesia (6), New Caledonia (1), PNG (2) and Vanuatu (2). According to the training records, almost all participants have been government (45), with two from SPC and one private enterprise.

SPC also hosts aquaculture interns, with three interns currently mentored by SCoFA-funded staff. Aquaculture interns appear to all be Fiji-based individuals; a few PICTs reporting they had not been made sufficiently aware of the opportunity to put forward interns or the internship programme at SPC.

SPC has continued working with countries on the development of a Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy. This will assist capacity development and harmonising of aquaculture development and investment across the Pacific. While the efforts towards a regional strategy were appreciated, several stakeholders noted that this had progressed slower than anticipated with the process having been first presented at HoF14 in 2022. Following consultations at sub-regional (March-June) and regional levels (August) 2024, the Strategy appears to be on track for drafting and receiving comment for endorsement at HoF17 in 2025.**Short-term outcome 3:** Survey results and feedback from stakeholders indicate that capacity development through output 2.2 is contributing to the uptake and adoption of improved practices at national level (short-term outcome 3). Government stakeholders responding to the survey provided examples of what they had done differently because of the training. Examples included making changes with egg collection methods and handling, modifying equipment and improving working methods, hapa breeding, and moving from grow out and manual collection of frys to an incubation system to do all male culture (examples provided by seven of nine respondents). As most training participants under SCoFA have been from Fiji, there is a risk that the regional reach for this outcome is limited if greater representation among training participants is not realised in the remaining project period.

4.2.3 Legislation and policy

Table 5: Legislation and policy - SCoFA outcomes and outputs

Medium-term outcome	**3. Legislation and policies enable clearer and more transparent decision making and planning for coastal fisheries and aquaculture.**
Short-term outcomes	4. Improved and robust laws and regulations at national and sub-national levels, strengthening regional and sub-regional arrangements. 5. Improved and robust policies and management plans at national and sub-national levels. 6. Increased capacity and skills to develop and implement legislation and co-management arrangements.
Outputs	3. Coastal Fisheries and aquaculture management enabled through development of legal frameworks, training, and implementation support. 3.1. New or revised legislation for coastal fisheries and aquaculture is drafted and support provided. 3.2. Policies and management plans developed or updated, and implementation is facilitated. 3.3. Fisheries and aquaculture staff trained, and mentoring provided on drafting of fisheries policies, legislation, and management plans.

Output 3.1 and 3.2: Support was provided for two new or revised pieces of legislation in 2022, and eight in 2023 (output 3.1) and assistance provided for three national fisheries management plans (Nauru, Kiribati, Tonga) and eight community fisheries plans (Tuvalu) in 2022. Support was provided to Nauru, Kiribati, Samoa, and Tonga in 2023, reviewing an additional four (cumulative) fisheries management plans. This support has led to changes at the outcome level. According to SPC's indicator monitoring, new coastal fisheries management legislation or policies have been enacted in the Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu (**short-term outcome 4**). New or updated management plans have been adopted in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu contributing to **short-term outcome 5**. Further contributions to legislative and policy change are expected in the longer-term particularly as it was noted that SPC does not have direct influence on how well the proposed legislative changes progress through a member's parliamentary process.

Output 3.3: Under this output (aligning with PaFMaC output 2.3) SPC has delivered capacity development activities for drafting coastal legislation and management plans. SPC training data indicates 65 people (71% women and 29% men, 104 cumulative attendance) were supported by SCoFA to participate in training related to legislative drafting in coastal fisheries. Participation was from Cook Islands (7 people trained), Fiji (6), French Polynesia (1), FSM (3), Kiribati (4), Marshall Islands (2), Nauru (1), New Caledonia (1), PNG (2), Samoa (8), Solomon Islands (17), Tokelau (1), Tonga (7) and Vanuatu (4). This area of the project has had greatest reach in terms of member country beneficiaries, covering 14 PICTs to date, with most attendees from Solomon Islands, Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga.

Attachments to SPC have also supported more in-depth learning and progress on legislation and policy outputs (3.1 and 3.2). The opportunities for participants from the legislative drafting course and management plan review workshop (funded by PaFMaC, see section 4.3.2) was seen as an effective way of progressing specific items of work. Through being at SPC and away from other responsibilities participants could focus on the specific output (either legislation or management plans) and applying knowledge gained under the mentorship of SPC staff, achieving a lot of progress in a short timeframe.

Short-term outcome 6: At the outcome level, improved knowledge and skills resulting from training outputs was evident through the review (short-term outcome 6). Feedback from fisheries staff involved in these efforts indicate that support provided to Pacific fisheries legal, management and MCS professionals through training, relationship building and engagement is enabling staff to be better equipped. Staff felt that the information delivered in training was relevant and able to be implemented at the national and local levels and described a boost in confidence as part of these outputs. Some also noted that reliance on SPC advisers is starting to reduce as a result of these outputs and longer-term engagement including through the previous MFAT-funded management project. This sentiment was supported through survey responses. Those who participated in legislative drafting or management plan training (five respondents) all agreed they gained new knowledge from the training, with four of the five agreeing that they had taught colleagues skills learned through their training.

4.2.4 Sustainable management, monitoring and enforcement

Table 6: Sustainable management, monitoring and enforcement - SCoFA outcomes and outputs

Medium-term outcome	**4. National and community coastal fisheries and aquaculture are more effectively and sustainably managed, monitored and enforced.**
Short-term outcomes	6. Increased capacity and skills to develop and implement legislation and co-management arrangements. 7. Increased awareness and compliance of sustainable fishing and aquaculture best practices, rules, and regulations. 8. Capacity improved and supported through identifying and promoting community-based fisheries approaches.
Output 4	4. Coastal Fisheries and aquaculture management practices implemented through community engagement, MCS and compliance. 4.1. Fisheries and aquaculture staff trained, and mentoring provided in support of implementation of fisheries policies, legislation, and management plans. 4.2. Coastal fisheries and aquaculture MCS training delivered, with supporting tools developed and promoted. 4.3. Awareness raising materials on sustainable fishing and aquaculture best practices, rules and regulations developed and disseminated.
Output 5	5. Regional coordination supporting and promoting the scaling of community-based fisheries in Pacific Island Countries and Territories. Coordinate and monitor community-based fisheries projects across the PICTs. 5.1 Support the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue process. 5.2. Support the "New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy". 5.3. Support the implementation of the "Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-Based Fisheries Management".
Output 6	6. Coastal fisheries and aquaculture data and information secured and accessible through an online data and information platform [added in October 2023]. Support members to secure legacy databases, and where feasible transfer the data to fit-for-purpose databases. 6.1 Ensure regional databases are able to effectively secure past, existing and future coastal fisheries and aquaculture data and information; facilitate and support appropriate access (FAME data policy); and use of the data and information for management purposes by members. 6.2. Develop the tools, applications and approaches for PICTs to access, interrogate and analyse their coastal fisheries and aquaculture data and information for use in management decision making.

	6.3. Support the collation and distribution of Community Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) data and information.

Output 4 - MCS and compliance

Output 4.1: Training workshops undertaken to date have focused on drafting, development or review of legislation, policy or management plans (output 3.3). So, while specific training on implementation has not been undertaken to date (output 4.1), across those PICTs interviewed there was agreement that drafting and development training also increased their capacity to implement legislation and management arrangements (**short-term outcome 6**).

Output 4.2 on MCSE training connects closely with the results achieved under PaFMaC (see section 4.3.1). SCoFA supported the 4th, 5th and 6th cohorts of the Cert IV in CFA Compliance training as well as basic MCSE training. MCSE training supported 130 participants (26% women and 74% men, 145 cumulative attendances). Across the SCoFA supported training 37% was funded by SCoFA alone and 63% with PaFMaC or both PaFMaC and PEUMP. For the remainder of the project it is anticipated that SCoFA will contribute increased resources to MCSE training once PEUMP ends. Contribution to **short-term outcome 7** is realised through the PaFMaC project and discussed in 4.4.1 below. In 2022 SPC produced a video on the outcomes of earlier training MCS officers in Kiribati received as part of the previous MFAT-funded coastal fisheries management project. The video highlights how fisheries officers in Tarawa have been ensuring the enforcement of fisheries regulations following training.

Output 4.3: Awareness raising material has been developed and disseminated online through the recently launched "Echoes of Oceania" portal. SCoFA and PaFMaC have been mostly directed at regional level information materials, with less material produced for nationally based activities (this is discussed further in output 6 below). Other materials developed include a legal guide on CBFM and radio resources in New Caledonia (17 radio shows) and Tuvalu (2 radio episodes).

Output 5 – Scaling CBFM

Output 5.1: Results against this output are presented below in case study 1.

Outputs 5.2 and 5.3: As noted in section 4.1 on regional alignment, results under this output have received attention at the Leaders' level, with Leaders commending implementation to date of the Pacific Regional Framework on Scaling-Up CBFM and welcomed its extension for a further five years from the initial 2017-2021 period. The alignment between the framework and the New Song are mutually supportive, meaning they are not two distinct sub-components of output 5. SCoFA supports regional CBFM coordination through the project funded CBFM Adviser, and work of this team undertaken through the connected EU PEUMP and DFAT Pathways funded position and associated activities. The reginal level coordination has also supported a cohesive regional approach to CBFM, both through the framework and roles of SPC staff, to ensure strong partnerships and connected efforts across multiple regional projects and implementing partners.

Output 6 – Data and information

This output was added to the project in quarter 4 2023. While the level of outputs that can be attributed to SCoFA are limited due to shorter space of implementation time, the project is supporting existing effort and initiatives from across CFAP's programme of work.

Outputs 6.1 and 6.2: A range of information related databases and tools have been developed across CFAPs work to support coastal fisheries and aquaculture management. These include the REEFLEX database and application, developed through the previous MFAT-funded coastal fisheries management project, and now maintained and supported through SCoFA. REEFLEX provides law, policy and regulation resources, including searchable access to the full text of laws and policies relevant to coastal fisheries and aquaculture by country or territory (22 SPC member countries and Timor Leste). This continues to be curated and managed to ensure content remains up-to-date.

Output 6.3: CBFM data and information has been collated and made available through the development of the Echoes of Oceania portal, jointly funded by PEUMP, SCoFA and PaFMaC. Echoes of Oceania is a web portal that provides information and tools to support CBFM in the Pacific. It supports the implementation of the Framework for Action on Scaling up CBFM through providing information, raising awareness, enhancing capacity and sharing knowledge. Given the range of donors and partners involved in delivering content, the portal also provides evidence of contribution to outcomes relating to coordination and capacity across the region for CBFM.

Another key regional resource supported jointly between SCoFA, PaFMaC and PEUMP has been the *Beyond the reef: A journey towards sustainable coastal fisheries* suite of resources. The toolkit outlines nearshore fishing practices focusing on the more resilient pelagic species beyond the reef edge. Beyond the Reef was initially a written manual designed to be engaging and accessible for users, which has been progressively adapted into a series of training videos called "Fish and Tips" and a photo exhibition.

In relation to the relevance of material produced and available, members interviewed felt that the process of engagement and co-development of resources made the information produced more tangible and highlighted that all these activities also delivered information in a range of ways for people to be able to access, understand and use effectively in their roles. These resources have also been translated into French extending their reach across the region to French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna.

As previously noted, SCoFA has focused on information and resources supporting increased awareness of sustainable fishing and aquaculture best practices at the regional level, and less on resource materials produced at the national level. Additional achievements that align with this output are described in section 4.3.4 on MCS information and materials.

Case study 1: Community based fisheries dialogue

Background

The Community-based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD) is an annual regional dialogue led by civil society organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actors (NSAs) actively involved in CBFM in the Pacific. To implement the decision by Pacific Island Forum Leaders in September 2016 regarding coastal fisheries, Regional Fisheries Ministers endorsed the CBF Dialogue in 2020 as a regional mechanism to enhance the engagement of CSOs and other NSAs on coastal fisheries matters. The first CBFD was in 2021 and is part of the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture. The CBFM is supported by the Convenor and the CBFD Advisory Group who help develop the agenda, identify potential participants and advise on engagement and reporting actions.

Change process

The CBFD is a co-funded activity supported by SCoFA, PEUMP and the ACIAR funded Pathways project. Participants selected for a given year may also be funded by other sources, such the connection with Our Fish Our Future in 2023. The CBFD platform has provided a platform for CSOS, NSAs and local communities to provide advice on issues associated with their coastal fisheries resources; exchange knowledge, experiences and lessons from CBFM initiatives; and foster dialogues with governments and partners on sustainable coastal fisheries management. Except for 2022's dialogue that was a hybrid event, all other dialogues have been face-to-face exchanges, including in 2024 where, due to funding constraints, the RTMCFA was conducted online. The range of groups, agencies, initiatives and donors involved reflect the substantial partnership coordination and engagement behind regional CBFM.

Outcomes

The CBFD has grown each year, with the third CBFD (CBFD3) including at least 37 representatives from CSO/NSA groups across 14 PICTs. CBFD3 focused on actively engaging and amplifying the community voices, including through a special GESI session noted by stakeholders as a powerful way to include community voices at regional fora and influence increased recognition of the value of inclusive CBFM.

Photo 1: Community representatives from Vanuatu - Rose Gere and Leisavi Daisy Kenneth during CBFD3, Noumea.

Held during the RTMCFA, CBFD creates a pathway for dialogue outcomes to be considered at HoF to be put forward to the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting. This pathway has also played a role in raising the profile of CBFM in the Pacific, with Leaders in 2024 making special mention of CBFM and commending implementation of the Pacific Regional Framework on Scaling-Up Community-based Fisheries Management (CBFM) and welcoming its extension for a further five years as a fit-for-purpose tool in coastal fisheries.

4.3 Effectiveness - PaFMaC

EQ 5: What key outputs have been achieved to date? Are they reaching the intended beneficiaries?	*Key outputs that are being effectively progressed include delivering national MCS trainings, developing accredited MCS related micro-qualification and regional information materials jointly supported by PaFMaC, SCoFA and PEUMP (i.e., information platform Echoes of Oceania, and toolkits Fish Smart and Beyond the Reef).* *Training effort in coastal fisheries and aquaculture MCS has been substantial with217 participants (22% women, 78% men) from 10 countries receiving training to date. Capacity building approaches include theoretical to practical "hands on" implementation of skills, and accredited and non-accredited training options. This has been viewed positively by interviewees from both PICTs and implementing partners to support retention and application of learning. Developing micro-qualifications is seen as an effective incentive for people to pursue the recognition for skills already learnt or as a pathway for building new capacity.*
EQ 6: What progress has been made to date against the short- and medium-term outcomes described in the theories of change for both projects? *EQ 6a: How effective have the projects been in enhancing capacity of national and local stakeholders for sustainable coastal fisheries and aquaculture management?*	*CFAP is implementing a well-considered approach to building MCS capacity. It is producing regional information and awareness raising tools in collaboration with SCoFA and PEUMP that raise the profile and understanding of the importance of coastal fisheries and MCS. Refining supporting legislative tools alongside building foundational MCS skills is an effective and holistic approach to move towards PaFMaC's short – medium term outcomes.*
EQ 7: What (if any) unintended outcomes (positive and negative) were there? If negative, how are these being addressed?	*CFAP support in coastal fisheries and aquaculture MCS was identified by members as also recognising the role of compliance officers within coastal fisheries MCS and supporting a career pathway in this area of work.*
EQ 8: What is working well and why? What is not working so well, for whom, why, and what should be done?	*Effective implementing partner working relationships have helped deliver a lot of PaFMaC's activities. Drawing on multiple implementing partners helps boost the effectiveness of engagement, reach and material when it is considered by a range of perspectives and skill sets, though the understanding of PaFMaC's intended outcomes was limited for some partners. One possible risk is that the level of demand on implementing partners' time and resources may be a limiting factor for future support.* *Having a PaFMaC staff based in the North Pacific was considered by some members to be a positive outcome for MCS work as in-person engagement is more accessible than when all SPC staff are centrally located.*

4.3.1 Fisheries agencies have appropriate MCS

Table 7: Fisheries agencies' MCS - PaFMaC outcomes and outputs

Medium-term outcome	**1. Fisheries agencies have appropriate monitoring, control and surveillance programs with the capacity, training, and systems to support sustainable coastal fisheries co-management at all appropriate levels.**
Output	1.1. Implement coastal fisheries MCS capacity development. 1.2. Development and delivery of national coastal MCS training, mentoring and support systems. 1.3. Development of an accredited micro-qualification in coastal MCS. 1.4. Scholarships offered for eligible underrepresented Fisheries Officers to undertake the USP accredited Certificate IV in Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Compliance.

Output 1.1: Training effort in coastal fisheries and aquaculture MCS has been substantial. Since the start of the project, 217 participants have been trained across 10 training events for this outcome area (22% women and 78% men, 262 cumulative attendances). Participants were from Fiji (10), Kiribati (59), Marshall Islands (17), Palau (20), PNG (1), Samoa (1), Solomon Islands (31), Tonga (16), Tuvalu (28) and Vanuatu (34). Much of this training was co-funded with PEUMP (4 training events, SCoFA (3 training events) or both PEUMP and SCoFA (1 training event). This training also had a broader reach beyond government fisheries staff than other CFAP training activities, also including police and local government / council staff, as well as NGO and CSO sectors (e.g., protected area network and WWF Fiji). Training participants interviewed noted that the combination of theoretical and practical elements to learning reinforced information.

Output 1.2: National MCS training has been delivered in Solomon Islands (24 participants in 2023, jointly funded with SCoFA), Tuvalu (23 participants in 2023), Tuvalu (28 participants in 2023, jointly funded by SCoFA), Palau (20 participants in 2024, jointly funded with PEUMP), Kiribati in Kiritimati (22 participants in 2024, jointly funded with PEUMP) and Tarawa (26 participants in 2024 jointly funded with PEUMP), Marshall Islands (18 participants in 2024), Tonga (15 participants in 2024) and Vanuatu (32 participants in 2024, jointly funded by PEUMP). Stakeholders interviewed felt that training information presented, tailored to a range of contexts, was better retained and the skills built are more easily implemented within people's roles.

Output 1.3: The Professional Certificate in Community Compliance (Level 3) course has received accreditation by the SPC Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) (see case study 2 below). This is in addition to the ongoing delivery of the Certificate IV in Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Compliance described under output 1.4 below. Members responded that certificates are an effective way of recognising people's qualifications and work experience. CFAP has developed working relationship with the University of Rhode Island (URI) (from Our Fish Our Future), a potential implementing partner for this course. Having a regionally accredited qualification with pre-prepared course material ensures consistent course content is delivered, regardless of delivery partner, while also enabling flexibility for these to the tailored to local contexts as required.

Output 1.4: The MCS Certificate IV course was completed by 23 individuals (9 women and 14 men) from six PICTs in 2022 (cohort 5), and 22 individuals (10 women and 12 men) from seven PICTs in 2023 (cohort 6). 15 scholarships were provided to cohort 5 students to attend the certificate's competency-based assessments. No scholarships were provided to cohort 6 students in 2023 and scholarships will be provided for 40 students from cohort 7 to attend the 2024 competency-based assessment.

Outcomes: Training participants and implementing partners interviewed described the training delivered to date as building a strong foundation of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Among the 25 survey respondents who completed non-accredited MCS and enforcement training, 24 agreed that they had gained new knowledge from the training (96%), and 21 (84%) said they had taught others in their office skills learned at the training. Specific examples of what they did different as a result of the training were provided by 21 participants, with examples including undertaking coastal patrols, fish market and other inspections, improved planning and documentation of operations and one also noting arrests. Several survey respondents identified extending MCS to provincial level or outer islands.

> *After the training we are now planning every operation with documents and file for reports later. I have conducted MSC inspections in regards to illegal harvesting of beche de mer here in the provincial level. With the assistance of police we have arrested dynamite fishers and dolphin fisher – Fisheries Agency staff*

Similarly, among the nine survey respondents who completed the Certificate IV course, eight indicated they gained new knowledge, and all nine said they had taught others skills learned in the training. Things they did differently included improved community engagement, improved research and data collection and strengthened partnerships.

Stakeholders interviewed felt that the design and mix of both accredited and workshop based MCS training supported ongoing sustainable change through building local capacity. The approaches taken were considered by both fisheries staff and implementing partners to be creating incremental change "in the field".

Case study 2: Professional Certificate in Community Fisheries Compliance

Background

The *Professional Certificate in Community Fisheries Compliance*, that is equivalent to a Certificate 3 course, is an accredited micro-qualification that will soon be available to professionals working in community-level fisheries compliance. Compliance services, including enforcing legislation, are provided by fisheries agencies who have finite resources both in personnel and operational funding. Over time, communities have undertaken some compliance services at a local level to ensure the sustainability of fisheries resources. This certification recognises those efforts, while providing a future pathway for other community members to trained and certified.

Change process

This Professional Certificate is aimed at enhancing the capabilities of community authorised officers engaged in local fisheries management and compliance. Completing this certification will enable learners to demonstrate competencies that reflect the minimum requirements of community engagement and nearshore fishing inspection and investigation.

The certificate training material was developed as part of the previous MFAT-funded coastal fisheries management project and the course was accredited in 2022 with support from SPC's Educational Quality and Assessment Programme. The course will be implemented by PaFMaC in partnership with accredited training providers who will deliver this course in 2025.

Anticipated outcomes

Communities will have well trained and skilled professional officers who can address community-specific challenges and support sustainable coastal fisheries practices. In some instances, those certified under this course will have the same powers as fisheries officers.

Having accredited training providers also deliver this course will create efficiency and longevity for the certification.

Photo 2: Field work visits to selling sites. Photo credit: Y. Silas

4.3.2 Enabling environment for compliance

Table 8: Enabling environment - PaFMaC outcomes and outputs

Medium-term outcome	**2. The enabling environment has been strengthened to enhance compliance with coastal fisheries laws and policies at all appropriate levels.**
Output	2.1. Review of laws and policies relating to coastal fisheries MCS at all appropriate levels. 2.2. Legal and policy drafting skills training to improve coastal fisheries management, compliance, and community empowerment. 2.3. Development of materials and capacity for political and community engagement to support adoption and implementation of coastal fisheries laws and policies. 2.4. Support for Pacific Island Fisheries/Legal/MCS Professionals.

As previously noted, this medium-term outcome and associated outputs connect closely with SCoFA medium-term outcome 3 described above. This results below focus specifically on the work PaFMaC has supported, with acknowledgement that results between the two are closely shared through the jointly funded MCS Adviser position and the fully-funded PaFMaC legal officer (currently vacant).

Output 2.1: To date, this output is supported through SCoFA outputs 3.1 and 3.2 (see section 4.2.3).

Output 2.2 and 2.4: In 2023, PaFMaC supported 12 participants in Tonga to complete refresher training on writing and reviewing fisheries management plans. The project jointly funded management plan writing training in Fiji (6 participants) and phase 1 of the legislative drafting training (30 participants from 11 PICTs) with SCoFA. PaFMaC also facilitated the second cohort of the legislative drafting course in 2023 through one of the trainers being the co-funded MCS Adviser (remaining trainers and participants funded through SCoFA). Interviewees who participated in these trainings described the courses as an effective and well delivered approach to build legal drafting skills and management plan development. These outputs are aligned closely with SCoFA output 3, both in relation to staff delivery and cohesiveness of the overall capacity development effort for management and legislation.

> *We had a two-week workshop on management plans, looking at how to draft management plans at the national level and also the community level. SPC really helped with technical capacity support, building those who lead the plans, but also those who will be working with community stakeholders. This training is an opportunity and it really helps my staff. SPC's service continues to impact the development and vision of this ministry to move forward –Fisheries Agency staff*

Output 2.3: Work relating to materials to support political and community adoption of laws and policies have been supported through PaFMaC at both regional and national levels. A key regional resource developed by PaFMaC jointly with a range of other CFAP is *Fish smart rules - tips and tools for community-based fisheries management practitioners to revive fishing grounds.* The toolkit is available online as pdf, and through the Echoes of Oceania portal. PaFMaC also supported a comparative study on aquatic biosecurity legislation in 14 PICTs and another on gender and human rights in coastal fisheries and aquaculture legislation in FSM, RMI and Palau.

With PEUMP the project also jointly supported communications training for 10 participants in Tuvalu. Participants were from Tuvalu's Fisheries Department, Broadcasting Corporation, Climate Action Network and Meteorological Service, demonstrating cross sectoral engagement and cooperation.

At the national level information packages have been developed for PICTs, tailored to their contexts, including the production of a compliance package with Solomon Islands and information strategies developed with Kiribati and Tuvalu.

The development of additional regional information tools Echoes of Oceania and Beyond the Reef were also supported jointly through PaFMaC, SCoFA and PEUMP, and are outlined in section 4.2.4.

4.3.3 National fisheries agencies coordination with civil society

Table 9: NFA and CSO coordination - PaFMaC outcomes and outputs

Medium-term outcome	**3. National fisheries agencies have effective and appropriate mechanisms operating to facilitate and coordinate with civil society in support of local level coastal fisheries co-management.**
Output	3.1. Coordination and collaboration with the USAID CSO grant recipient and other relevant projects and programs. 3.2. National engagement of CSOs/local NGOs 3.3. Stakeholder consultations, outreach, and awareness.

Output 3.1: As noted in section 4.1.3, coordination and collaboration with the USAID CSO focused Our Fish Our Future project has improved between the two USAID-funded sister projects following a slow start. The project partners appear to be communicating regularly and connecting between complementary activities. The relationship through CFAP has also supported some coordination between OFOF and other related CFAP activities, particularly in relation to CBFM. For example, OFOF became better connected with the CBFD, connecting with SCoFA output 5.1 on the CBFD.

Output 3.2: Outputs in this area are still emerging. The project is working with the Solomon Islands for the development of subnational legislation (provincial fisheries ordinances). The process will involve engaging the community to progress the ordinances, while ensuring effective and appropriate mechanisms exist for coordination with civil society. This output will also likely be further supported through the improved coordination and collaboration with OFOF as implementation progresses for both projects.

Output 3.3: The CBFD supported by SCoFA is the main mechanism supporting this output to date. As previously noted, engaging stakeholders through these dialogues has provided a cohesive and coordinated approach to dialogue, awareness raising and consultation (see case study 1). Information resources discussed in output 2.3 have also supported awareness raising, with community and local levels being key audiences for the Fish Smart and Beyond the Reef resources.

4.3.4 MCS information and materials

Table 10: MCS information and materials - PaFMaC outcomes and outputs

Medium-term outcome	**4. Monitoring, control and surveillance program frameworks, best practice guidelines, operating procedures and training and outreach materials developed for the Pacific islands' context.**
Output	4.1. Development and distribution of MCS information and awareness materials to promote voluntary compliance. 4.2. Development of MCS tools, systems, and materials for coastal fisheries compliance.

Output 4.1: A suite of regional information and awareness materials have been developed as noted in previous sections (see output 2.3 for further details). Fish Smart, Beyond the Reef and Echoes of Oceania all include key resources aiming to promote voluntary compliance. Echoes of Oceania having a broader focus on CBFM includes the following key information resources promoting voluntary compliance: *what are the fish smart rules?* and *monitoring, control and surveillance and enforcement*.

Output 4.2: In relation to MCS material and equipment 50 sets of MCS equipment kits including binoculars, multi tools, torch, first aid kit and sunglasses were delivered to fisheries officers in 2022.

In terms of MCS tools and systems to support compliance, several tools are in development, with no key results completed to output level as yet. The MCS Ocean Wardens video series are training videos for MCS Officers in the Pacific on how to perform inspections. The first video was published in 2020 in collaboration with PEUMP. PaFMaC will support further videos in the series, with two new episodes produced in 2023 and in the process of being completed and shared online.

A review is underway of SPC's regional coastal fisheries MCS database which focusses on inspection tracking and offence management. The review involves a needs analysis of Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands to inform what is needed to enhance the database. CFAP have been working with the Ministry for Fisheries & Marine Resources (MFMR) to produce an 'information and compliance' toolkit on Solomon Islands' coastal fisheries regulations, including a booklet for provincial fisheries officers and materials for the public (posters, rulers with size limits, sheets on seasonal bans etc).

4.4 Efficiency (combined)

Efficiency examines how well resources are being used in relation to delivery, cost efficiency and timeliness. The mid-term review considered the model of implementation, model of funding, timelines and coordination among stakeholders as part of efficiency.

4.4.1 Model of implementation

EQ 10b. To what extent does the model of implementation support efficiency?	*Shared arrangements for both staff and activities across the two projects have supported efficient delivery. However, implementing the activities as two separate projects (with their own budgets and reporting requirements) has meant the full efficiency benefit of shared implementation has not been realised.* *Increasing travel costs, risks and complexity have impacted the efficiency of training related expenses given capacity development is a key component across all outcomes, particularly those areas where in-person support is still seen to be the most effective.*

The shared arrangements between SCoFA and PaFMaC were designed to support efficient and effective implementation. The projects are intentionally aligned in areas focussing on MCS, legislation and policy, information and coordination between national fisheries agencies and civil society. This alignment has included shared staff positions between the two projects, with project management and administrative staff positions being co-funded by the two projects (see annex 5 for staffing arrangements). The role of a shared project manager across the two projects has enabled close coordination between the projects and leveraging resources to enable both national and regional level implementation. Stakeholders consulted also identified that this has also supported flexibility, particularly in cases where support could not be offered through PaFMaC but was able to be provided through SCoFA (e.g., due to PaFMaC being limited to the 12 USAID-eligible countries, or greater restrictions with USAID versus MFAT funding).

The projects have also shared implementation in relation to MEL systems and processes, leading to efficiencies. Indicators across elements common to both projects are shared, as are monitoring processes and tools and evaluative efforts where follow-up surveys have been conducted consistently with training participants from both projects since 2022. A shared baselines assessment report was also conducted in 2023 to establish baselines across the project indicators.

Following the end of COVID-19 travel restrictions, travel related implementation has increased in momentum since 2022. Since this time, however, flight and accommodation expenses increased across the region, exacerbated by reduced flight routes, with more complex routing and flight delays post-COVID. This has had an adverse impact on the project budgets, as the level of associated costs were not foreseen when the projects were designed. It was noted that having a PaFMaC staff based in the North Pacific was considered by some members to be a time / cost efficiency for in-person engagement versus when all SPC staff are centrally located. SPC has continued implementation using a combination of virtual, hybrid (virtual and in-person) and in-person training, workshops, meetings, and technical support to members, building on lessons learnt and adaptations adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Given ongoing higher travel costs, adapting workplans and reassessing approaches to training, e.g., identifying support that can be provided remotely before in-person engagement, has been undertaken.

4.4.2 Model of funding

EQ 10c: To what extent does the model of funding support efficiency?	*Despite the positives of alignment and shared resources, the challenges of implementing two separate projects with their own reporting, financial management and donor requirements appear to have overshadowed benefits relating to efficiency. Relying on project funding to support key areas across CFAP's programme of work creates challenges for SPC's planning and delivery into the longer term, particularly considering the high level of relevance at national and regional levels noted above.*

Project funding

Both donor and SPC staff identified that the approach of funding two separate projects was not the most appropriate to support a programmatic approach to implementation. With the value of hindsight, SPC staff indicated that it would have been more efficient for the investments be administered as a single combined project, although acknowledged this may not have been possible within USAID requirements. SPC's administrative and financial management systems have monitored and reported on expenditure from each project, including identifying their respective contributions for jointly funded projects. However, this has also required additional time and resources from technical staff to navigate the administrative requirements, plan activities between the two projects and track and report on the projects' respective inputs and outputs. It was noted that despite these challenges, the relationship between the donor partners and SPC was a positive one of collaboration and working through the respective challenges in administering the projects as they arose.

> *If I had to do it again, I would set it up as a joint collaboration. Trying to manage them as completely separate projects when they overlap is quite challenging… Where we can attribute we do, but in reality it is largely joint funding… But overall having this combined mechanism and having the three agencies contributing has been quite positive. It's been a learning experience on our side and also for the three agencies… they're all trying to work out how can we make this work. – SPC staff*

CFAP's heavy reliance on various time-limited project funding has resulted in complexities and uncertainties in planning and delivering CFAP's programme of work into the future. Over the past seven years, the combination of SCoFA, PaFMaC, along with broader PEUMP funding was seen to have provided continuity of support to members across the areas of aquatic biosecurity, aquaculture, coastal fisheries legislation, policy and strategy development, MCS policy management and CBFM. The challenge with project funds supporting such a significant programme of work for the region is that as PEUMP comes to an end in 2024, the funding that has pieced together the current size and functioning of CFAP will dramatically begin to decline. As PaFMaC and SCoFA will continue to 2026 and 2027 respectively, the loss of PEUMP may also have an indirect impact on the implementation of these projects, such as the loss of GESI and social science experts who were funded by PEUMP and worked across all of CFAP. With the next phase of PEUMP significantly reducing support for coastal fisheries, the future focus and capacity of CFAP is uncertain, particularly as PaFMaC and SCoFA funding will end in the next two to three years.

HoF16 recognised the critical challenges faced by CFAP in terms of funding, staffing and the level of national requests and regional priorities. HoF encouraged members to co-fund requests to CFAP where

possible, and tasked SPC to investigate new funding sources and to leverage opportunities through, among other things, climate change, food systems and food security initiatives[4].

The joint model of funding between DFAT and MFAT was seen to contribute positively to efficiency in implementation, although there were initial administrative challenges and delays in the two institutions setting it up.

SCoFA

The design of SCoFA followed two separate five-year MFAT funded projects, one on aquaculture and the other on coastal fisheries management. Combining the MFAT project investment into one MFAT project for the second funding phase was seen to be of benefit for a more holistic programme approach, providing greater flexibility and efficiency. As the amount of investment from MFAT remained the same, it meant a decrease in available funds in real terms given increases in staff, travel and operational costs, and SPC's standard management fee increasing from 7% to 15% since the previous projects were designed. Given this, prioritising the retention of staff given momentum built over the first phase of work has meant the proportion of funding for staff to activities was high at 60-70% when SCoFA and PaFMaC had the same end dates. The addition of 15 months to SCoFA meant that the proportion of funding for staff further increased to 80% with 20% for activities to ensure key staff co-funded with PaFMaC continued to support SCoFA to the end.

Although remaining funds from the previous coastal fisheries management project was technically rolled into SCoFA, SPC still had to expend those funds fully first and report on these separately. This also delayed spend against outputs three, four and five given they were continuing areas of work until the previous unspent funds were utilised (hence the extension), but not those outputs relating to aquaculture. The complexity due to the unspent funds, both in terms of administering them separately and implications of different SCoFA and PaFMaC end dates on staff costs, may have negated the potential efficiency gained by combining the two previous MFAT projects into one for this phase of funding.

SCoFA was especially seen to support a wide range of CFAP's programme of work. Given that both DFAT and MFAT have existing flexible funding relationships with SPC FAME, a more programmatic funding modality may have been more appropriate and more efficient for donors. One downside noted of more flexible funding is greater difficulty for donors to understand where their support is being directed and the nature of reporting shifting from tailored for donors to SPC-led reporting. Despite this, it was noted by donors that FAME is a trusted partner and now also able to provide more targeted evidence on how programme funding is utilised. Both MFAT and DFAT noted that there is a high level of trust and confidence in SPC that enables more flexible funding to be an option.

PaFMaC

PaFMaC was seen to be more administratively challenging than SCoFA due to more stringent USAID funding requirements and the time taken for SPC to understand and meet these new requirements. The modality of funding through which USAID funds PaFMaC was seen to be unique and more flexible than other more common USAID project funding options. However, this has also meant there was not a

[4] SPC, 2024. Outcomes of the Sixteenth SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting. Available online.

standard approach, templates or clearly articulated requirements known at the start of the project, with things arising during the implementation process that the team had to more reactively respond to.

The Leahy vetting process had also impacted the efficiency of PaFMaC activities in relation to administrative costs, timeliness and ability to be responsive. The Leahy vetting process applies to all USAID funded initiatives to ensure that a recipient does not receive U.S. assistance if they have committed gross human rights violations. The vetting process is carried out by the State Department, with the process beginning at the relevant U.S. embassy who conducts security and human rights checks, and also involves the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and the appropriate regional bureau. Examples were provided of several training or workshop events where the vetting of participants had not been completed in time, with SPC needing to utilise other project funds (usually SCoFA) to fund these participants or delay the activity.

Despite these challenges the relationship with the USAID administering team in Manila was seen to be a positive one, with a collaborative approach taken to working through these issues together with SPC. Having a dedicated project manager and administrative and financial support within FAME/CFAP was also seen to enable SPC to respond to these administrative challenges as they arose.

4.4.3 Timeliness

EQ 9: Have outputs been achieved in a timely manner? If yes/no - why?	*While the projects are generally on track for delivery within the planned timeframes, there have been significant administrative challenges for timely implementation. Travel and procurement processes (both of goods and contracts) have especially impacted timeliness over the past two years. Civil unrest in New Caledonia has also understandably limited activity and travel during 2024.*

Outputs across the two projects are generally on track for delivery within the planned timeframes. The efficiency related issues noted above in relation to the implementation and funding modality across the two projects has had impacts on timely delivery. Additionally, a key barrier to timely delivery has been SPC's administrative challenges with procurement and travel, which has had an impact on delivery across both projects.

Travel

In November 2023, SPC moved to a single-source travel provider. This transition included a new online travel booking tool to manage all travel requests. Unfortunately, there were significant implementation issues with the contracted travel provider, particularly in relation to the provider becoming familiar with travel and flight options across the Pacific and the volume of requests for travel support from SPC. This resulted in organisation-wide delays in travel, increased travel costs and placed a significant burden on administration staff. An SPC-wide contingency plan was initiated in 2024, with alternative travel providers engaged to support SPC's immediate travel needs. Some planned workshop and meeting activities set to occur in the first quarter of 2024 (funded by SCoFA and USAID PaFMaC) were deferred to enable more certainty around travel arrangements for funded participants to attend these in-person activities.

Civil unrest in New Caledonia

Unfortunately, in the second quarter of 2024 New Caledonia experienced civil unrest, leading to project activities being put on hold or redirected to online support given the situation, including travel restrictions followed by reduced flights even once Noumea's airport had opened and travel was possible. The situation in New Caledonia has continued to impact delivery and staff up to the period of this mid-term review.

Procurement and contracting

While all aspects of the projects have been impacted, lengthy procurement processes have particularly delayed support provided to aquaculture enterprises as part of SCoFA output 2. This output includes material support to aquaculture enterprises, which were administered in the precursor MFAT project as business grants. Changes to SPC procurement processes has meant the request for proposals and the grant review processes are led by SPC's procurement team, with the decisions being undertaken by an internal procurement committee supported by SPC's legal and finance teams. Although it is a rigorous process, it can take a lengthy period of time to complete the review and assessment of the bids, procurement committee process and obtain final approval. This has caused significant delays to implementation, including the aquaculture enterprise grants.

These delays have meant that the first agreements have only recently been signed with enterprises 18 months after commencing the process. Despite delays enterprises noted that communication with SPC was good through these delays. SPC staff noted some private sector enterprises have had to pull out as they were unable to wait any longer or they were able to go elsewhere for support. Restrictions such as SPC's limit of paying no more than 20% up front for the procurement of goods were also noted by staff as restricting available aquaculture suppliers as some require up to 70% to mitigate their own risk. It was noted that these all contributed to a reputational issue for SPC dealing externally with aquaculture enterprises, suppliers and partners both in the region and beyond. Given these challenges in delivering elements of outputs 1 and 2 within institutional processes relating to contracting and procurement, the design of these components may need to be revisited in the remaining project period to ensure project resources are not spent on overcoming institutional barriers with minimal results.

4.4.4 Efficiency of coordination and implementation of activities

EQ 10a: Have there been any notable efficiencies or inefficiencies in the coordination and implementation of activities among stakeholders…?	*There have been efficiencies identified with implementing consistent and collaborative material throughout capacity development activities (Legislative Drafting Online course; Fisheries Management Development Workshop; MCS Certificate IV and Level 3 Certificate). Delivery of these activities can, in time, be outsourced to local or regional accredited training providers and still provide the same opportunities and learnings to a wider audience. Implementing activities in tandem with external implementing partners have efficiencies of drawing from a large pool of experts beyond the SPC-CFAP team.*

As noted above, the projects are intentionally aligned in areas focussing on MCS, legislation and policy, and information. This alignment has included shared staff positions between the two projects, further supporting efficient and effective implementation of activities across stakeholder groups.

There have been instances where time and / or cost efficiencies have seen activities moved from one to another project to ensure delivery remains on track, or participants from a broader range of PICTs can be included in activities (due to PaFMaC only having 12 eligible PICTs as part of its scope).

Strong collaboration across implementing agencies in both PaFMaC and SCoFA has seen these partners assist with the development of materials. Utilising a range of subject matter experts across multiple implementing agencies to deliver course material for example is an efficiency that will be seen over time, e.g., the *Professional Certificate in Community Fisheries Compliance* course. One possible risk to any increasing reliance on external implementing agencies is their potential future funding limitations that may reduce or remove their capacity for ongoing work in this space.

There are efficiencies for delivering capacity development activities when common resources are implemented. Where appropriate, tailoring core materials for activities and members requests is an efficient way of shaping responses and approaches for assistance; engaging multiple countries in applicable activities creates working relationships across PICTs or CSOs and can foster peer-to-peer networks on common issues. Where CFAP team numbers are small, there is a limitation to how much they can deliver, so utilising such materials and / or external implementing agencies for delivery maximises efficiency.

4.4.5 Prioritising member requests

EQ 11: How effective is the process used to prioritise member requests under the two projects? Are there opportunities to improve the prioritisation process?	*The process for prioritising member requests is not clear and therefore unable to be adequately assessed. While there is clear evidence that member requests are received and responded to through the projects' activities, further evidence is required on the prioritisation process and how this is applied.*

As noted above in relation to relevance and coherence, both projects operate on a largely demand-led model. As well as the formal requests outlined in section 4.1.2 on alignment, in 2023, FAME started tracking informal requests as a lot of the requests are not formal but made directly from PICT fisheries and aquaculture staff to FAME staff. While usually small in nature, the annual SCoFA 2023 report identifies that they cumulatively consume a relatively significant portion of CFAP staff time.

While FAME has improved the tracking of both formal and informal requests, it is unclear how these requests are prioritised, particularly as they filter through to the project level of action. HoF16 tasked SPC to implement the broad criteria for the prioritisation of national requests that was presented to the meeting, indicating that is an area that CFAP is looking to strengthen. The current process of requests and prioritisation is also influenced by members' own approach to how and when they might request something from SPC. For example, one stakeholder observed that recently some members may have been hesitant to request assistance due to the unrest in New Caledonia and not wanting to burden SPC during this time. One member also noted that while they try to communicate their availability with SPC (e.g., when they are and are not able to receive in-country assistance) there is not a mechanism where SPC shares a calendar of CFAP engagement (in a similar way the SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme shares FFA, WCPFC and SPC calendars). It was felt this information may help members understand CFAP's availability and potentially see opportunities for coordination with other members that have similar requests or needs.

4.5 Impact (combined)

Impact examines the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of an intervention. It looks at the extent to which an intervention has generated, or is expected to generate, significant high-level change (either positive or negative, intended or unintended).

Table 11: Project impact statements

	MFAT/DFAT SCoFA	USAID PaFMaC
Goal	Food security, livelihoods and economic and environmental resilience in Pacific Island countries and territories are strengthened through more sustainable coastal fisheries, improved, and diversified aquaculture practices, and adherence to aquatic biosecurity standards.	By 2026, sustainable coastal fisheries co-management in the targeted Pacific Island countries has appropriate, effective, and collaborative monitoring, control and surveillance as integral components addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) coastal fishing.
Long-term outcome	Enhanced food security, livelihoods, economic and environmental resilience from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture	

4.5.1 Resulting impacts

EQ 12: What positive and negative medium- and long-term impacts at the sub-national, national, and regional levels have resulted from the two projects?	*As the projects are at the mid-term, it is too early to meaningfully demonstrate high-level longer-term change, particularly just one year on from the baseline assessment. Despite this, the results highlighted in the effectiveness section above indicate that it is likely the projects will contribute to impacts, particularly where outcomes are already being evidenced.*

As the projects are at the mid-term, it is too early to meaningfully demonstrate high-level longer-term change, particularly just one year on from the baseline assessment. As noted in the baseline report, evidencing impact against the high-level outcome and impact indicators may still remain a challenge even with more time given data gaps and the frequency of periodic collection for sources such as HIES and the Fisheries in the Economies of PICTs study. Despite this, the results highlighted in the effectiveness sections above indicate that there is potential for these to lead into impact.

Capacity development is a key pathway where the effectiveness of results is likely to lead to longer-term impact level change. Outcomes level change has been evidenced at the mid-term through the application of learning in areas of improved aquaculture practice and MCS. Another example is the development of national capacity in areas such as drafting management plans supports national staff lead and implement management and regulatory change, which in turn are expected to influence high-level environmental and social impact (see case study 3 below). The projects are expected to deliver impacts through legislative and regulatory change in coastal fisheries and aquaculture facilitated through the project. While such change takes time to move through the required national parliamentary and governance processes, the number of management plans drafted and close to adoption indicate the remaining years of the project will see increased pace for these outcomes.

4.5.2 Barriers for impacts

EQ 13: What are barriers/gaps for impacts to happen? For the people trained in MCS, it will be critical to know what are the barriers that hampers the trained officers from implementing an effective MCS work or simply to use what they have learned and trained for?	*Barriers to impact align with key issues noted in relation to effectiveness and efficiency, namely relating to timeliness of delivery (particularly considering lengthy procurement and travel processes) and achieving broader reach across the membership as implementation continues in the remaining years. These particularly relate to aquaculture and achievement of the mid-term outcome where aquaculture is more productive, diverse, socially inclusive, and economically and environmentally sustainable.* *Among those trained in MCS, challenges in implementing learning related to lack of funding, ongoing capacity or knowledge gaps, community and vendor engagement, and limitations in the supporting structural or regulatory environment for MCS.*

As capacity development is a key pathway to impact, survey respondents were asked what challenges they faced in implementing learning from training received. Among those trained in MCS, challenges identified related to lack of funding, capacity or knowledge gaps, community and vendor engagement, and limitations in structural or regulatory environment.

Resource constraints were noted by many implementing MCS. Insufficient funding to support MCS activities, purchase equipment or hire staff were common responses, along with the lack of necessary equipment like cameras, tools and technology to carry out tasks effectively. The challenge of covering geographic areas involved (either within islands or across remote islands) and implementing consistent MCS were also seen to be limited by resources.

> *Fisheries staff are not able to cover the whole island due to lack of funds. – MCS training recipient*

> *Inadequate monitoring facilities or poor internet connectivity can hinder the effective implementation of MCS strategies. – MCS training recipient*

> *Limited financial and human resources can affect the ability to deploy monitoring technologies (like drones or satellite systems) or adequately staff enforcement agencies. – MCS training recipient*

> *Lack of regular… enforcement by [fisheries] officers allow so many illegal harvesting of regulated species. – MCS training recipient*

> *Remoteness and scattered islands making it hard to reach communities. – MCS training recipient*

A few of those trained identified barriers due to their own knowledge gaps / continued learning needs such as a lack of in-depth knowledge on specific topics or concepts, challenges in understanding and applying training materials due to English proficiency, and ongoing training and capacity building being needed to maintain skills and adapt to new challenges. This also related to those who may have completed online learning but were yet to complete practical learning components.

> *Rules and regulations when it comes to coastal fisheries is quite different especially with someone with a offshore fisheries background. – MCS training recipient*

Gaining community buy-in for voluntary compliance and adversarial responses from vendors were other challenges noted by several survey respondents.

> *Gaining community buy-in for new compliance measures can be challenging, especially if they require changes to long-standing fishing practices or impose restrictions that affect livelihoods. – MCS training recipient*

The nature of the work is dangerous to fisheries officers as it involves confiscation of marine products from vendors. – MCS training recipient

Structural barriers were also identified, include policy and regulatory barriers and challenges in working with other government services such as police and provincial governments.

National and local policies may not always align with best practices in coastal fisheries management, creating obstacles when trying to implement sustainable and compliance-oriented measures. – MCS training recipient

We always face difficulties in funding and lack support from our provincial governments to implement our work plans. – MCS training recipient

4.5.3 Indicators

EQ 14: Are any adjustments required to the existing indicators to measure success at impact level?	*Given the intentional alignment of impact-level indicators between the two projects and upwards to the FAME Business Plan and regional policies, it is not recommended that adjustments are made. Recommendations in the baseline report in relation to data gaps may need to be addressed to ensure impact-level information is available for the end-of-project evaluations.*

The MERL frameworks for both projects were revised in 2022 to shift the focus of the indicators more towards the outcome level and reduce the quantity of output indicators. The indicators now align with regional indicators such as those from the Coastal Fisheries Report Card and the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management. PaFMaC's AMELP is also aligned to USAID's performance indicator results framework. The indicators between the two projects are also aligned in the areas they are achieving common results.

As previously noted, a baseline assessment using the revised indicators was conducted in 2023. Given the recent revision and the intentional alignment of impact-level indicators both between the two projects and upwards to the FAME Business Plan and regionally, it is not recommended that adjustments are made to the indicators. The baseline report notes some challenges and data gaps in relation to these indicators, so it is recommended that SPC develop a management response or outline on how these may be addressed to ensure that there is adequate evidence and information to examine change at this level for the end-of-project evaluation.

Case study 3: Samoa's Fisheries Management Plans

Background

Two of Samoa's management plans had expired and were in need of reviewing. The Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Plan 2013-2016 and Aquaculture Management and Development Plan 2013-2018 were both previously developed by SPC and key Samoa MAF-Fisheries staff who had since left the ministry. A Fisheries Management Plan Development workshop (facilitated by SPC and NZ MPI) was carried out in Samoa, January 2023. This was followed by four MAF-Fisheries staff attending a one-week attachment in July 2023 to complete the drafting of the new Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Plan.

Change process

The week-long workshop, held in Apia and attended by nine staff, was a combination of taking staff through the context and theory of fisheries management plans, and then using those learnings to draft elements of the aforementioned fisheries management plans. Throughout the week, MAF-Fisheries staff revised sections of the Plans, and brainstormed what new content should be included in the next iteration of the management plan.

After MAF-Fisheries undertook nation-wide consultations, using the draft management plan to guide their discussions, four key drafters worked on finalising those new Plans with SPC and NZ MPI assistance. Being on attachment and away from the office meant they could be efficient, well focused and immersed in writing with SPC experts' guidance. Also writing two plans in parallel by key staff implementing the work on the ground was seen as an advantage.

> *I was fortunate to attend an attachment for drafting our Aquaculture Management Plan while my colleagues worked on drafting our Coastal Fisheries Management Plan. It was an eye-opening experience for me to work alongside SPC experts in drafting these plans, not only we discussed about it in the national workshop but doing the actual writing was huge learning and fulfilling experience - Fisheries Agency staff*

Photo 3:Participants of the legal training. Photo credit (MAF)

SPC CFAP hosted a Coastal Fisheries Governance with legal training for sustainable marine resources management workshop for Samoa which was good timing while their management plans in draft. This not only strengthened understanding of MAF-Fisheries staff (in particular new recruits) but also continues to strengthen the capacity of the key drafters. Representatives from Samoa's Attorney General office and the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources were also participants to the training which highlighted peer to peer learning as well as strengthening networks and collaborations between Samoa and American Samoa.

Outcomes

Samoa's new Coastal Fisheries Management Plan 2024 – 2029, and Aquaculture Fisheries Management Plan 2024-2029 are planned to be finalised in November, and launched in December 2024.

4.6 Sustainability (combined)

Sustainability is essentially about whether the benefits seen will last. This mid-term review looked at sustainability in relation to the extent to which the projects' contributions will continue over time and whether the current funding arrangement supported sustainability and continuity of the work going forward.

EQ 15: To what extent will the projects' contributions continue over time? What critical success factors are in place to ensure sustainability?	*The projects have been designed to support longer-term sustainability at both national and regional levels. The focus on national level capacity development is intended to build and embed this knowledge within members' own national systems and processes. Staff turnover may limit the extent to which some capacity development is sustained in the long term, however it is identified as a key risk in the projects' risk registers and appears to be being managed by both SPC and members.*

The projects have been designed to support longer-term sustainability at both national and regional levels. The focus on national level capacity development in areas such as aquaculture, coastal fisheries and aquaculture MCS and drafting legislation and management plans is intended to build and embed this knowledge within countries own national systems and processes. While this is understood to be a long-term endeavour, results from the mid-term review identify key elements to continuity such as key examples of those trained applying what they have learned in their work and the sharing of learning to others they work with. A high proportion (88%) of the training participants surveyed for this review indicated they had "taught others in my office skills learned at the workshop/training", with 83% providing examples of how what they had done differently in their work as a result of training.

Case studies such as that from Samoa, highlights how training and mentoring have led to change nationally with new management plans being drafted and implemented. Cooperative and collaborative working relationships between partners also support this sustainability, with the survey receiving strong results in areas such as having a core group of skilled and committed staff over the life of the partnership. The development of regionally accredited coastal fisheries MCS qualifications through both the Certificate IV and newer Professional Certificate III for communities supports the sustainability of training going forward, and the broader professionalisation and recognition of this area of work across the region. This will be further supported through future planned activities such as train-the-trainer initiatives to further the spread of MCS training delivered.

While the investment and strategic design of capacity development intentionally supports sustainability, some challenges arise when there is staff turnover among key people trained within national fisheries agencies. The staff turnover in fisheries agencies limits the extent to which capacity development outcomes are sustained at the national level. This can reduce the long-term effectiveness of these outputs as trained staff leave or move to other roles. This was noted by several members and SPC staff interviewed. The extent to which this has impacted the projects overall is difficult to assess given the number of trainings and multiple people trained from each country appearing to be supportive in mitigating this risk. Staff turnover is identified as a key risk in the projects' risk registers and appears to be being managed through the mitigation actions noted.

In terms of ensuring sustainability going forward resources will still be required for the central role of partnership and regional coordination that CFAP has played, building on current momentum established, and continued delivery particularly as activities continue to mature and member requests

for assistance continue. Similarly, information and awareness resources and platforms developed through the project will endure beyond the funding period, however, continue to require curation, updating and development from the SPC team, particularly as countries look to adapt and tailor to their own contexts, information and language needs. While CFAP can produce materials as part of these projects, the effectiveness of national focused material will be diminished over time if resources cannot be kept current by fisheries agency staff.

If SPC's design and approach to fisheries capacity building cease, it will be challenging to maintain the improvements we have received so far in our fisheries – Fisheries Agency staff

EQ 16: Do the current funding arrangements support sustainability and continuity of the work going forward? What are the key challenges to ensuring long-term benefits to address these challenges?	*The current funding arrangements do not support sustainability and continuity of work going forward beyond the end of the current project periods. Within the current funding period the ending of PEUMP will also likely reduce pace and reach in key areas relating to training and information resources which had previously been jointly funded. Funding uncertainty also limits SPC's ability to plan longer term to provide relevant and timely support to meet requests from countries.*

A key challenge to sustainability is CFAP's high reliance on project funding from donors for these key areas of work across the programme. As identified in 4.2.2 above, the current funding arrangements do not support sustainability and continuity of the work going forward beyond the end of the current project periods. The results achieved to date have largely been through leveraging resources and staff between the two projects, as well as PEUMP. The ending of PEUMP particularly will likely reduce pace and reach going forward in key areas relating to training and information resources where these were often jointly funded, with PEUMP also supporting GESI expertise that contributed to the two projects.

Within the projects themselves there is uncertainty on the level of funding going forward. Momentum, capacity and partnership built to date is unlikely to be able to be maintained if the scope of funding reduces with some donors not renewing their support. It was noted that already there are high expectations on completing key areas of work with small implementing teams of just one to three specialist staff in each area. There was a feeling among staff that the intensity of effort for implementation, including navigating and overcome challenges, could not be sustained long-term.

I'm really impressed in what we do deliver. My concern is going forward how do we keep, maintain, attract and grow our capabilities in coastal fisheries? I think they are hitting above their weight in this division but it's not sustainable… Once these projects close out it would be good to have a rethink on how we can set things up much better from the beginning. – SPC staff

This uncertainty in funding continuity is also limiting SPC's ability to plan longer term and ensure it has the right level of staffing capacity and skills to manage a sustainable workload and provide relevant and timely support to meet increasing requests from countries. Uncertainty in continuity of funding also affects SPC's ability to recruit and retain valuable technical staff. When positions become vacant, there could be long delays in finding the right person to fill that vacancy, leading the stalled delivery and implementation in that area to the end of the project.

Projects are successful because of the commitment of fisheries staff taking ownership of the work – SPC staff

4.7 Partnerships and relationships (combined)

EQ 17: How well is engagement and partnership with key stakeholder groups being managed to ensure shared ownership and sustainability of intended outcomes?	*The PaFMaC and SCoFA projects rely on, and have developed, strong partnerships with government agencies, implementing partners and NGOs/CSOs and communities. These partnerships have been instrumental in the results achieved by the projects to date. While the partnerships have been generally positive, some challenges related to resources and coordination have emerged. Overall, the strong relationships and the commitment to collaboration among the partners have been crucial to supporting the success of these projects.*

Both SCoFA and PaFMaC have strong working relationships between project staff and implementing partners. Across both projects a range of partners are involved in implementation including agencies implementing associated other donor projects (e.g., OFOF and Pathways) and those involved in joint delivery of activities within the projects (e.g., external training facilitators and providers). Many have had long-term relationships with CFAP across aquaculture, legislation and policy, CBFM and information and awareness raising efforts. Areas relating to MCS&E and aquatic biosecurity had more new partnerships being developed, as did areas of growth such as data management (i.e., database development). Underpinning all approaches are the partnerships and relationships CFAP has built with members' fisheries agencies, both institutionally and with individuals.

Given the relationship-based nature of partnerships, much of the existing engagement between CFAP, partners and members drew on existing connections with other agencies. Key institutional implementing partners included AFMA and ANCORS in Australia, MPI in New Zealand, USP in Fiji and FFA in the Solomon Islands as well as the University of Rhode Island and World Wildlife Fund. The delivery of MCS training involved a range of implementing partners, as did work relating to the CBFD.

Partners working with SPC to implement activities and funding partners were asked a series of questions taken from the Victoria Health Partnership Checklist to understand the health of partnerships within the projects. Elements included were those on planning collaborative action, implementing collaborative action and reflecting on and continuing the partnership (questions 5-7). All partnership elements received positive average scores however the group of questions relating to planning collaborative action was the most positive. In relation to individual statements, partners were most positive about the skillset across partners (partners have the necessary skills for collaborative action, score 4.4 out of 5) and the need for continued collaboration (there is a clear need for and commitment to continuing the collaboration in the medium term, score 4.4). Other elements rated very positively were having a core group of skilled and committed staff over the life of the partnership (score 4.3) and partners being involved in planning and setting priorities for collaborative action (score 4.3). While still positive, the statement rated least positively were adequate processes in place for resolving disputes (score 3.8 out of 5). See annex 4 for survey data tables.

All survey respondents (partners, trainees and government staff) were asked to rate areas of communication, relationships and trust when working with SPC (questions 14-16). All 15 elements were rated very positively, with average ratings of either 4 out of 5 or higher. Highest ratings were received for respectful and ethical conduct (4.6) and preparing materials and knowledge products (4.4).

While partnerships were operating well, a few stakeholders noted emerging issues to be considered for the remaining period of implementation. Implementing partners provided their inputs including time through their own fundings and projects, as these also are adjusted or uncertain, ongoing levels of engagement require continued planning and coordination between SPC and partners. Another element raised was in relation to SPC partnerships with stakeholders at the national level, particularly where there were existing relationships between fisheries agencies and government with those stakeholder groups. It was noted that where SPC was engaging with communities or NGOs / CSOs directly at the local level it was important that SPC follow countries' official engagement protocols with communities to ensure that all partnerships continue to progress.

EQ 18: How has the implementation approach, and the engagement of MFAT/DFAT and USAID impacted on the delivery? *EQ 19: How effective has the coordination been between the SCoFA, PaFMaC, OFOF activities and other related initiatives in the region?*	*The dual project approach has yielded mixed results. While sharing staff and activities has improved efficiency, separate budgeting and donor reporting requirements have hindered overall effectiveness of coordination between activities. A more integrated, long-term and flexible approach to funding coordination could optimise resource allocation, long-term planning and enhance the overall impact of the projects.*

The impact of the implementation approach and engagement of the donor partners is explored in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 above. Coordination and implementation of activities is explored in section 4.4.4.

4.8 Cross-cutting issues (combined)

4.8.1 Gender equity and social inclusion (GESI)

EQ 20: To what extent are the two projects contributing to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and people with disabilities in all their diversities?	*It is difficult to assess these projects in isolation in relation to their contributions to gender equity and social inclusion outside of the broader CFAP programme, particularly CFAP's contributions to GESI are mostly delivered through PEUMP yet support all areas of work. Across all training conducted by SCoFA and PaFMaC, 32% of training participants were women and 68% men. National level MCSE training had the lowest participation of women at 17%, whereas Cert IV MCS training was more balanced with 42% women and 58% men participating. Legislation, policy and management plans training had the highest participation of women at 71% and 29% men. The discrepancy between non-accredited national level MCSE training and the accredited Cert IV MCS course indicates that it may be worth exploring opportunities to increase the participation of women national level training particularly.* *Evidence that was available suggests the projects are gender accommodative, and as implementation continues it is likely that there will be evidence that some elements of the projects working directly with aquaculture enterprises and community (CBFD, MCS and information) will be gender transformative. Beyond gender, other elements of social inclusion are not as well integrated, this includes young people, people living with a disability and other vulnerable or marginalised groups.*

SCoFA directly supported a comparative study on gender and human rights in coastal fisheries and aquaculture legislation in FMS, Marshall Islands and Palau. As key components of CFAP both projects draw on approaches to supporting GESI from across the programme, particularly through PEUMP and SPC's broader support for GESI through their Human Rights and Social Development Division (HRSD). It is therefore difficult to assess these projects in isolation in relation to their contributions to gender equity and social inclusion. Many of CFAP's key results and contributions to GESI are through PEUMP given key activities and expertise are structured under this project yet contribute across CFAP's work. Examples include support provided to members for GESI training and gender analyses which were initially supported under the previous MFAT-funded coastal fisheries management project and have continued under PEUMP rather than SCoFA. For example, when asked if they had done anything differently as a result of training, one participant said *"I have been in an SPC workshop [on GESI] and as a result we developed a GESI policy for the overall Ministry"*. This participant had received legislative drafting training supported by SCoFA, and GESI training supported by PEUMP. These connections across CFAP's broader programme of work all contribute to this type of long-term change.

Gender disaggregated training data has been collected for all training conducted by SCoFA and PaFMaC. Across the two projects a total of 529 people have been trained, including 167 women (32%) and 362 men (68%). National level MCSE training (PaFMaC output 1.2) had the lowest participation of women at 17%. Comparatively gender participation in the Cert IV MCS course was much more balanced with 42% women and 58% men, a key achievement in an area that is often perceived to be more male dominated. Aquaculture was another area with a lower gender balance with 34% of training participants being women and 66% men. Among those trained in legislation, policy and management plans 71% were women and 29% men, with this area having the highest proportion of women. The proportions of men and women trained across outputs may be reflective of the respective stakeholder groups involved,

however, the discrepancy between non-accredited national level MCSE training and the accredited Cert IV MCS course indicates that opportunities to increase the participation of women are worth exploring further particularly in national level training.

Evidence that is available suggests that the projects are gender sensitive in relation to revising and developing legislation, policies and plans, and selection processes for enterprises and training support. SCoFA's support for the CBFD actively supports the inclusion of women and marginalised people through the Dialogue. As one of the partnering donors, DFAT's particular focus on GESI was seen to be supportive, particularly in relation to the CBFM components of SCoFA. Similarly, the support for CSO and government engagement through PaFMaC considers inclusive and equitable engagement.

The available evidence suggests the projects are gender accommodative, where "the different roles of men and women are recognised and both men and women are given opportunities for training and improving livelihoods. But existing gender norms and inequalities are not addressed"[5]. As implementation continues it is likely that there will be evidence that some elements of the projects will be gender transformative, where "projects are effective in shifting gender norms to enable greater equality. Men and women are able to work more effectively together to achieve sustainable livelihoods from coastal resources"[6]. Particularly those components of the projects working directly with aquaculture enterprises and community (CBFD, MCS voluntary compliance, information and awareness).

Consideration and evidencing in these areas will continue to be critically important especially considering "do no harm" principles and the potential for this community level work (e.g., community compliance and enforcement) to negatively impact or actively harm if GESI and safeguarding are not met. Beyond gender, other elements of social inclusion are not as well integrated, this includes young people, people living with a disability and other vulnerable or marginalised groups.

4.8.2 Climate change

EQ 21: To what extent are the two projects contributing to PICTs being better equipped to address impacts of climate change?	*The extent to which the projects are contributing to equipping PICTs to address the impacts of climate change is unclear. While results achieved to date support resilience across environmental, economic and wellbeing and food security, the narrative of how they contribute to climate change adaptation is not explicit in project documentation or among stakeholders interviewed.*

The extent to which the projects are contributing to equipping PICTs to address the impacts of climate change is unclear. As the projects' designs and implementation draw clear linkages to supporting resilience across the areas of environmental, economic and wellbeing and food security, it follows that there will be contributions addressing the impacts of climate change. However, the association with climate change is not well articulated in documentation or among stakeholders consulted.

At the activity level, programmes supporting CBFM are inherently supporting those communities be better able to adjust and adapt to climate change. Similarly, the regional 'Echoes of Oceania' portal includes climate change as a category of resources. It was unclear from the review if management plans and approaches developed through the projects included actions tailored towards climate change

[5] Barclay K., Mangubhai S., Leduc B., Donato-Hunt C., Makhoul N., Kinch J. and Kalsuak J. (eds). 2021. *Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture. Second edition*. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. p.3
[6] Ibid. p.3

adaptation. Rather than the projects not contributing to impact in this area, it is more likely that the narrative of how they contribute to climate change adaptation is an area that could be made more explicit going forward.

The need for further connection between coastal fisheries and aquaculture with climate change was discussed at HoF16, suggesting that there would be value in exploring how to improve the linkages between the two projects and their contributions to climate change adaptation. Specifically, HoF16 highlighted the need to further extend the focus on the impacts of climate change on coastal resources, including the corresponding involvement in training and awareness workshops of appropriate personnel.

4.8.3 Traditional knowledge

EQ 21: To what extent are the two projects contributing to effective use of Traditional Knowledge in decision making?	*Stakeholders were able to identify key areas where the two projects were contributing to the use of traditional knowledge in decision making. Despite these linkages project documentation does not highlight this as an area within the projects.*

Stakeholders were able to identify key areas where the two projects were contributing to the use of traditional knowledge in decision making. The key mechanisms were through the CBFD and regional coordination of CBFM, information and awareness materials produced (Echoes of Oceania, Beyond the Reef and Fish Smart), and community engagement approaches to coastal fisheries MCS. Despite likely strengths supporting the use of traditional knowledge in decision-making through the two projects, there is no specific mention of this contribution in any of the projects' documentation, reporting or indicators, including the baseline assessment report. Consideration could be given to evidencing these contributions if it is seen to be an area of key relevance for the projects going forward.

> *SPC includes traditional knowledge in trainings and doesn't ignore skills. In villages they are familiar with their environment, weather patterns [and their] influence on fish, SPC includes that knowledge.*
> *– SPC staff*

V. Lessons learnt and recommendations

5.1 Lessons learnt

Drawn from the strengths and successes of SCoFA and PaFMaC to date, the review has highlighted key lessons that can provide relevant learning for the remainder of the projects' implementation and other similar programmes of work.

Key factors that have contributed to the success of SCoFA and PaFMaC have included:

- Design of the projects provides SPC with resources to leverage support also being provided through the PEUMP project to maximise resources across all projects.
- The implementation approach supports being responsive to member requests and priorities, including the flexibility to tailor support to ensure relevance to members' specific needs and contexts.
- The project design and SPC's relationships with other implementing partners enables SPC to deliver capacity building effectively through a combination of theoretical and practical components through both remote and in-person training.
- Strong trusted relationships are important to facilitate meaningful engagement with countries. The development or relationships take time and consistence, with SPC seen as a trusted and consistent regional partner in coastal fisheries and aquaculture.
- Administrative cooperation between two donors (MFAT and DFAT) enabled SPC to benefit from DFAT's funding without having to meet separate reporting requirements.

5.2 Recommendations

The mid-term review identified the following recommendations for the two projects to build on the successes and strengths to date and continue to improve.

5.2.1 Recommendations for remaining implementation of SCoFA and PaFMaC

	Recommendations	Evaluation criteria
1	**Continue to strengthen coordination between PaFMaC and OFOF projects:** Continue to build on recent improvements in coordination and implementation coordination between the two connected USAID-funded projects.	Coherence
2	**Greater connection between the three donor partners – MFAT, USAID and DFAT:** More frequent donor coordination meetings may be required particularly as PEUMP ends and the future of the projects are considered.	Coherence
3	**Ensure SCoFA's ToC includes all project components:** Consistently update SCoFA's theory of change across all project documentation to include the added sixth output on data and information.	Coherence

4	**Continue to monitor regional spread of support provided for the remainder of the projects' implementation, particularly in relation to aquaculture (SCoFA) where training efforts have largely been focussed in Fiji.**	Effectiveness
5	**Further clarify CFAP's process for prioritising members' requests:** Explore opportunities to work more closely with members to further enhance the member request, prioritisation and response process. Also consider opportunities to enhance the request process so that it is equitable among members, including clarifying when CFAP is accepting requests (e.g. what happens with requests when SPC is deal with times of crisis or vacant positions) and whether a call for requests when new projects begin would assist.	Efficiency and effectiveness
6	**Continue to address procurement processes that have impacted timely and responsive delivery of services under the two projects**, particularly in relation to support to aquaculture enterprises. Consider a redesign of these components of the project if it is not possible to achieve more efficient procurement so that project resources are not spent on overcoming institutional barriers with minimal results.	Efficiency
7	**Provide a response to addressing recommendations noted in the baseline report on outcomes evidence for the projects:** The baseline report notes some challenges and data gaps in relation to evidencing higher-level outcome and impact level change. It is recommended that SPC develop a management response to recommendations included in the baseline report or outline on how these may be addressed to ensure that there is adequate evidence and information to examine change at this level for the end-of-project evaluation.	Impact
8	**Improve project specific consideration of GESI, including greater focus on disability and evidence on contributions to GESI**. Beyond gender, other elements of social inclusion are not as well integrated, this includes young people, people living with a disability and other vulnerable or marginalised groups. Stakeholders felt that a great focus on disability particularly was required.	Cross-cutting issues
9	**Explore opportunities to increase the participation of women in training across the two projects, particularly for national level training.** National level MCSE training had the lowest participation of women at 17%, whereas Cert IV MCS training was more balanced (42% women and 58% men). This difference indicates there is opportunity to explore the reasons behind the lower participation of women in national level training with view to increasing participation.	Cross-cutting issues
10	**Improve the articulation of how the project contributes to climate change adaptation:** There is evidence that there are results in this area through the focus on supporting resilience and sustainable co-management of resources, however, the connection between this and climate change is currently absent.	Cross-cutting issues
11	**Identify whether traditional knowledge is a key area of focus for the project and incorporate accordingly**: If traditional knowledge is a key area of focus for the projects, supporting the use of traditional knowledge in decision-making should be reflected in project reporting and documentation.	Cross-cutting issues
12	**Continue to engage with implementing partners to understand their changing resources and time available to contribute for the remainder of the projects.** In coordinating and connecting with a range of partners at national and local levels, continue to work with members and local partners to follow national protocols when working with communities and build on existing partnerships.	Relationships

5.2.2 Recommendations for future projects and programmes

	Recommendations	Evaluation criteria
13	**For future project designs ensure consistently worded outputs and outcomes where implementing is shared:** Ensure alignment with FAME's overall goals and objectives in project ToC particularly where they are intended to provide broader support across multiple areas of CFAP's work.	Coherence
14	**Explore opportunities to transition funding for these key areas of work to more flexible funding arrangements**, reflective of the breadth of support these projects contribute to across many areas of CFAP's work with members.	Efficiency
15	**Secure long-term flexible and appropriate funding to support this work after current projects end.** A more integrated, long-term and flexible approach to funding could optimise resource allocation, long-term planning and enhance the overall impact of the projects' areas of work. Exploring funding support through larger scale grants such as GEF could also help.	Sustainability

Annex 1: Initial document review

Table 12: Documents included in the document review

Key documents identified in RFQ	SCoFA	PaFMaC
Activity Design Document (ADD) and Business Case	*Pending*	SPC Project Description - USAID v6.0 (28-Apr-2021).pdf
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plans and frameworks	SPC FAME Baseline assessment report-Business Plan-SCoFA-PaFMaC_Allen and Clarke_09 May 2023.pdf	231031 PaFMaC Activity Annual Report 2023.pdf Annex 10.5 SPC FAME Baseline assessment report-Business Plan-SCoFA-PaFMaC_Allen and Clarke_09 May 2023.pdf
Theory of Change	Anon_22_ScOFA_brief.pdf	Anon_22_PCFMC_brief.pdf
Activity Progress Report for Year 1	Year 0-1: Annual SCoFA Report 2023 (12-03-24).pdf (Aug 2021- June 2022) Year 1: SPC Activity Progress Report Year 1 SCoFA (final 09-03-2023).pdf (Jan to Dec 2022)	220930 PaFMaC Activity Annual Report 2022 .pdf
Activity Progress Report for Year 2	Annual SCoFA Report 2023 (12-03-24).pdf Jan to Dec 2023	231031 PaFMaC Activity Annual Report 2023.pdf (Oct 2022 to Sept 2023) 240501 PaFMaC Mid-Year Report 2024.pdf (Oct 2022-Mar 2023)
Indicator reporting and tracking	SCoFA Reporting Results Framework updated LM Sept 2024.xlsx	PaFMaC Indicator Tracking_final_Sept2024.xlsx
Activity Steering Committee Meeting Minute	*Pending*	230721 PaFMaC Activity Progress Meeting Report.pdf

Annex 2: Stakeholders interviewed

Table 13: List of stakeholders interviewed (deidentified)

Number	Stakeholder group	Country location	Interview type
1	Aquaculture enterprise	Fiji	In person
2	Aquaculture enterprise	Fiji	Online
3	Aquaculture enterprise	Fiji	In person
4	Aquaculture enterprise	Fiji	In person
5	Donor	Australia	Online
6	Donor	New Zealand	Online
7	Donor	Philippines	Online
8	Donor	Philippines	Online
9	Member - National fisheries agency (NFO)	RMI	Online
10	Member - NFO	RMI	Online
11	Member - NFO	Fiji	Online
12	Member - NFO	Samoa	Online
13	Member - NFO	Samoa	Online
14	Member - NFO	Samoa	Online
15	Member - NFO	Samoa	Online
16	Member - NFO	Samoa	Online
17	Member - NFO	Solomon Islands	In person
18	Member - NFO	Solomon Islands	In person
19	Member - NFO	Solomon Islands	In person
20	Member - NFO	Tonga	In person
21	Member - NFO	Tonga	Online
22	Member - NFO	Tonga	In person
23	Member - NFO	Tonga	In person
24	Member - NFO	Tonga	In person
25	Member - NFO	Tonga	In person
26	Member - NFO	Tuvalu	Online
27	Member - Other government agency	Fiji	In person
28	Partner - Government agency	Australia	Online
29	Partner - Government agency	Australia	Online
30	Partner - Government agency	New Zealand	Online
31	Partner - Government agency	New Zealand	Online
32	Partner - NGO	Palau	Online
33	Partner - NGO	Palau	Online
34	Partner - Project	Fiji	Online
35	Partner - University	Australia	Online
36	Partner - University	Fiji	Online
37	Partner - University	RMI	Online
38	SPC	New Caledonia	Online
39	SPC	New Caledonia	Online
40	SPC	New Caledonia	Online
41	SPC	New Caledonia	Online
42	SPC - Project staff	Australia	Online
43	SPC - Project staff	Fiji	In person
44	SPC -Project staff	New Caledonia	Online
45	SPC - Project staff	New Caledonia	Online
46	SPC - Project staff	New Caledonia	Online
47	SPC - Project staff	New Caledonia	Online
48	SPC - Intern	Fiji	In person

Number	Stakeholder group	Country location	Interview type
49	SPC - Intern	Fiji	In person
50	SPC - Intern	Fiji	In person
51	Supplier	Fiji	In person

Annex 3: Data analysis framework

Key evaluation questions (discuss and refine indicative questions from the RFQ with FAME)	Document review/secondary data	Interview: PICT govt	Interviews: business, community	Interviews: SPC	Interviews: Donor	Interviews: Other stakeholders	Survey
Relevance and Coherence							
1 How well the goals and objectives of the SCoFA and PaFMaC activities align with regional priorities.	✓	✓		✓	✓		
2 How relevant is SCoFA and PaFMaC to the priority needs of PICTs (Pacific Island countries and Territories)?	✓	✓		✓	✓		
3 How well aligned are the two activities with other related DFAT, MFAT, and USAID projects?				✓	✓		
4 Is the design of two activities still relevant for now and the near future? What, if anything, needs to be changed going forward?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Effectiveness							
5 What key outputs have been achieved to date? Are they reaching the intended beneficiaries? 6 What progress has been made to date against the short- and medium-term outcomes described in the theory of changes for both activities?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
7 What (if any) unintended outcomes (positive and negative) were there? If negative, how are these being addressed?	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
8 What is working well and why? What is not working so well, for whom, why, and what should be done?	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Efficiency (value for money)							
9 Have outputs been achieved in a timely manner? If yes/no - why?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
10 To what extent are the activities being structured, managed and delivered efficiently? Are there any concerns with efficiency? What improvements can be considered?	✓	✓		✓	✓		
11 How effective is the process used to prioritise member requests for work under the two activities? Are there opportunities to improve the prioritisation process?	✓	✓		✓			

Impact							
12 What positive and negative medium- and long-term impacts at the sub-national, national, and regional levels have resulted from the two activities?	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
13 What are barriers/gaps for impacts to happen? For the people trained in MCS, it will be critical to know what are the barriers that hampers the trained officers from implementing an effective MCS work or simply to use what they have learned and trained for?	✓	✓	✓	✓			
14 Are any adjustments required to the existing indicators to measure success at impact level?	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Sustainability							
15 To what extent will the projects' contributions continue over time? What critical success factors are in place to ensure sustainability?		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
16 Do the current funding arrangements support sustainability and continuity of the work going forward? What are the key challenges to ensuring long-term benefits to address these challenges?		✓		✓	✓		
Relationship between partners, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders							
17 How well is engagement and partnership with key stakeholder groups (governments, NGOs/CSOs, research and academic institutions, aquaculture enterprises and communities) being managed to ensure shared ownership and sustainability of intended outcomes?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18 How has the implementation approach, and the engagement of MFAT/DFAT and USAID impacted on the delivery?		✓		✓	✓		
19 How effective has the coordination been between the SCoFA, PaFMaC, OFOF activities and other related initiatives in the region?		✓		✓			
Cross-cutting issues							
20 Gender and social inclusion. To what extent are the two activities contributing to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, people with disabilities in all their diversities?	✓	✓	✓	✓			
21 Climate change. To what extent are the two activities contributing to PICTs being better equipped to address impacts of Climate Change?	✓	✓	✓	✓			
22 Traditional Knowledge. To what extent are the two activities contributing to effective use of Traditional Knowledge in decision making?	✓	✓	✓	✓			

Annex 4: Data tables – survey

Q1. Which of the following best describes your organisation?		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
Government	85.33%	64
University, research or other academic institution	5.33%	4
Non-government or civil society organisation	4.0%	3
Donor / funder	4.0%	3
CROP agency	0.0%	0
Private sector	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	1.33%	1
	Answered	75

Q2. How does your organisation collaborate or partner with SPC?		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
We provide funding to SPC (donor partner)	6.67%	5
We partner with SPC to deliver activities (implementing partner)	6.67%	5
We receive training or other support from SPC	84.0%	63
Other (please specify)	2.67%	2
	Answered	75

Q3. What country or territory are you based in?	
Answered	75
Skipped	0

Q4. What are your priorities for improving coastal fisheries management, MCS or aquaculture?	
Answered	69
Skipped	6

Q5. Planning collaborative action							
Answer Choices	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Responses
The managers in each organisation support the partnership	2	0	0	8	12	0	22.0
Partners have the necessary skills for collaborative action	1	0	1	8	12	0	22.0
All partners are involved in planning and setting priorities for collaborative action	1	0	0	11	10	0	22.0
The lines of communication, roles and expectations of partners are clear	1	0	1	11	9	0	22.0
There is a participatory decision-making system that is accountable, responsive and inclusive	1	0	2	12	7	0	22.0
Comments							6.0
						Answered	22

Q6. Implementing collaborative action							
Answer Choices	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Responses
The action is adding value (rather than duplicating services) for the community, clients or agencies involved	1	0	0	12	9	0	22.0
There are regular opportunities for informal and voluntary contact between staff from the different agencies involved	1	2	0	12	7	0	22.0
There has been a core group of skilled and committed staff (in terms of the partnership) over the life of the partnership	1	0	0	10	10	1	22.0

The perceived benefits of the partnership outweigh the perceived costs	1	1	1	10	8	1	22.0
There are adequate processes in place for resolving disputes	1	1	5	8	5	2	22.0
Comments							6.0
						Answered	22

Q7. Reflecting on and continuing the partnership							
Answer Choices	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Responses
There are processes for recognising and celebrating collective achievements and/or individual contributions	0	2	3	13	4	0	22.0
The partnership can demonstrate or document the outcomes of its collective work	1	0	0	15	6	0	22.0
There is a clear need for and commitment to continuing the collaboration in the medium term	1	0	0	10	11	0	22.0
There are resources available from either internal or external sources to continue the partnership	1	1	2	13	4	1	22.0
Comments							5.0
						Answered	22

Q8. Have you received any training from SPC in coastal fisheries management or aquaculture between 2022 and 2024 (the last two years)? E.g. legislation, policy, MCS, aquatic biosecurity, aquaculture, etc.		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
Yes	66.67%	50
No	30.67%	23
Unsure	2.67%	2
	Answered	75

Q9. In the past 2 years, which of the following training have you received from SPC? Tick all that apply		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
Aquatic biosecurity	6.25%	3
Coastal fisheries MCS and enforcement	52.08%	25
Cert IV in CFA compliance	18.75%	9
Legislative drafting	10.42%	5
Coastal fisheries management plans	20.83%	10
Sea cucumber hatchery and grow out	4.17%	2
Tilapia (hatchery production, nutrition, feed and/or site selection)	14.58%	7
Other (please specify)	18.75%	9
	Answered	48

Q10. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:						
Answer Choices	Strong disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Responses
I gained new skills or knowledge from the workshop/training	4	0	0	21	23	48.0
I tried to implement something from the workshop/training but it did not work	4	10	8	17	7	46.0
My manager was supportive of me implementing skills gained	2	6	3	25	10	46.0
I have taught others in my office skills learned at the workshop/training	2	0	3	31	11	47.0
Comments						13.0
					Answered	48

Q11. Have you done anything differently in your work as a result of the training? If yes, please provide one example	
Answered	42
Skipped	33

Q12. What challenges have you faced in implementing learning from the training?	
Answered	44
Skipped	31

Q13. What value does SPC add to coastal fisheries management, MCS or aquaculture?	
Answered	53
Skipped	22

Q14. Please rate the effectiveness of SPC in carrying out each of the following activities:							
Answer Choices	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Don't know	Responses
Coordinating communication among partners and organisations involved	1	0	10	26	27	2	66.0
Organising project activities, including meetings, training and technical support	1	1	9	22	32	1	66.0
Managing grants and funds	1	2	8	22	26	7	66.0
Preparing materials and knowledge products	1	1	5	24	33	2	66.0
Evaluating the progress and impact of the projects	0	4	15	18	21	7	65.0
Comments							13.0
						Answered	66

Q15. Please rate the SPC's effectiveness in the following:							
Answer Choices	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Don't know	Responses
Fostering respect, trust, inclusiveness and openness	0	2	6	26	33	0	67.0
Creating an environment where differences of opinion can be voiced	1	0	9	23	32	1	66.0
Combining the perspectives, resources and skills of partners	0	2	6	29	29	1	67.0

Helping partners be creative and look at things differently	0	1	8	26	31	1	67.0
Working with diverse people and organisations	1	1	7	21	35	2	67.0
Comments							12.0
						Answered	67

Q16. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with SPC in relation to the following:							
Answer Choices	Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Highly satisfied	Don't know	Responses
Fairness in financial resource sharing	1	1	10	30	22	3	67.0
Fairness in providing capacity building opportunities	0	4	5	26	30	2	67.0
Effective communication	0	2	3	26	35	1	67.0
Effective conflict management	0	1	13	25	20	8	67.0
Respectful and ethical conduct	0	0	3	28	35	1	67.0
Comments							9.0
						Answered	67

Q17. What are the most significant outcomes SPC has helped to achieve in coastal fisheries management and aquaculture (e.g. legislation, policy, MCS, aquatic biosecurity, CBFM)? Please provide specific examples.	
Answered	55
Skipped	20

Q18. Please provide any available supporting evidence for the examples provided in the question above	
Answered	8
Skipped	67

Q19. Do you think these changes will continue over time? Are there any challenges to maintaining these improvements over time?	
Answered	50
Skipped	25

Q20. What do you think SPC could do to further improve its contribution to coastal fisheries management, MCS and aquaculture? Please provide specific examples.

Answered	51
Skipped	24

Q21. Do you have any other thoughts or comments to add?	
Answered	41
Skipped	34

Q22. Finally, below are some questions to help us understand a bit more about you. All responses will be treated confidentially, this additional information just helps us understand the sample who responded to the survey:		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
Gender	100.0%	56
Preferred language	100.0%	56
Organisation (optional)	69.64%	39
	Answered	56

Annex 5: SCoFA and PaFMaC staffing

Table 14: FAME CFAP SCoFA, PaFMaC and related PEUMP staffing

Position	Type	Site	Start	SCoFA / PEUMP (%)	PaFMaC (%)
Deputy Director (CFAP)	Existing	NOU	-	SCoFA (10)	PaFMaC (5)
Principal Fisheries Adviser (Mgmt. & Livelihoods)	Existing	NOU	-	SCoFA (10)	PaFMaC (10)
Principal Aquaculture Adviser	Replacement	SUV	Aug 2022	SCoFA (15)	
Coastal Fisheries & Aquaculture Legal Adviser	Existing	NOU	-	SCoFA (100)	
MCS Adviser (CF&A)	New	NOU	Aug 2022	SCoFA (50)	PaFMaC (50)
Community-Based Fisheries Adviser	New	NOU	Apr 2023	SCoFA (100)	
Projects Manager (CFAP)	New	NOU	May 2022	SCoFA (60)	PaFMaC (40)
Aquatic Biosecurity Specialist	New	NOU	Jul 2022	SCoFA (100)	
Coastal Fisheries Management & Policy Specialist	Existing	NOU	-	SCoFA (100)	
Coastal Fisheries Information Technology Officer/Trainer (vacant)	New	NOU	-	SCoFA (30) & PEUMP (70) for 2024. SCoFA (100) from 2025	
MCS Officer (CF&A)	New	FSM	Jul 2022		PaFMaC (100)
MCS Officer (CF&A)	New	SUV	Jul 2022		PaFMaC (100)
Legal Officer (CF&A)	Replacement	NOU	May 2024		PaFMaC (100)
Legal Officer (CF&A)	New	NOU	May 2024	SCoFA (70)	PaFMaC (30)
Information and Outreach Officer	Existing	NOU	-	SCoFA (25) PEUMP (75)	
Aquaculture Officer	New	SUV	Aug 2022	SCoFA (100)	
Aquaculture Technical Officer	New	SUV	Jun 2022	SCoFA (100)	
Pacific Island Fisheries Professional (Fisheries Management and Policy)	New	NOU	Mar 2023- Mar 2024	SCoFA (100)	
Pacific Island Fisheries Professional (MCS/Legal)	New	NOU	-		PaFMaC (100)
Senior Administrative Assistant	Existing	NOU	-	SCoFA (34)	
Administrative Assistant	New	NOU	Dec 2022	SCoFA (100)	

Position	Type	Site	Start	SCoFA / PEUMP (%)	PaFMaC (%)
Administrative Assistant – Fiji (vacant)	Replacement	SUV	-	SCoFA (100)	
Senior Administrative Assistant	New	NOU	Jan 2023		PaFMaC (100)
Information and Outreach Assistant (CF&A)	New	NOU	Sep 2022		PaFMaC (100)

Source: SPC