



Solomon Islands Government

Solomon Islands National Strategy for the Management of Inshore Fisheries and Marine Resources 2010 - 2012

OUR APPROACH TO INSHORE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT:

- The inshore strategy encompasses priorities and activities to meet national and international obligations towards sustainable management and utilization of inshore resources. The document will be a living document and implemented over a two year period and is to be reviewed every two years to meet the changing environment.

VISION

Sustainable and secure inshore fisheries and aquatic resources by 2020

Multi-scale, Multi-sectoral Governance

Pillar 1

Community-based Resource Management

Pillar 2

Leadership and Institutional Strengthening

Pillar 3

Market and Trade

Pillar 4

Communication and Information

Pillar 5

PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

The political and socio-economic stability of Solomon Islands depends on the security and well-being of the rural sector which comprises more than 70 percent of the current 550,000 - 580,000 population. More than 70% of the population relies heavily on subsistence agriculture and fishing for sustenance and livelihood security. Subsistence fisheries are dominated by small scale and artisanal fisheries that work from shore or use small boats in coastal waters. The Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, The Hon Dr Derek Sikua, has stated that "... the self-sufficiency of the subsistence community is an asset that must not be overlooked or undermined. We have a degree of self-sufficiency that provides an important protection from the risk of vulnerability." Existing or near-future threats to inshore fisheries resources in Solomon Islands include rapid population growth, logging, mining and inappropriate land use practices, the growth of the cash economy at the local level and climate change.

Inshore fisheries and marine resources play a critical and unique role in the rural economy and social livelihood

status of Solomon Islands supplying daily protein and serving as one of the few sources of cash for villagers and rural coastal people. The broad threats facing the country such as climate change and rapid population growth are particularly relevant to the inshore fisheries status. A major and known threat is simply catching too many fish.

It is improbable that the catch from Solomon Islands inshore fisheries will increase sufficiently to meet the projected deficit in fish supply as the population continues to grow. One third of the current population of Solomon Islands is under 15 years old. The current population growth of 4.4% is one of the highest in the world and is unlikely to reduce significantly given the current demographic profile.

Fisheries management must focus on: (i) securing the productivity of inshore fisheries and where necessary restoring the productivity of degraded or collapsed fisheries (e.g. *bêche de mer* and *trochus*), (ii) increasing the benefits (\$s and/or food) from catch through reduced wastage and improved product quality and markets and (iii) increasing the capacity of communities to adapt to change, including external forces such as climate change.



Fortunately, Solomon Islands has many strengths on which to build effective management of inshore fisheries and marine resources. The most important of these are its people and social capital. In the great majority of districts and villages, traditional and church authorities are strong and provide the necessary institutional foundation for people to reinvigorate their stewardship of their own resources. The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) believes that coastal communities are the best managers of their fisheries and marine resources and seeks to work as partners in securing the potential of these resources.

This strategy provides the direction and path MFMR believes it needs to take to achieve a sustainable and secure inshore fisheries sector. This recognition requires the role of MFMR to shift from prescriptive management and compliance to a one of facilitation that supports local community management and its adaptation to meet modern threats and opportunities. MFMR also recognizes the need for clear and agreed roles across local, provincial and national management. MFMR further recognizes that effective daily management of fisheries and marine resources by traditional owners can only be possible if coastal communities' traditional rights, experiences and knowledge are respected in legal and regulatory frameworks.

Collectively, the movement of inshore and coastal resources into local management will contribute to poverty reduction and lessen the vulnerability to future food scarcity while increasing livelihood opportunities. The successful development of community-based management also provides a platform for the implementation of sound environmental practices and sustainable economic development for the benefit of all Solomon Islanders.

In the absence of a clear and targeted national direction, the inshore fisheries sector has suffered from ineffective management with limited benefits flowing to the people of the



Solomon Islands. Most Solomon Island coastal communities have confronted their coastal and inshore fisheries management challenges alone, or with limited support from local, regional and international organizations. International organizations have provided valuable assistance but their effectiveness is constrained because they are not mandated by the Government to discharge the powers and functions of the Fisheries Act. While authority rests with MFMR, there is a clear agreement on the need to achieve its sector goals through coordinated and supportive partnerships with coastal communities and other key stakeholders.

Community-based management, which can draw on the strengths of kastom systems, is becoming more important and desirable, offering significant cost efficiencies to national Government and providing more effective outcomes. This is particularly the case in remote coastal areas and in other circumstances where centralized controls are ineffective. Consistent with this approach, MFMR recognizes that governance of inshore resources needs to be placed within the broader rural development context.

The Government of Solomon Islands is working quickly to empower and support communities in this process of securing benefits. The new Fisheries Act will provide a legal basis for communities to manage their marine resources. The passage of the Act through parliament will mark the starting point for re-energizing inshore fisheries management. However, implementing the Act is the difficult and necessary next phase in securing the benefits of inshore fisheries for the future. The Inshore Fisheries Strategy will address the needs within the national Government (through MFMR), provincial fisheries agencies, and local communities for building capacity, support systems and processes to encourage more effective local management.

Work to achieve the vision of this strategy is organized under five pillars and is guided by ten principles that underpin the intent of the strategy. Within each pillar, key activities are recognized along with timelines to complete them.

TEN PRINCIPLES

1. The strategy is people-centered consisting of a process in which management is developed and customized to the Solomon Islands.
2. The strategy promotes the development of management approaches from national objectives that allows fisheries to absorb stress following disturbances such as climate change, rural development and over-fishing. It does this by securing the sustainable flow of benefits from inshore resources and the wider ecosystem.
3. The strategy takes an ecosystem based approach to sustainable inshore resource management. In the context of Solomon Islands this encompasses resilience to variability, adaptation to climate change, and biodiversity conservation in watersheds and coastal zones.
4. The strategy provides and strengthens an enabling environment (e.g. legal and institutional framework) that supports communities and promotes the use of tradition, authority and knowledge in their management endeavors while ensuring coordination of national interests as expressed in other policies and law.
5. The strategy provides a multi-sectoral approach to fisheries governance, incorporating land use, wider ecosystem health and other economic activities. It will address both potential threats to fisheries and opportunities to reduce dependence and vulnerability. This will require integration of policy and implementation among ministries at national and provincial level. Such integration will mirror the integrated nature of peoples' lives and the social fabric of communities.

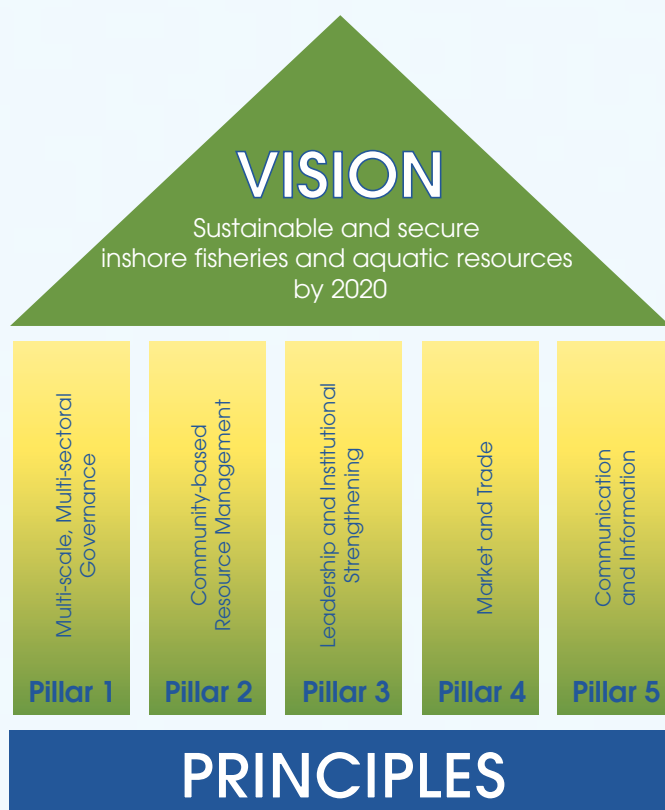


6. Management of inshore resources should be self-sustaining and cost-effective. Although external investment will be required in the medium-term, the overall objective must be to make this strategy fundable from Solomon Islands resources. Management of coastal resources and inshore fisheries needs to be viewed as a national responsibility of the Government and attract commensurate budgetary support.
7. Management that 'learns by doing' (adaptive management) is the most appropriate approach in the low capacity, low data and high uncertainty context of Solomon Islands. As such, the priority in this strategy is to use existing and traditional knowledge as opposed to creating new science.
8. The strategy promotes information sharing and learning through networking and channels of communication that will make the system of governance in the country more resilient to failures.
9. The strategy recognizes the importance of using the precautionary approach in fisheries management. If a community's fishery is threatened or in danger of being overfished, then recognizing the need to change is a critical step towards its recovery.
10. The strategy recognizes and nurtures leaders to act as agents of change at all levels of the management and governance network.

FIVE PILLARS

The Inshore Fisheries Strategy is built on five pillars that will organize the key activities needed to be completed in order to achieve MFMR's vision of sustainable inshore marine resource management by 2020. The five pillars of the strategy are:

1. **Multi-Scale, Multi-Sectoral Governance:** Effective resource management requires actions at the three primary scales of governance: national, provincial and community. Further, it will require the integration of policy and action among sectors, such as health, environment and education to better reflect the factors that influence the lives of people.
2. **Community-Based Resource Management:** The strategy recognizes that community-based initiatives will be the driving force of sustainable economic development in the inshore marine resource sector. Key activities in this pillar include developing and refining community-based management plans and promoting livelihood diversification/supplementation strategies to reduce dependence on capture fisheries.



3. **Leadership and Institutional Strengthening:** The long-term sustainability of the sector is dependent on building Solomon Island capacity at national, provincial and community level. A critical component of success will be to recognize and nurture leaders as agents of change at all levels.
4. **Markets and Trade:** Ensuring that small-scale producers maximize the value received from their resources is critical to long-term success. Access to markets and equitable sharing of profits from the sale of inshore and marine resources need to be a focus of this strategy.
5. **Communication and Information:** Efficient communication and sharing of information within the ministry and among key stakeholders determines the success of the overall inshore program through better coordination and implementation. This will be achieved by developing of capacity, providing an enabling environment in policy development, and making available appropriate technology and resources such as databases and GIS technology.

This strategy is underpinned by an implementation plan that details the 'what', 'when', 'how' and 'whom' of getting the job done.

KEY ACTIVITIES FOR EACH PILLAR

5a. Multi-Scale Governance

- Approve and gazette Fisheries Act 2010 by end 2010
- Amend Fisheries Regulations (penalties) by end 2010
- Amend Fisheries Regulations (fees) by end 2010
- Develop at least one provincial action plan each year to stimulate the implementation of this strategy at the provincial level
- Develop a national policy brief for inshore resource management by end 2010
- Update provincial fisheries ordinances in two provinces by end 2011
- Incorporate fisheries issues in HIES and census programs by end 2012
- Convene two meetings of the Fisheries Advisory Council each year
- Develop national regulatory framework for pearl culture industry by end 2011
- Integrate fisheries policies across relevant ministries, particularly Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Meteorology by June 2011
- Amend inshore fisheries license procedures by end of 2012

5b. Community-Based Resource Management

- Develop national management plans for key commercial species: bêche-de-mer (end 2010),



trochus (end 2012), corals (end 2012), dolphins (end 2011) and LRFFT (end 2011)

- Develop and implement management plans in 50 community-owned marine tenure or clusters of community owned marine tenure in identified provinces by end 2011. The long-term aim of this activity is to have communities sustainably managing their resources using community-based management plans.
- Coordinate activities of NGOs and strengthen the role of SILMMA in integrating NGO initiatives within MFMR's inshore resources strategy by end 2010
- Develop assessment programmes to underpin policy advice in three national fisheries plans by end 2012
- Develop information systems to monitor trends in key fisheries and species by end 2012
- Test biodiversity conservation measures in at least two sites by end of 2012
- As part of community-based initiatives, deploy at least three inshore FADs in all provinces by end 2011
- Test livelihood supplementation options for at least three fishery dependent communities in three provinces by end 2011
- Develop the National Tilapia Plan by end 2010
- Test seaweed livelihood options in two new provinces by end 2010

5c. Leadership and Institutional Strengthening

- Finalize inshore fisheries management division within MFMR by end 2010
- Strengthen provincial government and fisheries capacity in at least two provinces by end 2011



- Create fisheries forums to network provincial government and community leaders in at least two provinces by end 2011
- Identify and support appropriate networks and forums for knowledge exchange among and within scales of government by end 2011

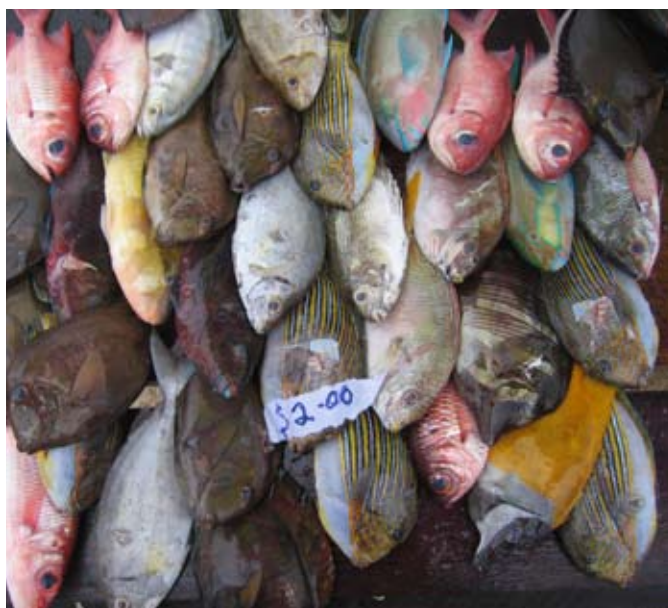
5d. Markets and Trade

- Develop a marketing and trade information database by end 2012
- Build fisheries capacity of 60 rural fishers in SYFB and other fisheries related training programs by end 2012
- Develop a national marketing and trade strategy for inshore fisheries by end 2011
- Develop and test models of small-scale producer networks and value chain improvement in at least one province by end 2010
- Test the viability of commercial-scale pearl culture in Solomon Islands by end 2012
- Complete an analysis of fish value chains in at least three provinces by end 2011

5e. Communication and Information Systems

- Develop a inshore fisheries communication strategy by end 2011

- Amend the inshore database system by end 2011
- Amend appropriate inshore statistics information sheets by end 2010
- Develop a research protocol for international institutions and individuals by end 2010
- Improve communication by installing radios in five provincial fisheries offices by end of 2011



For further details contact:



Solomon Islands Government
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES

P. O. Box G13
Honiara, Solomon Islands

Photo credits

Front top banner : Anne-Maree Schwarz
Page 2 : (left) Alex Tewfik
(right) Anne-Maree Schwarz
Page 3 : Mike McCoy
Page 5 : (left) Jeff Kinch,
(right) Mike McCoy
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