BLUE ECONOMY IN THE PACIFIC REGION

Case Study: The sustainable management of tuna resources

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The Blue Economy embraces a wide range of aspirational, cultural and pressing economic influences – all evident in the Pacific Islands region and encapsulated in the concept of sustainable development.
Regionalism and regional cooperation feature prominently in efforts to promote the Blue Economy in the Pacific region.

The establishment of the Forum Fisheries Agency in 1979 to help countries better manage their shared offshore tuna resources typifies such action.
Today, the key regional and sub-regional bodies and in respect of fisheries management include:

**Forum Fisheries Agency** - Honiara, Solomon Islands

**Pacific Community** – Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division – Noumea, New Caledonia

**Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA)** – Majuro, Marshall Islands

**Te Vaka Moana** – Rarotonga, Cook Islands

**Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)** – Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.
Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (1979)

Membership now at 17

Mission: To drive regional cooperation to create and enable the maximum long term social and economic benefit from the sustainable use of our shared offshore fishery resources.
WCPO and FFA waters
Tuna fisheries in other oceans mainly occur on the high seas.
Importance of Tuna to Pacific Island Countries

To the rest of the World

- 25,000 jobs

To the Pacific Island Countries

- More than 40% of Govt. revenue in 5 countries
- Food security
- Development opportunities
Key facts about WCPO Fishery

- 2015 total tuna catch 2.7m MT (worth USD4.8b) representing about 60% of global tuna catch
- Around 60% of WCPO catch from FFA waters (1/3 global catch by volume).
- 4 key target species are Skipjack, Yellowfin, Bigeye, Albacore
- Main fishing methods Purse seine. Longline
Western Pacific Ocean in Context

Tuna catch by Ocean Basin (2014)

- Western Pacific Ocean: 2,846,280
- Indian Ocean: 646,081
- Eastern Pacific Ocean: 465,367

Pacific EEZs versus Ocean Basins

- Indian Ocean: 832,138
- Kiribati EEZ: 706,782
- Eastern Pacific ocean: 646,081
- Indonesia: 494,654
- Atlantic Ocean: 465,367
- Papua New Guinea: 343,806
FFA

Catch by gear

[Bar chart showing catch by gear from 1960 to 2014. The chart includes categories such as PURSE SEINE, OTHER, POLE-AND-LINE, and LONLINE.]
488,208 km
NOSE TO TAIL THE SKIPJACK ALONE
WOULD MAKE THE DISTANCE TO THE
DARK SIDE OF THE MOON... AND
BEYOND!

DISTANCE FROM EARTH TO THE MOON
384,400 km

DIAMETER OF THE MOON
3,474.8 km

THERE IS SOME MORE...
100,333.2 km
The Regional Roadmap

- High level 10-year plan developed by Ministers and endorsed by the last Forum Leaders’ meeting;

- Covers oceanic fisheries (economic development) and coastal fisheries (food security);

- Clear goals and strategies with Annual ‘report card’ to measure progress.
Stock Status Overview

- 3 main stocks accounting for 95% of the catch are ‘biologically healthy’
- BET the main focus of management action, but some by-catch - species of sharks - are severely overfished
- Albacore longline fisheries becoming uneconomic due to depletion of large adults caught by the fishery
- LRPs and TRPs
Challenges

- Effective regional management of tuna – e.g. Vessel Day Scheme
- Combatting IUU Fishing
- New technologies
- Economic challenges:
  - Market access
  - Lack of infrastructure
  - Transportation and utility costs
- Ensuring domestication generates net value.
Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing pursued through a range of surveillance, legal and regulatory means.
Opportunities

- Economic opportunities for members:
  - Access Fees
  - Enhanced GDP
  - Domestication of fleets
  - Onshore processing
  - Exports
  - Food Security

- Sustainably managed resource for future generations

- South-South Cooperation
Long history of regional cooperation led by FFA

Growth in capacity evident

Strong growth in returns arising from e.g. PNA’s Vessel Day Scheme

Robust management measures needed with better cooperation from DWFNs.

Slowly overcoming inequity in returns to Pacific Island Countries.

Bartering for reject fish from foreign vessel-Honiara
The offshore fisheries Sector encapsulates many of the basic principles of a Blue Economy; including

- **Sustainable management** of a key marine resource
- **Respect for environment** and fair treatment of all participants in the sector
- **Regional cooperation**
- Developing countries **taking control** of their own resources management
- **Support from donors** & market countries to help meet agreed priorities & **secure market access**.
The new Pacific EU Marine Partnership Programme will support sustainable management and development of fisheries for food security and economic growth, while addressing climate change resilience and conservation of marine biodiversity. It will be implemented by a consortium of regional agencies (SPC, FFA, SPREP and USP) over 5 years, with a budget of 45 million Euros (35 million EDF and 10 million provided by Sweden).

EU SUPPORTS PACIFIC FISHERIES:

- Market Access
- National and Regional Development Assistance (DevFish, PEUMP)
- Efforts to combat IUU

- Also represents the interests of its own fleets in the region.
- Euro-centric fisheries management not necessarily the best
UN Oceans Conference – the “Call for Action” is 13q “13.
We call on all stakeholders to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development by taking, inter alia, the following actions on an urgent basis, including by building on existing institutions and partnerships: … (q) Support the promotion and strengthening of sustainable ocean-based economies, which inter alia build on sustainable activities such as fisheries, tourism, aquaculture, maritime transportation, renewable energies, marine biotechnology, and sea water desalination, as means to achieve the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, in particular for SIDS and LDCs”
SDGs most relevant to the “blue economy” concept is 14.7 “By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.”