

Contribution of SPC (the Pacific Community) to the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, on the theme “Capacity building and the transfer of marine technology: New developments, approaches and challenges”.

This contribution provides information on “Capacity building and the transfer of marine technology: New developments, approaches and challenges” in the Pacific Region, as a contribution from SPC (The Pacific Community). SPC is conducting capacity building activities through its technical divisions, mainly FAME (Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems) and GEM (Geoscience, Energy and Maritime).

- A primary role of SPC is to increase capacity in its member countries to uptake the outputs of scientific research and technical analysis to enhance the sustainable utilisation of renewable resources.
- SPC has long-running national capacity building programmes enhancing both tuna fishery data management systems to ensure regional data provision and the interpretation of the outputs of regional tuna stock assessments to support management decisions.
- SPC is a key component of the Pacific fisheries observer training programme, defining the standards for observers and as part of the regional network, implementing observer training courses at the national and regional level to ensure information is effectively and consistently collected.
- Following the agreement to adopt the harvest strategy approach for key tuna species within the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, SPC has implemented national, sub-regional and regional capacity building workshops on the development of tuna harvest strategies to enable members to review and refine candidate strategies for adoption.
- Consistent with the increased focus on climate change impacts on oceanic fisheries within the Pacific region, SPC has delivered workshops on the latest climate science and analyses to highlight the regional implications for tuna fisheries management.
- Supported by regional partners, SPC has undertaken training around the implementation of ‘close-kin mark recapture’ techniques to enhance understanding of tuna population dynamics and abundance. This work has included capacity development in biological sampling and storage and analysis.
- SPC has created a network of Pacific Early Career Ocean Professionals (Pacific ECOP) to support Pacific Islands Countries and Territories Ocean Offices and engage with young people in the Ocean Science sector. The placement and internship program aims to build leadership capacity and empower Pacific ECOPs in the Ocean sector.
- SPC provides capacity-building support for Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) to its member countries, focusing on the technical, scientific, and governance aspects of sustainable marine resource management.
- SPC delivered specialised training in spatial prioritisation tools such as Marxan to enhance technical skills at the national level. These training programmes enable member countries to map and analyse marine resources effectively, supporting evidence-based decision-making.

- Ecosystem-based management is a core focus of SPC's MSP activities, integrating knowledge of marine biodiversity and climate resilience.
- SPC supports its members in aligning MSP efforts with regional governance strategies, such as the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, and international commitments, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) ensuring coherence with global conservation and sustainability objectives.
- To foster regional collaboration, SPC facilitates knowledge-sharing and technical exchanges among stakeholders. These efforts are complemented by leadership training initiatives aimed at developing a skilled workforce capable of advancing the region's MSP priorities.
- SPC remains committed to supporting the Pacific region with the tools, knowledge, and expertise needed to implement effective and sustainable climate smart MSP.
- The work of the Pacific Community (SPC) in assisting Pacific Island Countries (PICs) with the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is vital for maintaining sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction over their maritime zones.
- Through technical support, SPC helps the PICs map and delimit their maritime boundaries by carrying out field surveys, using satellite technology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). SPC also supports PICs in the legal front by drafting treaty documents, maritime zones legislations and regulations. This process can be referenced via the maritime boundary and extended continental shelf pathway. This ensures that maritime claims are based on accurate, scientifically backed data, fulfilling the requirements set by UNCLOS.
- As of now, 75% of the maritime boundaries in the Pacific region have been formalized through Treaties, leaving 25% still to be addressed. SPC is now focussing on completing the remaining 25% of maritime boundaries by working closely with PICs and consortium of partners to resolve the outstanding maritime boundaries pathway.
- This effort involves crucial technical and legal tasks such as negotiations, capacity building workshops, finalizing boundary delimitations and operationalizing the agreed-upon maritime zones through bilateral sessions with countries and the Pacific maritime boundary working sessions.
- By addressing these remaining boundaries, SPC is helping to solidify the legal framework that governs the maritime space of Pacific Island countries, ensuring that the enjoyment of ocean resources, sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction over their maritime zones are maintained and respected regardless of the physical impacts of climate change related sea level rise.

SPC Contributors :

-J. Aucan
 -G. Pilling
 -S. Bailey
 -T. Kabasi
 -M. Vakautawale

For correspondence : Dr Jerome Aucan, Head-Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Sciences (PCCOS)
 Pacific Community CPS – B.P. D5 | 98848 Noumea, New Caledonia
 Tel: (687) 26 20 00 | Ext: 31124
 Email : jeromea@spc.int