

Regional Aquaculture Highlights from the Pacific Islands

Masanami Izumi

FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands (SAP), Samoa
Masanami.Izumi@fao.org

Development of aquaculture in the Pacific region has intensified during the last couple of years. During biennium 2008-2009, FAO continued to provide support to our members through a number of aquaculture projects (TCP/CKI/3201, TCP/MAS/3101, TCP/MIC/3201 and TCP/NAU/3201) including a new 2010 TCP facility (TCP/RAS/3301) that were implemented by SAP and supported by FAO technical officers from headquarters. They are briefly described below.

Learning lessons from aquaculture developments in Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu

At the 8th Meeting of FAO South West Ministers for Agriculture held in Niue, 20-22 May 2009 (see photo, right), the importance of aquaculture to food security in the Pacific Island countries was stressed. The Meeting urged countries to further strengthen national capacities in the sustainable development and sound management of aquaculture, and became the basis for requesting FAO to undertake this regional overview of aquaculture development. Project TCP/RAS/3301 “Regional overview of aquaculture development in the Pacific – lessons learned” is designed to review aquaculture development and document the lessons learned from past experience as well as on-going aquaculture activities in selected countries in the Pacific region. Although development is relatively slow in the region, most countries are keen to move forward its commercial development. The sector lacks national legal frameworks, development policies and guidelines and have been frequently affected by natural disasters (cyclone/typhoon, drought, floods). Other constraints are related to infrastructure, financial resources, technical capacities, marketing scheme, information and other vital inputs (e.g. seed, feed). While many aquaculture initiatives (i.e. development projects and studies) were implemented and completed as planned, on their completion, the findings and recommendations did not provide the countries with complete and favourable answers for the further development of aquaculture in respective countries. Thus, an overview of sectoral development at national and regional levels are being undertaken to further guide the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector in the region.



D. Schulz, FAO/SAP

8th Meeting of FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture, Niue, 20-22 May 2009

The immediate focus of this review is to determine the real economic opportunities to be provided by aquaculture development. The draft overview report is expected before end of 2010 and will be reported in future issues of FAN.

Enhancing capacity on understanding and applying risk analysis in aquaculture in the Marshall Islands and in Federated States of Micronesia

The region was first introduced to the basics of risk analysis and its application to aquaculture in 2007 during the Regional Workshop on Implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture and Aquatic Biosecurity organized by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and supported by FAO. Since then, interest in risk analysis came forward from the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. Two national workshops held in May 2008 in Majuro (TCP/MAS/3101) and May 2010 in Pohnpei (TCP/MIC/3201), respectively. The Majuro workshop raised awareness on the value of risk analysis as a decision-making tool, the principles and processes involved as well as the different risks affecting aquaculture. The Pohnpei workshop went much further and as part of learning the basics of the risk analysis process used three translocation scenarios as working group exercises which made the learning curve of participants much more practical and efficient. This project is also finalising training tool on risk analysis which can be used by national trainers. On another occasion as



M. Izumi, FAO

Newspaper clip of the technical training conducted by FAO in May 2010 under project TCP/CKI/3201, through the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR)

part of the Project Terminal Workshop (June 2009) of TCP/RAS/3101 “Sustainable aquaculture development on Pacific Micronesia” participating countries from such as Palau, FSM, and Marshall Islands were again given a brief opportunity for further understanding the concepts, principles and application of risk analysis.

Progress with aquaculture development projects in Cook Islands, Palau, Nauru

Cook Islands: Under the project TCP/CKI/3201, through the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR), interested farmers were provided with technical training on culture and post-harvest techniques (pond preparation, fertilization, water quality sampling, feed formulation and management, hatchery operations and management for tilapia and milkfish; tilapia sex identification and sex reversal techniques; eradication of unwanted species; and milkfish deboning) that will enhance their knowledge from current existing farming practices to improve productivity using better management practices. Aside from the practical training provided to fishfarmers, market and financial feasibility studies will also be undertaken for both commodities.

Palau: This sub-regional project, TCP/RAS/3101, was completed shortly after the Project Terminal Workshop held in June 2009. A major outcome was a National Aquaculture Strategy for Palau and capacity development for participating nationals of Micronesia countries (Palau, FSM, Marshall Islands) on aspects related to developing national strategy on aquaculture and risk assessment. Further assistance from FAO is requested particularly focussing on small-scale aquaculture and aquatic biosecurity including relevant

legislation. Aquaculture legislation is being addressed through another project, TCP/PAL/3201, which was approved in September 2009. On a more practical perspective, a significant achievement was that through joint efforts of Palau’s Bureau of Marine Resources and FAO, the Ngatpang State Aquaculture Farm, now produces and sells about 3 000 lbs of fresh milkfish and vacuum-packed boneless milkfish (average of 1 lb/pc) at Koror market on a biweekly frequency during Thursdays and delivers 200 lbs of fresh milkfish directly to a local supermarket every Monday.

Nauru: The project TCP/NAU/3201 is looking at two major activities. The first pertains to reestablishing milkfish farms in the country (Buanda lagoon and 21 other lagoons) and the second is an assessment of potential environmental impact of dredging of Buada lagoon and in particular, assessment of capacity of the lagoon to support non-intensive milkfish farming. The Buada lagoon is a very important resource, being the largest freshwater lake in the country. The accomplishment of the first activity include review of existing milkfish farming system, assessment of water quality and potential source of milkfish fry and a stakeholder workshop. The second activity will provide important environmental management input to the GEF Small Grant Programme-funded Buada Lagoon Rehabilitation Project. The scope of the assessment includes both environmental, socio-economics and cultural aspects and will come up with an environmental management plan (impacts, mitigating measures, monitoring programme and responsibilities). The process will necessarily involve consultation with members of the Buada Lagoon Owners Association. ■