



# Gender analysis of the fisheries sector – **Solomon Islands**



Prepared by the Pacific Community



NEW ZEALAND  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
Aid Programme



FAME DIVISION



SDP DIVISION



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Prepared by the Pacific Community



Noumea, New Caledonia, 2018

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## Abbreviations

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ADB	Asia Development Bank
DCC	Democratic Coalition for Change
EIA	environment impact assessment
FAME	Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division of SPC
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
CBRM	community-based resource management
IPAM	Institute of Public Administration and Management
IF	inshore fisheries
JICA	Japanese International Corporation International
MAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MDPAC	Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination
MFMR	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
MoFT	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
MPAs	marine protected areas
MPGIS	Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
MWYCA	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
PIMEU	Policy Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
SILMMA	Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Areas Network
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SINCW	Solomon Islands National Council of Women
SPC	The Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TA	technical assistance
UN Women	United Nations Women
WDD	Women's Development Desk



# 1. Introduction

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This stocktake of gender analysis was conducted to support institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine resources and other central and subnational institutions related to fisheries and marine resources management. The gender analysis seeks to better understand women's and men's role in the fishery sector (coastal and aquaculture) in Solomon Islands. As articulated in the methodology section, the field work was undertaken in the three provinces of Guadalcanal, Central Province and Isabel Province, with stakeholder interviews also conducted across Honiara between March and June, 2017. The compilation of this report is a collaborative effort between the Solomon Islands Government (the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs), the Pacific Community and WorldFish.

This activity is in line with the Solomon Islands national gender equality and women's development policy and is a requirement under the project: *Improving fisheries food security and sustainable livelihoods for Pacific Island communities*. The project is managed by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Marine and Ecosystems Programme (FAME) with funding by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). This activity is a collaboration between FAME and the Social Development Division (SDP) of the Pacific Community, and the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Solomon Islands.

Women play a vital role in the fishery sector. They are involved in various aspects of coastal fisheries and are increasingly engaged as middle sellers and buyers and in the development of value-added products. The role of women in fisheries and fish value chains is relatively poorly understood by researchers and rarely well accounted for globally by fisheries policies (Kleiber *et al.* 2015; Williams 2016). Mirroring this, few gender differentiated or women-inclusive accounts of roles in fishing are available for the Pacific region (but see Kronen & Vunisea 2007; 2009). The perception that fishing is a man's domain is not uncommon and it is perpetuated by failure to sex-disaggregate data or gather any data at all from women fishers. More challenging aspects of gender and fisheries, however, lie in moving beyond an understanding of men's and women's different and shared roles in fishing to a deeper understanding of the social and cultural norms and relations that may be gendered and that determine how men and women experience benefits, opportunities and challenges in fisheries differently. While not covered here, other forms of social differentiation – economic status, ethnicity and disability – are also influential.

In Solomon Islands, women dominate the unskilled and semi-skilled labour force in the tuna processing industry but earn a much lower wage than do their male counterparts working in similar jobs.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, women's contribution to the fishery sector is often overlooked or minimised so they are often left out of technical and capacity-building initiatives and community consultations. On the other hand, we observe an increasing number of women becoming involved in fisheries sciences and management across the Pacific region and it is worth exploring the factors that enable women to invest in this field, where they can earn more and contribute in the decision-making that shapes the fisheries sector.

This report describes the current state of knowledge and the current state of gendered roles, opportunities and barriers within the fisheries sector in Solomon Islands. The focus here is on coastal fisheries and aquaculture sectors, given that commercial offshore fisheries have recently been the focus of an extensive review (Barclay 2015 – not accessible, but summarised in Krushelnytska 2015). The purpose of this report is firstly to present the current understanding of women's and men's role in the fishery sector (coastal and aquaculture) in Solomon Islands. Secondly, the institutional analysis presented in this report aims to guide the appropriate design of institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) and other central

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<sup>1</sup> Olha Krushelnytska, 2015. Toward gender-equitable fisheries management in Solomon Islands. See: <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/en/publications/bulletins/women-in-fisheries/471-women-in-fisheries-information-bulletin-27.html>

and subnational institutions. The overall aim of these findings is to support the mainstreaming of gender across key policies and legislation under the mandate of the ministry, from a gender perspective. The outcomes of this initiative will be used to support the implementation of the Pacific Community's (SPC) programme: Improving fisheries food security and sustainable livelihoods for Pacific Island communities.

Gender mainstreaming is about strengthening institutions to advance gender equality. Women will continue to be marginalised in the fishery sector as officials, fishers and farmers if government policies and strategies are not gender sensitive. Political will must be demonstrated in concrete gender strategies in fishery policies, with adequate resources to support the advancement of women. Because gender mainstreaming is a 'people-centred approach', it looks at how policies and services can have a greater impact on the women and men working in the sector. Hence, this approach is not beneficial to women only; it contributes to the whole sector by improving how decisions are made and how services are delivered, so that more people involved in fisheries benefit directly.

This activity is in line with the *Solomon Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development* and is a requirement of the project: Improving fisheries food security and sustainable livelihoods for Pacific Island communities. The project is funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and is a collaboration between the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division and the Social Development Division of SPC and the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) of Solomon Islands. The activity is also in line with the ACIAR-funded project: Strengthening and scaling community-based approaches to Pacific coastal fisheries management in support of the New Song (FIS/2016/300); a project implemented in Solomon Islands by a WorldFish, SPC and MFMR collaboration.

## 2. Methodology

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This study employed five methods to gather data from a range of sources to assess the situation of gender within the fisheries sector in Solomon Islands. First, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken, focused specifically on Solomon Islands literature and studies that examined Solomon Islands as one of many case studies. This literature is used throughout this report to situate the findings and recommendations arising from consultations and other methods. Second, a single community consultation was conducted. Third, a small set of interviews was conducted with small-scale fish traders – people who buy and sell fish in local and provincial markets or shops. Fourth, interviews were conducted with government departments and NGOs in three provinces to gain an understanding of provincial institutional capacity to mainstream gender. The methods for these interviews were largely similar to those employed at the national level. Lastly interviews and other consultations were conducted at the national level with respondents from within MFMR but also with other government departments and NGOs with a nation-wide mandate, mainly those with a natural resource management and development focus.

### 2.1 Community consultation

One community consultation was conducted in Niu village, a small, low island located in the Marau area, Guadalcanal Province. The community was selected due to Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) engagement in the area and the community's foray into marine resource management and in fishing and aquaculture. The consultation was conducted in July 2017 by the Community Based Resource Management (CBRM) team from the MFMR.

The main livelihood activities in Niu are fishing and gardening. Men and women are fishers and farmers but most of them are sellers, who sell fish and other marine resources, such as trochus, clamshells, corals, seaweed and turtles.

The consultation was held in order to understand gendered aspects of the fisheries sector at community level, from both men's and women's perspective. It also attempted to discuss the responsibilities involved in managing marine resources and how decisions to sell marine resources are made.

Focus group discussions were conducted separately with males and females (Appendix 1). Each focus group consisted of around seven people. Discussion topics looked into the different roles that men and women play in fishing, and also aquaculture (if relevant). The discussions also touched lightly on the socially constructed constraints and opportunities that men and women experience, but was insufficient to understand the norms and relations that underlie the different gendered experiences, opportunities and patterns – it provided only a brief look at how these play out in terms of roles in the fisheries sector.

Because this consultation was conducted in only one community, the data presented here cannot be used to make broad generalisations, but can be looked at alongside other local studies that have explored local fishing roles, participation, decision-making, marketing and management.

### 2.2 Fish trader interviews

Interviews were conducted with fish traders in provincial markets, the main market in Honiara and in two stores. The first survey was conducted in Maromaro fish market in Honiara, Guadalcanal Province on 6 July. The second and third were conducted on 11–13 July in Tulagi, capital town of Central Province, and Buala, capital of Isabel Province. Interviewees were identified opportunistically. Sixteen fishers and sellers, 13 men and three women,

were interviewed (Table 1). This does not mean there are fewer women than men working as fish traders; the team did not have time to consult many female fish traders and ended up interviewing more men.

The objective of the interviews was to understand gendered aspects of small-scale fish marketing from the perspective of men and women present and selling produce at provincial markets. Interview questions (Appendix 3) were designed to understand the roles that men and women play in selling fish. Just as importantly, questions were also asked about how fish are transported to markets, who caught the fish that is intended for markets, and who handles the money from sales. Questions also touched on the socially constructed constraints and opportunities that men and women experience differently with regard to earning income from fish.

**Table 1.** Summary of respondents to the fish trader interview

	Guadalcanal	Central	Isabel
Fish traders	7 (6 men, 1 woman)	7 (men)	2 (women)
Fish buyers	0	1 (women)	3 (men)

## 2.3 Institutional analysis of MFMR

An assessment of the capacity and opportunities for MFMR to mainstream gender across key policies and legislation under the mandate of the ministry was conducted. A few parameters were used to measure enabling mechanisms for gender mainstreaming, including an assessment of the political will, organisation culture and accountability, the technical capacity and the financial capacity. Links and coordination with other line ministries was also assessed.

The institutional assessment also aimed to identify enabling mechanisms and support structures that can facilitate gender mainstreaming in the MFMR. The assessment is not a review of the gender work of the MFMR but an attempt to assess the degree of advancement of gender inclusion in the ministry. A stakeholder analysis was undertaken to identify government departments, NGOs and other partners that worked closely with MFMR and to identify links and how gender mainstreaming work could be progressed through inter-sector relations (See Appendix 5).

The institutional assessment included a desk review, focus group discussions and key people interviews. The desk review reviewed work already done on gender-related work in Solomon Islands and also analysed policies in place to facilitate and enhance gender mainstreaming work.

Key people interviews were conducted with eight senior staff of the MFMR and with ten staff from other government ministries, development partners and NGOs (See Appendix 6 for institutional summaries). Interviewees included the section heads of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, four senior staff members of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and three senior staff members of the Ministry of Development, Planning and Aid Coordination. Other ministries that took part in the interviews and focus group discussions were the Statistics Division of the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Public Service; the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening; the Ministry of Culture and Tourism; the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs; the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology; and the Policy Unit of the Prime Minister’s Office. NGO interviews were conducted with the UN Women Office, WorldFish, the Solomon Islands National Council of Women and the Honiara City Council. Both men and women were represented in all focus group discussions. The interviews sought to gauge perspectives, mechanisms, capacities and structures that might enable or hinder gender mainstreaming, and guide priorities for addressing gender within MFMR and in the fisheries sector more broadly.

A challenge faced in the institutional review work was that interviews and discussions could not be held with all selected line ministries and NGOs. The Information collected from line ministries and NGOs at the interviews

was, as much as possible, triangulated through publications, reports and discussions with line ministries and the MFMR.

## 2.4 Institutional analysis of fish traders

Interviews were conducted with representatives of provincial government and non-governmental organisations in three provinces: Guadalcanal, Central and Isabel (Table 2). The objective of these interviews was to understand the overall enabling environment for gender equality in the province and provincial departments. Interview questions (Appendix 2) focused on understanding the provincial commitments related to gender and the capacities and resources available to support gender work. The team also sought to understand the barriers, and what can be done to address the barriers from the perspectives of these actors working at the provincial level.

These three provinces were selected because they are the top three provinces that supply fish to the Honiara markets (based on the HapiFis project and database, unpublished data). Interviewees for provincial consultations were identified at a meeting with SPC and MFMR on 14 June 2017, when it was recommended that provincial consultations should be held with provincial secretaries, planning officers, and fisheries officers. For Isabel Province, it was recommended that the team include interviews with representatives of the Mother's Union.

The first interviews were conducted on 4 July at the Guadalcanal Provincial Government office. The second round was conducted in the week of 10 July in Tulagi, capital of Central Province, and in Buala, capital of Isabel Province. Interviews were carried out with various provincial ministries as listed in Table 2.

For Guadalcanal Province, the interviews were conducted differently from those in Isabel and Central Provinces (see Appendix 2) because the provincial officers had arranged for one focus group discussion with all eight respondents. This was amended during the visit (so as to gather a range of different perspectives but still respect the provincial officers' preference for group discussion) by holding four consultations with a number of officers sitting in together representing their respective departments/divisions.

**Table 2.** Summary of the provincial representative interviews

Guadalcanal	Central	Isabel
<b>Total number of interviews conducted</b>		
4	5	7
<b>Number of male and female respondents</b>		
5 men, 3 women	5 men, 1 woman	4 men, 3 women
<b>Provincial departments interviewed</b>		
Women's Development Desk	Women's Development Desk	Women's Development Desk
Provincial Fisheries Office	Provincial Fisheries Office	Provincial Fisheries Office
Administration Office	Administration Office	Planning Office
Lands Office	Tourism Office	Tourism Office
Agriculture Office	Agriculture Office	Agriculture Office
Commerce Office		
<b>Civil Society/NGOs</b>		
		The Nature Conservancy
		Mother's Union





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## 3. Summary of findings

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### 3.1 Situational analysis of gender in the fisheries sector

Many actors, across multiple agencies within Solomon Islands, have in-practice and deep understandings of the realities of gender in the fisheries sector – these understandings have been gathered into this report, using interviews and focus group discussions.

The current state of knowledge on gender in the fisheries sector in Solomon Islands is indicated, in part, in the published literature. The review of published literature demonstrates that, where gender and fisheries have been examined together, the focus is mainly on the roles women and men play in harvesting and working at different points of the value chain. Some reports disaggregate, and in a few instances compare, the roles that men and women play. The fisheries roles described for women in the literature (and reinforced with the single community consultation conducted here) suggest that women spend more time harvesting from nearshore habitats, including mangroves and reefs, with the most common methods being gleaning by walking, gleaning by diving, and fishing with a line. Men appear to be more likely to participate in fishing with greater travelling times, for example into deeper waters to fish for pelagic fish, and the use of fishing gear, such as nets and spears, and handling methods, such as trolling. Importantly, patterns of fisheries use and gendered roles differ throughout Solomon Islands, depending on habitats available and social factors, including culture.

The literature examines gendered roles and decision-making at different points of the fisheries value chain. Women's contributions to the fisheries value chain reportedly focuses on post-harvest processing, and on the sale or marketing of fisheries products. In Solomon Islands, marketing points include informal roadside stalls or in-village selling of fish, small and dynamic village markets, markets in provincial centres or in the capital Honiara, and also through 'buyers' who might be operating out of shops or appear in villages to buy products. Kronen and Vunisea (2007) report that, because men are often the main liaisons with fisheries agents, women's needs and contributions to fisheries are often overlooked.

The literature also suggests that women hold less explicit power in decision-making – particularly at the community level. Findings from the primary data collected here reinforce findings of others that many externally supported community development initiatives embrace community meetings as the main way to consult and negotiate. These initiatives, however, will inadvertently perpetuate existing inequalities in decision-making and subsequent participation and distribution of benefits unless they allow the voices of women (and others who might be marginalised in community meetings) to be heard. Increasingly applicable methods and approaches have been documented and trialed for the Solomon Islands context that would help to overcome this inequality.

Views about participating in fish marketing were generally very positive – survey respondents reflected positively on the earning potential. Many respondents have been the recipient of some fish-handling training (no gendered pattern was determined), but did not mention other support services or the provision of market infrastructure to support either women or men. Views on who was responsible for making decisions about selling fish and the use of money were variable, but many respondents implied that spousal consensus about household expenditure was important (similar to the findings of Lawless *et al.* in preparation). Further interviews would be required to establish if there are other contexts in which spousal roles differ. There are substantial lessons to be gained from other women's economic empowerment initiatives (i.e. beyond the fisheries sector) that could be applied to fisheries initiatives, e.g. the initiatives and writings of Pollard (2000, 2003), but it is beyond the scope of this study to summarise them here.

The primary data collected in this study are insufficient to understand the norms and relations in depth. Nonetheless, there was some evidence that roles in fishing were shifting – suggesting a shift in underlying norms. Solomon Islands has attracted a lot of attention from anthropologists, who have generated a rich body of ethnography. In some cases this examines gender roles, norms and relations in different areas and for different cultures within Solomon Islands. Some of these studies are not easily translatable into advice for mainstreaming gender in the fisheries sector, but others can be applied to the fisheries sector and to efforts that seek to work with communities to strengthen livelihoods (e.g. Lawless *et al.* in prep, Lawless *et al.* 2017).

### 3.2 Institutional capacity of provincial agencies

To gain an understanding of provincial level institutional capacity regarding gender mainstreaming, interviews were conducted across three provinces, with a total of 20 interviewees representing at least fourteen agencies or divisions. It was clear that each department worked under their own mandate and it was noted that there were relatively few links between sectors at the provincial level, yet there were links to appropriate line ministries at the national level, i.e. there were sector silos. There was no evidence of a gender policy in the provinces and it was felt that, with so few gender staff and low capacity, the task of mainstreaming gender would be difficult. In terms of political commitment to gender mainstreaming, there is awareness of the need for it, but respondents suggested that there was no real understanding of it and the processes involved.

In terms of technical capacity for raising the profile of gender mainstreaming and taking action that might be considered gender mainstreaming, this was also noted to be limited across all three provinces. This was attributed, in part, to a lack of gender training and awareness and constraints placed by cultural perceptions. Ideas exist for ways to overcome these barriers but it was felt that it needed funding and the support of leaders. In terms of organisational culture and accountability, people were generally aware of gender but there are no formal processes or established norms that meant people were held accountable or encouraged to deal with gender issues in a meaningful way. Further, it was commonly recognised there are limited financial resources at the provincial level and, apart from supporting the Women’s Development Desk (WDD), it was noted that there was no gender support. Getting sufficient funding was seen as a particularly difficult barrier to overcome, because disbursements from provincial funds are based on provincial government priorities and work on gender and women’s economic development are not seen as priorities.

When discussing gender mainstreaming capacity, much emphasis was placed on the WDD within the provinces. For example, when asked to elaborate on the reasons interviewees provided for a ‘high’ score for considering gender, they cited the active encouragement of women in meetings and projects. A common reason for considering attention on gender issues to be medium to high was the existence (but not necessarily involvement or collaboration with) the WDD. The WDD was highlighted as the ‘lead’ for gender issues in the three provinces and considered an initiative to promote and advocate for addressing gender differences/issues. Whilst there was a diversity of agencies identified with expertise and mandates around gender at the national level, in these three provinces (note that it may well be different in other provinces) the WDD was almost exclusively the only agency identified at that level. The exception was the involvement of the Mother’s Union in Isabel Province. In fact the reliance or continued reference to the role and responsibilities of the WDD suggest that gender is currently far from being mainstreamed, and is considered to be the responsibility and technical expertise of somebody else (i.e. the WDD).

### 3.3 Institutional capacity at the national level

There are indications of progress in gender and human rights work at national government level in the last few years. Supportive legal mechanisms and policies are in place and evident at the highest decision-making bodies in government. Key policies to support gender mainstreaming exist through the National Development



Strategy, the Policy Unit of the Prime Minister's office and the Gender and Women in Development Policy at the MWYCA. Permanent secretaries have been mandated to ensure the inclusion of gender issues in their respective ministries and gender focal points have been appointed in most line ministries. Responsibility for national gender mainstreaming work sits with the MWYCA and there are in existence enabling policies and initiatives that facilitate gender mainstreaming work. In 2017, the Ministry of Public Service with the support of the Pacific Community started training modules on gender inclusion in government processes.

While active political will and commitment at the national level has started to be in place, accountability mechanisms and support systems to support gender work and provide institutional support for women are weak. Financial resources to progress the work on gender mainstreaming at the national level and at the MFMR are not in place. Technical capacity to do gender mainstreaming remains one of the areas that need support and there is a need for capacity building, awareness and training on gender mainstreaming across government institutions and MFMR.

In MFMR, while political will and support for gender mainstreaming has started to improve, there is still a lot of awareness and training needed to build the capacity of staff to do gender mainstreaming. Work culture and accountable mechanisms are not in place, and there are few available financial and human resources to enable gender mainstreaming. For MFMR increased collaborative work with other line ministries, NGOs and CSOs will provide needed support for gender mainstreaming work.



## 4. Situational analysis of women and men in the fisheries sector

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### 4.1 Gendered roles in small-scale fisheries

A study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB 2014) suggests that, in 2011, 90% of men and nearly half of all women in rural communities were engaged in fishing. The roles of men and women in coastal fishing communities are shaped by gender norms and relations that determine socially acceptable activities. Men tend to participate more in reef and off-shore fishing, while women often participate in inshore environments, including lagoons and mangrove areas (Govan *et al.* 2013; Kruijssen *et al.* 2013). Men use more fishing methods, such as using lines and spears, whilst women mainly glean for invertebrates and harvest mangrove products (Weeratunge *et al.* 2011). A study by Basily and Vuki (2014) in Isabel Province records the responsibilities of women and children to gather and collect shellfish from reefs, rivers and mangroves by hand. A study by Kronen and Vunisea (2007) shows that across the Pacific women's participation was the highest in beche-de-mer fisheries, as well as collection of giant clams, octopus and lobsters. Beche-de-mers exports are one of Solomon Islands highest earning commodities after tuna (Krushelnytska 2015).

Accounts of gendered roles in fishing found women's role in the tuna industry, for example, indicate that women are engaged and play a very critical role in processing. Women are found mainly to be responsible for cleaning, gutting and processing fish and this include salting, drying and baking of fish to sell at the local markets (Maetala 2009). At the household level, both men and women support each other in maintaining their livelihood and sustenance. Kronen and Vunisea (2007) describe how men mostly supply family needs in terms of food and money, whereas women are providers of household seafood and supply. Although it was commonly perceived that fishing is primarily a man's work, women do, however, gather shellfish, molluscs, sea urchins, mangrove seeds and small fish (Lawless and Teioli 2015; Akimichi 1978; Goto 1996; Molea and Vuki 2008; Schwarz *et al.* 2014).

For this study the team conducted two focus group discussions with a group of men and women in Niu village in Marau, Guadalcanal, to understand the gendered patterns of resource use. Respondents explained that in Niu village men and women share the same fishing grounds around the marine protected areas they have established. Men and women do, however, have their own particular parts of these fishing grounds. Fishing in the deep sea and near reefs is always done by men travelling by dugout canoes, whilst women mainly fish in shallow waters and reefs. All respondents in both focus groups said that both men and women are heavily engaged in gleaning and dropline fishing, whereas it is mainly the men who engage in netting and diving for fish. Women do not dive or use nets because of longer hours spent in the water during the day and night. However, women do dive for other marine invertebrates, such clams and trochus. Both men and women practice dropline fishing and would spend half a day doing this; men suggested they would do this at least twice a week. Net fishing takes a whole day or night to throw nets around the reefs to trap fish. According to both focus groups, net fishing is quicker and can bring in a large catch; as one female respondent commented, '*Quick catch, plenty fish, the size of the catch is always the same – big or small [fish are all taken], because it is on the reefs.*' Fish that are commonly caught, as described by the male participants, are snappers, sweet lips and coral trout. Fish caught using nets are mackerel (locally called *kalua*), *mamula* (trevally) and reef fish, including turtles. The catch is mainly for selling to earn income, for consumption and for barter.

The discussions focused also on the importance of clams that are harvested in the wild, primarily for household consumption but also for cash and to barter with other people. Normally, men collect clams from the marine protected areas (*paipai*) when they are open for the community to use (probably for fundraising or a community feast). Currently, there is a family (to which one of the female participants belongs) that is harvesting and collecting clams for homestay and tourist activities. The family hires some men in the village

to collect clamshells from the marine protected area near their homestay. These shells are put in the water for easy sightseeing by snorkelling tourists. Interestingly, male participants reported that clamshells and trochus are not only used for decoration, women use them for making jewellery and custom shell money, which can be sold at the market. It was mentioned that these clams were introduced by the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM – now known as WorldFish) and were transferred to Niu from Aruligo before the ethnic tension happened in 1998.

According to both male and female focus groups in Niu, men spend a whole day and night (or eight hours) diving for fish and shells such as clams and trochus, whereas Niu women spend two to three hours diving for clams and trochus during the day only. Men have more flexibility in the times they can go fishing. According to Kronen and Vunisea (2009), men are able to fish during day and/or night, meaning they have greater capacity to have high catches. Whilst the profile of women's role in fisheries is increasing, domestic work is still seen as women's responsibility and this is one of the reasons women lack the opportunity to participate more in fisheries and in associated fisheries or livelihood development activities (Lawless & Teioli 2015).

Whilst there are differences in the roles that men and women play in fisheries, these roles are subject to change. Some studies found that women's roles in fishing have more recently expanded to include net fishing, an activity in the past only undertaken by men (Cohen *et al.* 2016). Some shifts in roles were seen from the discussions in Niu. Niu respondents felt that roles in some aspects of fishing were shifting. For example: *'Women were responsible for cleaning and preparing food but today, men harvest or clean the fish before handing it over to the women for cooking. Dads and men help too,'* reported female respondents. In the past, bamboo fishing<sup>2</sup> was practised and the women's group reflected that bamboo fishing suits women. *'Bamboo fishing during my days fits women before.'* Due to population increase, women fish a lot more nowadays as commented by female respondents. *'Women did not fish before but now they fish. Increasing family so women too fish. Some daddies don't fish so women have to fish.'* Interestingly, the men's focus group reported that not so many men are engaged in fishing activities as before. *'Men do not fish too much now compared to before. Depends on interest; some boys don't know how to fish now, before every boys fish. Depends on interest to go far to fish.'*

In Niu the team also examined how men and women engage with markets and income from fisheries – what, who and where to sell resources. Female respondents felt that whoever produces or owns the goods holds more power in the decision on where to sell their products (whether it be garden produce or fish). From Niu, products could be sold at different points. *'We sell at station, logging camps, Honiara, local market.'* Women like going to the station (that is, Marau substation) to sell their produce because of the high population. Women felt that young men are not interested in selling their product. Fish eskies are mainly sold by women (for others) as they get little commissions on that. A decision on where fish eskies are sold is usually made by the owners of the eskies, whether a man or woman. People engaged in fish selling with eskies are identified as those from outside the community. The community sells fish in eskies only if there is a fundraising activity happening in the community. In terms of money earned from fishing, it depends on who owns the fish eskies or sells the fish. In the household, a family has what is described as a 'good daddy' if he plans with his wife how the money should be used. A female respondent said that she sells her produce for children's school fees: *'I have to do it, otherwise I have none.'* The men's focus group acknowledged that women are better at saving or keeping money than men. *'Because daddy smokes so women are best to hold money,'* commented a male respondent. He added, *'When daddy holds money or sells, you see no good thing or no money out of sales.'*

## 4.2 Gendered governance of local fisheries resources and fishing grounds

In Solomon Islands, *kastom* (or cultural belief systems) and gender norms and relations are influential in shaping the different abilities of women and men to make claims over natural resources. Land and marine

<sup>2</sup> Bamboo fishing refers to the traditional way of fishing whereby people use a thin bamboo stick (like a fishing rod) with a string.

tenure operates through a combination of matrilineal and patrilineal descent systems. The in-depth studies of tenure and decision-making (in other areas) challenge common assumptions that matrilineal descent systems transmit greater decision-making powers to women (see also Macintyre 2008), and findings from Solomon Islands also suggest this to be the case (e.g. Lawless *et al.* in preparation), pointing out that, irrespective of inheritance systems, men ultimately act as spokespeople and negotiators regarding the use of land and marine areas in all communities. Women (and in some cases men) who do not hold primary resource rights, are generally less able to determine the direction of decisions about the use and management of natural resources (Lawless *et al.* in prep). A study conducted in Malaita Province examining fishing and farming practices found that men reported they were ‘always’ or ‘sometimes’ involved in decision-making relating to management of marine resources, while 72% of women reported they were ‘never’ involved (Boso & Schwarz 2009).

Women’s greater responsibility for household food production and their lack of participation in decisions relating to farming and fishing have significant impacts for household food security. Vunisea (2008) claims that women in fisheries across the Pacific suffer a ‘culture of silence’, which refers to the fact that the voices of women and youth are not heard, as their culture restricts their participation in discussions. However, there are some contemporary resource management efforts that explicitly try to redress the gender imbalance in decision-making (see Hilly *et al.* 2012).

In the focus group discussions conducted for this study, respondents confirmed that, in the community of Nui, resources, including marine resources, are tribally owned. Respondents felt that the responsibility to look after and manage resources rests with both men and women. Men and women who married into the community (i.e. people who migrated into the community and do not necessarily have any tribal affiliation that bestows rights to land/resources in that area) are also able to participate and contribute to making decisions regarding their marine resources and protected areas. A female respondent reported that Niu does not have a chief and that instead ‘clans become heads’. The women’s focus group commented, ‘*Women can also contribute in decision making over resources; there is no taboo (tabu) for women to speak during important meetings.*’ There was, however, no further information on who mostly make decisions and specifically on what, as it was not captured in the group discussions.

### 4.3 Gendered engagement in local fisheries management and extension

Research conducted in Solomon Islands suggests that men are better positioned to participate in, and benefit from, development opportunities (Cohen *et al.* 2016; Hilly *et al.* 2012; Lawless *et al.* 2017). In the context of fisheries, this is because they tend to have better access to and control over productive assets (i.e. income, fishing equipment, new technologies) and resources (i.e. education, management information, extension services) than women. Men also more generally experience greater freedom to make important life decisions. These studies have found that women’s increased participation in development opportunities can result in positive benefits, including increased access to financial capital, increased influence in community and household decision-making, and increased confidence and willingness to trial new innovations (Cohen *et al.* 2016; Lawless *et al.* 2017).

Traditionally, fishing was seen as a man’s domain. A member of the MFMR reported, ‘The marine management plans that MFMR have implemented in the past have sometimes overlooked the role of women or only seen fish species as important for men’ (Lawless *et al.* 2017:7). Consequently, fisheries development initiatives have tended to target men and have overlooked the value and contributions of women in fisheries. Schwarz *et al.* (2014) identify the importance of explicitly targeting the attendance of men, women and youth groups in community consultations, to ensure that consultations are inclusive and that all community members benefit from initiatives. The exclusion of women in community consultation processes can ensure that male leaders remain dominant and further empowered in decision-making, further marginalising women and their interests (Akao & Strachan 2012; Cohen & Steenbergen 2015).

These patterns of men's dominance in terms of numbers and leadership in community consultations was reflected in the focus group discussions conducted in Niu. The Niu community had had some engagement with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). In meetings SPREP conducted, both men and women participated but, according to the men, the turn-out of women had always been low. Because men are viewed as 'big' they tended to attend most of the meetings and training facilitated by SPREP (for example training on turtle conservation and monitoring). This view, shared in focus group discussions, seemed to apply broadly to any external organisation. It was noted also that information comes first to men and is later passed on to village women and tribal groups. The women's participation in community consultations or meetings about the activities SPREP worked on was restricted, and the women's focus group explained: *'In our culture, activities beyond women does not look wise, e.g. turtle rangers'*. The women would have been more involved if the SPREP work had been about clams or corals. This feedback from the women's focus group is likely also a reflection of the gendered roles of men and women in Solomon Islands, whereby men are more involved in turtle hunting (hence their involvement in conservation initiatives) and women are more involved in gleaning (hence their suggestion on clams and corals). Once project activities are targeted for certain groups of people like the women, then the women can be directly consulted and contribute and share their views and ideas. Otherwise, women's participation and engagement in community meetings would be minimal – there was no clear discussion as to whether SPREP had tried any strategies to rectify the balance of men and women in community meetings. According to all female respondents, men' and women's participation in meetings is determined by their leadership roles/qualities and the capacity needed for such project activities.

A study on rural development and community-based management in Roviana, Western Province, suggests that the sea tenure system (referring to a group of people who have formal or informal entitlement) not only enables men and women to recognise their customary entitlements but also allows them to participate in resource management (Aswani and Weiant, 2004). Aswani and Weiant argue that, whilst sea tenure is promoted and slowly accepted, it is important to consider the different forms of governance and management systems that are practised in different communities – as most practice is based on local culture and history. Further study is required to look at how local and western knowledge can merge in a way to protect marine resources. Like marine protected areas, community-based resource management (CBRM) is effectively implemented and adapted by local communities. It is a key component of MFMR (Hilly *et al.* 2012), which aims to increase resources for future living. Formal marine management committees have been set up but in most cases men tend to dominate the functions of the group, leaving women more engaged in church activities and programmes (Cohen *et al.* 2016; Sarah Lawless & Teioli 2015) and less in resource management.

Traditionally, information and knowledge was shared and passed on to people through family members (Lawless & Teioli 2015) prior to the intervention of churches and NGOs. The 2015 study conducted on social and gender revealed that a person's family is still an important source of information or knowledge on fishing, gardening and other domestic skills. At the community level today, men and women access information from others who are perceived as having a higher standing in the community. As Cohen *et al.* (2016) discuss, lack of education and exposure to training or networks limit women from seeking information and support from outside the community. Women would be more willing and engaged in developmental activities only if they had attained education and further training (see also Lawless *et al.* 2017). Most rural men and women depend on the provincial extension offices for resources, information and support, as reported by Lawless and Teioli (2015), and information can be obtained and passed on to people when agricultural or fisheries extension officers visit communities. Due to limited funds and lack of resources (e.g. logistics) a one-round trip to communities is possible but implementation of activities on the ground remains unaccomplished. People tend to rely much on outsiders for new ideas but only one gender group receives the information first, and that is men; leaving women to rely on men for information (Lawless & Teioli 2015; Schwarz *et al.* 2014).



One of the main challenges reported is the lack of dissemination and sharing of information in the National Fisheries Act 1999 (at that time). In many communities, the act is not available so there is not enough understanding of fisheries management laws and regulations (Maetala 2009). Support from government and NGOs is needed to carry the right information to communities so that they are able to manage their resources in accordance with the Fisheries Act. The act has been revised as the Fisheries Bill 2015, and MFMR is currently developing the regulations to accompany the bill.

## 4.4 Gendered aspects of aquaculture

Aquaculture is a relatively recent introduction in Pacific Island countries (PICs). In 2000, Solomon Islands was amongst ten PICs reported to have aquaculture production. The economies of Pacific Island countries are limited by their remoteness and small landmasses. Their biggest and most important resource is the ocean (Adams, Bell & Labrosse 2001). In traditional times, inshore marine resources were harvested for subsistence purposes. More recently, marine resources have provided communities along the coasts with opportunities to export in the region and abroad.

Coastal communities have participated in aquaculture activities since it was introduced. Families have different roles in fisheries and, globally, women play an important role in the aquaculture and fisheries sector. However, this role has been through many constraints (Egna *et al.* 2014). Limited knowledge on the role of women in aquaculture calls for further research in the region. PICs have recognised aquaculture as a long-term and sustainable way to benefit from inshore fisheries resources (Williams 1996, cited in Adams *et al.* 2001). In a statement from the second SPC Fisheries Management Workshop in 1998, 'Aquaculture, as an alternative activity, is still at a preliminary stage of economic development in most PICs, but is of enormous future significance.'

In the 2009 calculation by Bell *et al.* it was forecast that, by 2030, the majority of PICs would not be able to maintain current consumption rates from their coastal fisheries, even if the fisheries were well managed. Venturing into developing small-scale pond aquaculture was one suggestion for maintaining food security.

Pacific countries can benefit from aquaculture in terms of economic activities. Although knowledge of aquaculture practices, benefits and the roles of men and women are lacking, the need to promote aquaculture as an alternative activity for sustainable livelihoods is vital in light of fish shortfall predictions.

Aquaculture has been recognised as a source of livelihood and food security and aquaculture activities have increased over the past years in Solomon Islands. In 2009, it included penaeid shrimps, milkfish, sponges, beche de mer, hard and soft corals, oysters, tilapia, and seaweed (Gillet 2009). Both men and women play an important role in aquaculture, especially in the production of tilapia, marine ornamentals and seaweed, as discussed below.

### 4.4.1 Tilapia

The Mozambique Tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*) is the only tilapia species that was introduced to the country by the Solomon Islands Government in the 1950s and 1960s. This exotic species has since been established in fresh and brackish water. Tilapia can be found in many parts of the country but the largest concentrations are said to be found on Malaita and Guadalcanal (WorldFish 2011). This is the only farmed fish in Solomon Islands (Phillips *et al.* 2011). A policy brief by WorldFish (2011) reported that almost all the tilapia farmed were consumed by households, including women and children. In reporting on participatory action research designed to improve pond design and productivity, Harohau and colleagues (2016) wrote: 'Established ponds are included in the daily livelihood tasks of both men and women and explicitly gender equitable approaches to partnerships with pond farmers provide opportunities to further increase benefits to households.'

Tilapia may be a significant source of protein for some highland-dwelling families, but there are also coastal families that farm tilapia, especially in areas where access to fresh reef fish is difficult. For people of Lake Tegano and Lees Lake in Guadalcanal, this is a major source of protein (Cleasby *et al.* 2014). Jones *et al.* (2014) stated in a paper that most participants in their survey expressed great interest in tilapia farming. Both men and women felt that farming tilapia is cheaper and more time-efficient than harvesting other fish species sold in the markets.

#### 4.4.2 The aquarium trade and associated mariculture

The coral trade in Solomon Islands is relatively new; it started exporting in the early 1990s. Coral export was established as a way of improving the livelihood opportunities for communities in the coastal areas in Solomon Islands (Trinidad, Albert & Boso 2012). Actors in the aquarium and curio trade may include the villagers who harvest, the exporters, the wholesalers, as well as retailers and consumers. Collectors and harvesters are mainly from Solomon Islands. It was estimated that each harvester receives around SBD 2.50 per piece (Trinidad *et al.* 2012). The main coral suppliers are from the Central Province, especially the Nggela Islands, and some parts of Guadalcanal. Around 30 to 40 people supply dead and live corals, and about 200 people are involved in collecting aquarium organisms (Lal & Kinch 2005). The aquarium trade in Solomon Islands has been an opportunity for women in the country. Women play an important role in coral cultivation in Guadalcanal and the Marau area (Lal & Kinch, 2005). Research has shown that both men and women were involved in the aquarium trade in 2005. While this has been a success, it was a mixed success, leaving a gap for further studies into gender roles in this trade. A gender analysis and the impacts that the aquarium trade has on men and women need further research (Egna *et al.* 2014).

In the community focus groups discussions conducted as part of this study in the community of Niu, participants discussed their involvement in coral harvesting and mariculture related to the aquarium trade, seaweed farming and clamshell harvesting. In past years (2001–2009) Niu people were engaged in collecting fish and shells for the aquarium trade. Women were involved in fishing activities during that time, particularly in collecting shells like clams and trochus. Men and women were also heavily engaged in coral farming. The key role of women in coral farming included planting corals, and they received help from the men at times. Both men and women dived and harvested corals, but it was noted that men specially dived for the branching corals. Corals were mainly sold by women at the local market and sometimes in Honiara. Currently, there is ongoing sale and exporting of dead corals, but export of live corals has ceased, as reported by an officer from CBRM.

#### 4.4.3 Seaweed farming

Seaweed farming in Solomon Islands started with initial trials in 1988 (Kronen 2013), when the government and other projects set up seaweed farms. A survey in Wagina revealed that seaweed aquaculture was a family tradition, involving all the household members. The survey also showed that, while 68 per cent of the labour input was done by men, activities such as harvesting, planting and maintenance were mostly done by women.

In the community focus group discussions conducted as part of this study in the community of Niu, both men and women reported that they had been engaged in seaweed farming. All respondents agreed that it was the men's job to cut the sticks and tie the ropes, whereas the women's job was to plant seaweed onto the ropes. Maintenance and harvesting of seaweed were usually done by a husband and wife or the family as a whole. Women mostly sold seaweed to buyers visiting their village or directly to others in Honiara. Money earned from seaweed farming was controlled by the wives and used for buying household food such as rice and flour. Seaweed farming stopped in 2014 because of lack of interest shown by people. Other reasons given for this activity no longer being pursued was that dugongs, turtles and balloon fish (*poe*) feed on the seaweed and diminished harvests. Seaweed farming was moved to Simeruka, another community nearby, in 2015.



## 4.5 Gendered engagement in aquaculture extension

Geographical isolation and fragile habitats are examples of some of the constraints for aquaculture in Solomon Islands (Adams *et al.* 2001). Knowledge surrounding aquaculture in the country has been limited, with a correspondingly low understanding of the differences in roles and engagement of men and women in different contexts where aquaculture is operating. A study by Cleasby *et al.* (2014) showed that challenges to land-based aquaculture have resulted because of lack of equipment and knowledge. FAO (2017) reported that data on aquaculture are limited, and little is known. This meant that the contributions of men and women in the workforce are rarely discussed. The roles of men and women and their access to information and resources should be considered important (FAO 2017). The report also highlighted the fact that women lack access to certain information compared to men.

Women in communities usually have limited access to information because firsthand information is passed onto the chiefs, elders and leaders, who are mostly men. Moreover, studies have shown that women and men in the rural areas often have little education and only 60.1% have reached primary level (Schwarz *et al.* 2014). The reliance of women on men to give them information, combined with lack of education, has also contributed to the limited participation of women in community decision-making. In a cultural sense, women may have limited participation in meetings, so they are less likely to speak up. Lawless *et al.* (2017) stated that women's interests are represented by male leaders in the community. Women are not well represented and do not have a place of power in communities in Solomon Islands (Ride 2014).

## 4.6 Markets and value chains

Women's contributions to fisheries value chains are documented by the Asian Development Bank, (2015), which reports that women play an important role in post-harvest processing, and in the sale or marketing of agricultural and fisheries products. For example, Molea and Vuki (2008) highlight the importance of the role of women in cleaning and processing fish before it is transported to Honiara. However, despite women being more engaged in processing and transporting of invertebrates and finfish than men, Kronen and Vunisea (2007) report that, because men are often the main liaisons with fisheries agents, women's needs and contributions to fisheries are often overlooked.

Most coastal-dwelling communities in Solomon Islands depend on fish for their livelihood. Govan *et al.* (2013) state that more than half the Solomon Island household population are to some extent involved in the fisheries sector. There are many who depend on fish for regular income, but also for subsistence purposes. Fish is often sold at local markets or to dealers, who re-sell at the main market in Honiara (Molea & Vuki 2008) where demand is high. The Honiara fish markets provide a variety of fish and invertebrates. The survey by Molea and Vuki shows that about 76% of the fish suppliers to Honiara were males, and that women are active sellers there. The survey indicated that, on average, the sellers (both men and women) had more than eight years of experience in fish selling. Central Province had the biggest share of retail market and value-added markets (Pomeroy & Yang 2014). By contract, using case studies of two Solomon Island communities (one each from Western and Isabel Provinces) Kruijssen and colleagues (2013) found that 'selling (fin)fish is more often done by men, while women may dominate the sales of other marine resources, although this depends on the cultural context'. This is an important finding, that roles along the market chain (types of harvesting and roles in harvesting, transport and sales) are variable and any market-based intervention should be informed by local studies. The study also suggested: 'There are several potential entry points for upgrading marine resource value chains, including exploration of different models of coordination and collective effort among fishers and gleaners, especially for women, and provision of training and awareness on alternative processing options to improve fish and shellfish preservation in order to reduce wastage and increase shelf-life.'

#### 4.6.1 Fish market case study 1 – Market vendors in Tulagi, Central Province

In Tulagi, the urban centre of Central Province, respondents were first asked to describe their fishing activities and the species they focused on. The male respondents explained that, when they go fishing, they go on their own, with family and relatives, or with other male fishers. Only one respondent stated that he normally goes fishing with his wife. Five out of the seven male respondents said they mainly use fishing lines or hand-lines with hooks, with lesser use of nets and spear guns. Two of the male respondents said they use nets, tow-line and drop-line fishing. Some of the fish species commonly caught are snapper, king fish, emperor, bonito, roma, mangatata and yellow fish. One respondent reported that snapper was being sold now, but had not been sold in the past “*In the past we do not catch it due to where it is (deep sea) and don’t know how to catch it.*” Technology and knowledge has developed and today the demand for snapper is relatively high, particularly by tourists. In addition to finfish, invertebrates (e.g. trochus, clams, mud crabs, squid and crayfish) are sold at Honiara market or to Tulagi restaurant owners. Three of these fishers said that most of the fish they catch are for selling at market, whereas the other four reported that they catch fish for both selling (mainly), but also for home consumption. Respondents stated that at times they keep some fish for household consumption but usually people fish at different times or separately for consumption and selling in Tulagi or Honiara.

Respondents explained that in Central Province, it is common for men to travel to Honiara Central Market around two to three times a week, to sell their ‘esky’ fish (i.e. fish they have caught and packed in a cooler with ice). According to the respondents, the fishers themselves are responsible for selling their catch – this is treated as a business and is the main way they earn money. The alternatives for fishers who are unable to travel to Honiara is to sell their fish at Tulagi market and to restaurant owners nearby, or from the roadside, where they sell strings of ten fish. Weather was identified as a major factor that can affect sales and marketing business; when there is bad weather traveling to both Tulagi and Honiara markets can be difficult and June to July are typically times of rough seas and strong winds. One other, unrelated challenge noted was dishonesty. Two of the respondents who normally sell their esky fish at Honiara market reported, *‘Dishonest fish sellers buy our fish and sell them for a higher price. They slacken the scales so that it costs buyers more. They earn more than us in this way.’*

Men and women from Tulagi consider that traveling to the market and selling produce is a family affair and men, women and children like coming to the market to sell produce and also to make their own purchases. Three respondents discussed how they travel with their wives to the market to sell fish, garden produce and cooked food. One male respondent stated, *‘My wife and kids also sell fish, and cooked food,’* and another said, *‘Just me and my wife. My wife sells cabbage, kumara and taro.’* Other respondents observed that children also come to the market to sell goods, *‘Sometimes the children come to the market to sell ring cakes (doughnuts), popcorn and ice blocks.’*

Respondent further said in Boroni village in Sandfly men mostly sell fish and go fishing, and one man explained that in Central Province culture (*kula kastom*) women do not sell fish (except women who reside in urban areas). Another suggested this was changing: *‘In the past women do not fish but now they fish. I also noticed that some men get tired of fishing so the women go in their place’*. As further noted by a male respondent: *‘Women fish from reefs and collect shells’* and another observed: *‘Before men catch fish a lot’*. Women fish (to help their husbands) and sell at the market (with and for their husbands or relatives). According to the respondents, women feel they need to support their husbands and contribute to earning income for helping children. *‘Mothers need income to support children’*, commented one male respondent. Another male respondent stated: *‘Need for income and women also want to contribute earn income’*.

Money earned from selling fish is enough to meet a family’s daily needs and wants. One respondent said: *‘We get good money from selling fish. We earn about \$<sup>3</sup>2,000 to \$3,000 if the weather is good. We need a good*

<sup>3</sup> The Solomon Island currency, SBD, unless otherwise stated

*engine, fishing gear and esky to earn more income.* Another respondent mentioned that he used to earn \$1,000 and today he earns around \$5,000. Respondents said they are satisfied with the money they earned, one man saying, *'Yes, satisfy with income. When catch good number of fish, can \$300; sometimes \$100 or \$200.'* When asked whether the government or non-government organisations (NGOs) provide assistance and support, all the male respondents reported that there was none; *'No help from NGOs and the government. The village does not help as well.'*

When respondents were asked about how decisions were made in relation to marketing and income they explained that responsibilities and decision-making are shared between a husband and wife, sometimes even including children. Yet the involvement in decision-making depends on the particular activities or issues that concern the family. For example, one male respondent said he and his wife would decide on the days for gardening or fishing, whereas decisions about what to do with fish he would take by himself. According to one male respondent, the decision on how much fish to sell is always made by the husband and often the wife would just select small fish from the catch for cooking. A family chooses their favourite fish species for their meal: *'The whole family decides. If family likes certain species, then we cook it. I love my family so much so I let everyone decide.'* In terms of how money earned from fishing is used, responses varied between a fisher making decisions to decisions based on the consensus of a husband and wife:

*'My wife and I decide on what to buy. We buy rice, salt, clothes for our children from Honiara.'*

*'I repay the fuel to boat owner and then pay my fishermen.'*

*'Men have different uses. Sometimes they buy what they want. But I ask my wife first on what the whole family needs.'*

*'The money is for the family, contributions to church or school. The family makes decisions for use of money.'*

Clearly roles in decision-making vary from household to household and subject to subject. One study of household decision-making (broadly, and not just in relation to fishing) stressed that in fact what was more important in household decision-making (in the three communities examined) was negotiation and consensus within the household, rather than the importance of a man or a woman dominating a decision (Lawless *et al.* in prep).

When asked to think about how fishing and marketing of fish had changed, respondents in Tulagi explained that in the past, fishing was primarily for consumption and not to earn income and when asked if men and women had fished and sold fish less or more in the past, six male respondents said the involvement of men and women was less: *'[During the time of our] grandfather [selling fish was] not popular in in town. Only sell in village but back then it was barter system. Father sometimes he sells but mostly for consumption because money was not an issue back then'*. Due to family commitments and the now very high demand for money, a husband and wife are seriously engaged in fishing and selling as part of their responsibilities to pay for their children's school fees, for example.

#### **4.6.2 Fish market case study 2 – Fish sellers in Buala, Isabel Province**

Three of the respondents in Buala in Isabel Province were male fish buyers who run their own fish shops. These fish shop owners had been operating their business (selling iced and frozen fish, and one also selling fish and chips) for more than two years. The fish that these men re-sell are bought directly from men and women fishers who come directly to them to sell. Fish prices depend on the type of fish. For example, mamula and parrot fish are sold at \$18–\$23/kg, reef fish at \$23–\$28/kg, king fish \$25–\$30/kg or \$35/kg. Invertebrates such as clams (notably illegal to sell), crayfish, and squid are sold at \$25–\$35/kg. Fish (mainly king fish) are transported to

Honiara if people have placed an order. The three male fish buyers reported they received help. They initially said there had been no assistance received from outside agencies like the government or NGOs, but then explained they had benefited from training on fish handling, filleting and gutting facilitated by MFMR.

Views expressed by Buala respondents were that women do not fish like men do; women collect clamshells and other invertebrates, whereas men go out in the deep seas to catch yellow fin and island bonito, and dive for parrot fish.

Two female respondents who took part in the interviews sold fish and chips at the market from Monday through to Friday. They buy reef fish or fish caught from 'rafters' (the pijin term for fish aggregating devices) and sell their fish and chips at the market. Sometimes, their husbands catch fish for them, so the women save some money by not having to purchase from others. For these two women, they like going to the market because it is the only way to get money and also because they can *'meet friends, relax while kids are looked after by husband'*. They felt they received good earnings from selling fish and chips, but one challenge was getting the capital needed to start up a business. Both women felt that husbands and wives make decisions together. Their family household has a saving box where they put all their savings – an initiative by the family. They reported that there is no assistance from outsiders (government or NGOs) provided.

#### 4.6.3 Fish market case study 3 – Maromaro Market, Guadalcanal

Respondents were first asked to describe their fishing activities and the species they focused on. Four of the respondents were fishers and fish sellers who come to Maromaro market every day to sell their fish catch. The other three male respondents were fishers from Honiara Central Market. All respondents noted that they focus on fishing for sale (rather than home consumption) and listed the following fish: snapper, king fish, marlin, emperor, barracuda, reef fish, bonito and buma. Respondents identified mangatata, silver fish, mamula, roma and snapper as fish types they never sold much before. A male respondent said that demand for king fish and marlin (i.e. white meat fish) was relatively high nowadays compared to the past, due in particular to the Chinese restaurant and hotel owners who buy that fish for making fish and chips. In making comparison to the past, one female respondent said she no longer sold king fish and box fish because *'fishermen do not go to the places where these species exist. Also, changes in weather affect our fishing trips'*. As in Central Island Province, the common fishing method used is hand and fishing line with hooks and fish baits (luto, small fish used as baits). Nets and spear guns are not much used except for one respondent who mentioned that he sometimes uses nets. Two of the respondents said that their wives helped them to catch fish, whereas others fish with their brothers.

All respondents stated that men and women like coming to the market. A male respondent commented: *'Women like to come to the market to buy food, vegetables and fish. Few come to sell their food products and fish for income'*. A female respondent said: *'Yes, I like coming to the market to pass time and to tell stories with other women. People from Patmos<sup>4</sup> started this market so that's why we come here all the time.'* This social element of marketing was reflected in other responses.

Men and women farmers travel to the market to sell their produce. Like in Central Province, women mainly come to the market to sell garden produce (potato, pana, and taro) vegetables, cooked food like baked fish to earn a little money for them and their family. Some women travel to the Honiara Central Market to sell fish, while their husbands have a rest: *'Sometimes women come (too) to sell for their families while their husbands rest after a fishing trip'*. Others come to sell chickens (uncooked). Another respondent stated he does not like his wife to sell other things (e.g. woven baskets) when helping him to sell fish because *'it looks bad that they are selling baskets while everyone is selling fish'*.

<sup>4</sup> Patmos refers to a small island formed by the Lungga River which is located East of Honiara. The island is situated within the River Bay and is close to the open sea.

There was a range of views about how decisions were made in relation to marketing and income. A woman explained that, as the wife, she makes decisions regarding what to eat, stating: *'I decide on that as the mother of the house.'* A male respondent commented: *'Husband and wife make decisions. Husbands make decisions on fish while wife pay goods, coffee mix.'* At the household level, both husband and wife make decisions on what to do and how the money they earn should be used. A male respondent said that: *'Decisions in the household are made by me and my wife. We use the money for school fees, water bills and shopping. We also have to pay a market fee here.'* (referring to Honiara Central Market). A female respondent said: *'The money from the fish sold is used to buy water, rice, salt, cabbage. I decide and tell the household on what to buy.'* Good income is earned from fish selling as a female respondent commented: *'We get good money from selling fish. We earn about \$2,000-\$3,000 if the weather is good. We need good engine and esky to earn more income.'* A male respondent when he was asked about money earned from fishing and what is needed to improve income, said: *'Good catch is sold for \$500 to \$1,000. I need an esky, fishing gears to earn more income. People using canoes (dugout) need OBM.'*<sup>5</sup>

When asked to think about how fishing and marketing of fish had changed, respondents explained that traditionally, fishing skills, tools and knowledge were passed on to the young generations. Back in the day, young children (but in particular boys) were taught by the old people, or elders, how to catch fish and know where the fishing spots were. A male respondent described how *'in the past, they teach us to fish. Where to fish and knowledge of fish'*. When asked if men and women were involved in fishing in the past respondents said there was less involvement of women overall, and that women were less involved in deep-sea fishing and concentrated their efforts on the reefs or nearby coastal areas. One male respondent commented: *'In the past, women do not fish. Maybe because of the distance from the sea but also their role was to collect shells. Nowadays, women in Honiara fish every day'*. In general it was noted that participation in fishing had increased, whereas in the past fish were taken for special occasions and not so much for selling.

#### 4.6.4 Fish market case study 4 – Honiara Central Market, Guadalcanal

The MFMR coordinate an ongoing data collection effort (HapiFis) at the Honiara Central Market, collecting data on fish being marketed. Those data are not presented here, but their analysis and presentation would provide a more quantitative and broad scale perspective on fish marketing. For the purposes of this study, we conducted a short period of observation and follow up interviews, observing that both men and women sell fish in Honiara Central market. Interviews highlighted that most of the women who sell fish do not actually catch the fish themselves, but sell for and with their families (i.e. son or daughter, niece, brother), or help husbands to sell their fish catch/esky. Those who sell their esky fish have mainly been fishing in Central (Russell, Buena Vista), Isabel and Western Provinces and esky fish come into the Honiara Central Market from these three provinces every day. Male fishers who catch fish and bring their eskies to market are referred to as the 'originals'. Those who buy fish from the originals are referred to as the 'middle-men' or 'black-market sellers'. One male fisher reported that most men are involved in black-market fish selling. These middle men buy fish or have their eskies from Isabel or Central, Western provinces. The middle men are mostly from Malaita. Women who sell esky fish are mostly from Malaita, particularly North Malaita, and are selling fish on behalf of their family or relatives – the eskies have been transported (via transport ferries MV Kosco or Anjennett) from Noro, Western Province to Honiara.

Bonito fish are commonly sold. A 30-40 cm size bonito is sold at \$20 but its price will vary depending on the fish supply and demand of the public. People felt that good income is earned from selling fish at Central Market. Some of the fish sellers, particularly men, had attended training on fish handling provided by the MFMR (i.e. the from HapiFis team) but no further assistance or support is provided after that. Respondents felt that there was a need for assistance from government and identified the provision of better fishing gear and outboard motors as assistance that would increase income from the fish-trade business.

<sup>5</sup> outboard motor





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## 5. Institutional capacity – Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources

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MFMR works closely with MDPAC on government-funded development projects and programmes and reporting, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The ministry works with MWYCA on gender-related issues and aligns any gender policy to national policies and acts. There is little collaboration with the Ministry for Culture and Tourism, however. As the ministry responsible for taboo areas in communities and documentation of traditional knowledge and skills, there is merit in linking up on areas of common interest. The Ministry of Finance and Treasury is responsible for recurrent budgets and allocations to each ministry. The Statics Division of the Ministry of Finance is an entry point for gender mainstreaming work as they conduct national surveys and could include gender-related indicators. The MFMR should try to be part of the taskforce for the upcoming national census to ensure there are questions on gender inclusion in fisheries participation in all areas of the fisheries sector, country wide. The Ministry for Provincial Government works closely with the provinces and all fisheries development at provincial level will be best conducted through linking up with the Ministry of Provincial Government. The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change works closely with MFMR on community-based marine resource management, on identification of taboo sites and the work on the Convention of International Trade of Endangered Species.

Gender work does not feature high in the work of MFMR. There is little understanding of gender issues and there is little capacity to do the work. Gender differences have not been specifically addressed, although work in some divisions, such as the CBRM and the Aquaculture Division, specifically targets women's and men's participation. This has been mostly in ensuring a balance in participation, rather than in the more useful aspect of engagement of women in decision-making processes. The permanent secretary has the mandate to support gender work and this has been evident in recruitment of staff and in engagement in workshops and forums where there is an attempt to have gender balance. Otherwise, there has not been much gender progress in addressing gender differences.

MFMR, in partnership with the WorldFish Center, developed a strategy for mainstreaming gender in Fisheries in 2011 (2011–2013). The main objectives of the strategy were to provide a gender-sensitive approach to the translation and implementation of the MFMR corporate plan 2011–2013 and to develop gender-integrated programmes as prioritised in the plan. The strategy targeted the improvement of access to markets, improvement of health of fisheries and marine resources, and increased skills and knowledge of partners in fisheries development. The strategy was to be implemented through the MFMR/World Fish partnership, and gender focal points within the ministry and World Fish were to be responsible for ensuring that the strategy was effectively implemented. Four out of eight staff of the MFMR reported that there was a lack of knowledge of the strategy and there was a lack of awareness and proper training on its implementation. This highlights the need for greater involvement of MFMR in the planning and development of the strategy to ensure ownership and accountability for its implementation.

### 5.1 Political will/ commitment to gender mainstreaming

Demonstrated political will in terms of gender mainstreaming means that action is taken on stated gender equality commitments and action is formalised within systems and mechanisms to ensure mainstreaming is sustainable. A measure of political will is the enactment of policies and legislation referring to gender equality. Political will and commitment to include gender mainstreaming is more evident now in MFMR. As in other ministries, the increased number of women employed, two of them now at deputy director level at MFMR, is seen as progress in political support. Six of the eight MFMR staff said that gender inclusive work has not

been the focus of work done by the MFMR, but there is political will that could be utilised to support gender mainstreaming. A gender mainstreaming strategy for example, was developed in 2011 (2011–2013) but has now expired. There was no implementation plan, and little knowledge of it or of its use. Four of the staff interviewed acknowledged that there had been no advocacy work on it and little understanding of the need for gender inclusive approaches to work. It was also acknowledged by five of the eight staff interviewed that for a gender strategy to be sustained, there needs to be involvement and buy-in of staff to ensure its implementation.

At least three staff in management positions were described as gender champions who can help progress the work on gender mainstreaming. The Corporate Plan, and the Inshore Fisheries Strategic Plan make no specific reference to gender inclusion, but commitment to gender inclusion has been evident in there being a gender focal point in the ministry. From interviews with staff of MFMR, four out of nine stated that there is not enough understanding of gender issues and how to conduct gender analysis and assessments. Those interviewed who were at senior level in the MFMR emphasised the fact that discussions on gender mainstreaming should happen at the ministry level before it can happen at the community level. These discussions will also identify the role of staff, what each division or unit will try to achieve, and have staff at management and all other levels engaged.

### 5.1.1 Sectorial policies and plans

The presence of gender focal points in all line ministries shows some degree of commitment to progressing gender equality, but following through and committing to doing gender analysis of projects was not evident. A gender stocktake conducted by SPC for the government (SPC 2012), the development of a Gender and Women in Development Policy, the Country Gender Assessment for Solomon Islands (2015) all indicate increasing commitment to mainstreaming gender in the sectors. Following through on implementation of these policies can then be practical indicators of this commitment.

Four line ministries rated political will as high, while the other five, rated it medium to low. This shows some progress from the gender stocktake (SPC 2012) results five years ago, when five out of the 15 ministries interviewed rated political will as high. However, similar to findings from the stocktake, political will varied from high to low in the different line ministries. Examples of an increase in political will cited were the development of the Gender and Women in Development Policy (2016), and the inclusion of gender considerations in policy documents in the various ministries, including MDPAC, the Ministry of Public Service, the Prime Minister's Office and the MWYCA.

Those who rated political will as medium noted that, although there has been progress in the recognition of gender as a development issue and there has been improved understanding of gender issues, the uptake to have these gender considerations part of development planning is not there as yet. MWYCA, MDPAC, MECDM, the Ministry of Public Service and MOF have policies that make reference to gender inclusion, but the respondents who were mostly at senior level in the ministries or who were gender focal points raised the point that there was a need for more targeted training to ensure better awareness and understanding of how to conduct gender analysis and assessments in projects. Five of the ten line ministries had little interaction with MFMR and gender political will within these ministries was low. This included the ministries of agriculture, culture, provincial governments and finance, and the Policy Unit of the Office of the Prime Minister.

### 5.1.2 Perceived barriers and overcoming barriers

Of the 18 people who were interviewed or were part of the focus group discussions, more than half identified the lack of awareness and training on gender inclusive work to be a main barrier. Two MFMR respondents stated that policies at the moment are in a state of disarray, with project strategies and work plans in place but no overarching policy to ensure consistency and strategic addressing of issues in the different divisions and sections. In MFMR, five of the eight staff interviewed also made reference to lack of awareness and training



as primary barriers to gender inclusion work. From discussions with the CBRM section and other divisions of MFMR there is little evidence of sex disaggregated data being collected. The only data available- are from projects such as PROCFISH work in 2006, the HAPIFIS project on fish markets (2015–2016) and other WorldFish studies. The CBRM section collects data on gender participation at meetings and workshops but no proper gender analysis has been done on projects or programmes by MFMR, as this has not been a priority area in the past. Some gender analysis has been done by WorldFish, as part of fisheries management and value chain analysis work.

The CBRM respondent, highlighted how, in many instances, women targeted species within the coastal zone but that these species are not accounted for in management decisions. This is in part due to the trend that women are not included – or are included less than men – in decision-making about management, unless deliberately inclusive strategies are employed (e.g. Schwarz *et al.* 2014). In addition, almost all staff made reference to there being no human or financial resources allocated to support gender inclusive work in fisheries planning and management.

The SPC national gender stocktake (SPC 2012) mentioned the lack of awareness and training as the main barrier to progressing gender work. This has not changed much in the last years, despite the progress in policies and legal enabling mechanisms. NGOs interviewed also supported the views of government on the lack of awareness and training on gender.

There is low to medium understanding of gender issues in the different sectors of work in the Fisheries Division. From discussions with respondents from line ministries, three out of the ten respondents had a good understanding of gender issues. The rest had heard references to gender inclusion in policies but had little knowledge of what this required. In MFMR, all respondents interviewed understood technical and scientific information relating to the use and management of fisheries resources but knew little about the social aspects of the sector. There is definitely a need for training for better understanding of gender issues in all divisions of the ministry. The training should cover the differential uses of the coastal zone by men and women, the different access and user rights of resources, value chains and the participation of men and women, and marketing and distribution networks for fisheries products. From this training, staff should be able to acquire competence on gender analysis and assessments and the inclusion of men and women in community-based work and ensuring practical participation of women.

Of the eight respondents from MFMR interviewed, two had attended a gender workshop run by WorldFish. Gender training needs to be regularly conducted and it is important to determine what the training is for, what the outcomes will be and what will be the final outcome in terms of food security and livelihoods work. Lack of sex-disaggregated data and the low level of understanding of gender issues were similar to barriers to political commitment mentioned in the national gender stocktake report (SPC 2012).

Eight of the ten line ministries interviewed, highlighted the need for awareness, training and capacity-building. Capacity-building and training were proposed by six out of the eight interviewed in MFMR. Collection of sex-disaggregated data was also raised by most respondents as necessary to making decisions and planning in their respective ministries. Re-allocation of resources or targeted resource allocation to support gender work was suggested by at least four of the line ministries involved in the interviews. Unless there is strategic targeted intervention and a systematic approach to address gender inequality, there will not be much change to the current gender relations. NGOs and civil society organisations, provincial governments and the National Council of Women were mentioned by six of the ten ministries interviewed as providing key support systems for gender mainstreaming work. These organisations have their networks on the ground, are familiar with mechanisms and dynamics for working in communities and know how to link communities to government services and networks.

## 5.2 Technical capacity

Technical skills refers to the skills and experience that organisations can draw on to support gender and human rights mainstreaming initiatives across and within their operations and programmes. The national gender stocktake report (SPC 2012) stated that gender and women and human rights cannot be properly mainstreamed without a pool of technically qualified experts, whose expertise line ministries can draw upon. Experts to do the work on gender mainstreaming is still a major lack in government ministries and almost all respondents referred to the MWYCA as the lead agency on gender work that should have required expertise.

Six of the respondents from MFMR indicated that technical capacity to do mainstreaming is low, stating that only one or two staff members can facilitate identification of gender issues but they have little capacity to integrate gender perspectives into programmes and projects. In the CBRM work, for example, only one person works on gender inclusion when working with communities and this entails making sure that women participate in CBRM activities. The Director of the Policy and Planning Unit is the gender focal point for MFMR and the position should be maximised as the lead in gender mainstreaming work, especially at policy-making level.

There are gender focal points in all line ministries of government, but discussions with five of the gender focal points from the ten line ministries reported that the capacity to address gender inequalities ranges from high to low. At least six of the ten respondents had not attended any gender mainstreaming training. It must be noted, however, that whilst this work was being carried out, the Ministry of Public Service, with support from the Pacific Community, was conducting gender training for all gender focal points and this training focussed on analyses and assessments of projects and gender mainstreaming. One gender focal point pointed out the need to have a wider buy-in, especially at the management and director level of work in ministries before gender mainstreaming can be successfully introduced.

For MFMR, a senior respondent suggested that the ministry deal with technical issues and work with MWYCA to conduct gender training. Only three of the eight interviewed thought that MWYCA should be involved directly, as they provided policy support for gender work in government. Most MFMR respondents interviewed agreed that there should be training and awareness work for all staff and there also should be targeted training for specific divisions, including the Aquaculture Division and CBRM. There is, however, a need to define gender mainstreaming and how to help the ministry understand this. It is obvious that there is no lack of political will and everyone has goodwill but there has been no conversation on what gender mainstreaming is and what it will achieve.

## 5.3 Organisational culture and accountability

Organisational culture and accountability refer to the extent to which the attitudes of staff and institutional systems, policies and structures support or marginalise gender equality as an issue.

### 5.3.1 Job descriptions and performance

Gender focal points have been appointed to all government ministries. According to the national gender stocktake report (SPC 2012), job descriptions and recruitments are done by the Ministry of Public Service (MPS) and only two ministries indicated reference to gender inclusion in their TORs. There has been a lot of progress in the work of the MPS, where gender issues have become an integral component of training for public servants.

MFMR also has a gender focal point, but the specific description of the work of the officer is not clear and most of what he/she currently does relates to representation of the ministry at gender-related meetings. Half of those interviewed in MFMR and other line ministries indicated that there was little opportunity for the gender focal

point to have discussions on gender issues or conduct gender assessments and gender analysis of projects. From discussions with five ministries out of ten, the feedback was that there is some support for gender inclusion at the management level in their respective ministries, but there needs to be awareness work and training at that level to ensure there is better understanding of issues discussed. From discussions with the three women in management positions in MFMR, mechanisms to support promotion and progress of women are not in place, and their progress to current positions had been based on merit. In MFMR at the top management level there are two women in the six posts. Women have to compete with men to hold positions at the management level and selection is based on merit.

### 5.3.1 Perceived barriers and overcoming barriers

Staff of MFMR are not required to make sure that men's and women's different needs are included in their work description and that the programmes and projects benefit women and men equally. Neither is gender inclusion written into their job descriptions or assessed in job performance processes. Only three of the line ministries indicated that there was some attempt to include gender in their work. Most of this is related to the field and community component of the work with MFMR, the Agriculture Ministry and MECDM. In these cases, the nature of the work requires community engagement and participation, which necessitate the involvement of **all** sectors of the community. Four out of ten interviews with line ministries indicated that a lot of national funding goes towards violence against women and other areas perceived to be exploitation, but little towards sector differential access, roles and responsibilities. Two staff of MFMR stated that the work on aquaculture, including gender in staff TORs, is not a priority and work done to address gender differences is negligible.

Lack of awareness and capacity was cited in the national gender stocktake report (SPC 2012) as the main single barrier to gender incorporation into TOR. This has not changed, as interviews with MFMR staff and with the various line ministries also highlighted the urgent need for awareness and capacity building. Respondents from five out of ten line ministries were of the view that there was not enough awareness and understanding of gender work to have this included in their TORs. If this were part of the training conducted for public servants, work on gender could be assessed. Three respondents from line ministries indicated the need for training on gender analysis and mainstreaming by the MWYCA. The training should be at all levels to ensure the buy-in at the highest level. Four of the eight respondents in MFMR argued that all staff in the Technical Division should be responsible for gender inclusion in their work. The gender focal point can be responsible for general ministry-wide gender mainstreaming but responsibility for implementation of gender inclusive approaches should be with all staff.

Three of the eight staff interviewed in MFMR thought that gender-related indicators should be included in TORs. From discussions with MFMR, most respondents said that qualified staff were more open-minded and ongoing work in the ministry can be tailored to be more inclusive of women. Most respondents in the line ministries emphasised the need for more training of focal points, who can then conduct regular internal training for staff.

## 5.4 Financial resources

The national gender stocktake report (SPC 2012) indicated that the Solomon Island Government does not provide sufficient funding for gender equality work. In discussions with line ministries and MFMR, almost all respondents made reference to there being no gender mainstreaming funding because it is still not a priority area of work. This is also true for MFMR, where gender inclusive work is not prioritised. MOF and MDPAC, however, referred to existing policies and mechanisms that could be capitalised on to ensure funding of gender-related work. There has also been no funding of gender mainstreaming by development partners because this work has not been an indicative area of needed support. Discussions with MOF staff indicate there is no budget

or expenditures especially set aside to target gender equality work. For MFMR, until gender mainstreaming and gender equality are included as part of fisheries development and management goals, there will be little or no funding for the promotion of gender equality. From the eight respondents interviewed in MFMR only three responded to questions on financing of gender work.

#### 5.4.1 Perceived barriers and overcoming barriers

Lack of awareness on the importance of gender work and the lack of financial support were cited by those who responded to questions on finance, as contributing most to the lack of gender responsive budgeting. Respondents from six of the ten line ministries emphasised that there first has to be work on gender inclusion at the sector level, before engaging in gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

To facilitate gender budgeting, enabling policies at national level need to be identified and links to community priorities strengthened to start incorporating this. Those who responded to questions on budgeting and finance highlighted the need for awareness work on gender mainstreaming and the need for more supportive mechanisms and frameworks to create buy in at policy and implementation levels in government ministries.

### 5.5 Existing mechanisms to improve accountability for gender mainstreaming

National policies in various ministries (e.g. MDPAC and MWYCA), the Policy Unit of the Prime Minister's Office and other line ministries are enabling mechanisms for the promotion of gender and human rights.

NGOS (e.g. WorldFish, TNC, SICCP), networks (e.g. SILMMA), multi-actor initiatives (the Coral Triangle Initiatives) and smaller CSOs work within the fisheries sector space and most are involved in fisheries management and development, research and monitoring work. NGOs are the links to the communities for government ministries and MFMR works closely with NGOs and CSOs in community related work.

Development partners that have worked with the Ministry of Fisheries in the last five years include the governments of Australia, New Zealand and USA; ADB; the World Bank; UNDP; UN Women and RAMSI. Other development partners have provided assistance through collaborative work with other sectors. Development partners, through the Pacific Community and other regional organisations, also shape the priorities and direction of work at national level.

MWYCA has close links with the Solomon Islands National Council of Women (SINCW), which has representatives in every province and does ongoing work there. Working with SINCW will help forge links between women in provinces and communities.

There are established links and coordination between MFMR and most government institutions, but there is a need for better coordination with some line ministries, such as the Ministry of Culture, the Agriculture Ministry and the Ministry for Provincial Government, especially in community engagement, as these ministries work directly with provinces and communities. All of those interviewed in MFMR insisted that, for gender mainstreaming to take place, there is a need to understand gender mainstreaming and what it means for MFMR before there are discussions on what should be done in programmes and projects.

Ethnicity and culture are significant factors in gender relations in Solomon Islands. The traditional culture, *kastom*, dictates the role of women and men. *Kastom* is based on traditional beliefs and social norms, rooted partly in ancestor and partly in male worship (JICA 2010). Gender roles and social norms are important factors that can influence the way men and women participate in resource use and extraction. All gender work at the community level should be contextualised to gain support by the people.

### 5.5.1 Key supports

The *Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020* creates a framework to promote women's greater participation in decision-making roles. Yet the government lacks technical capacity, skilled staff, and adequate resources to implement major policy changes.

MFMR has increased its recruitment of women in various divisions over recent years and with the new MFMR corporate plan there will be further opportunities to increase the participation of women in areas such as aquaculture, which have formally been male dominated.

The fisheries policy currently being developed is an opportunity to include gender mainstreaming into all divisions of MFMR.

### 5.5.2 Factors to support gender-inclusive work

The Ministry of Public Service (MPS) has started gender training in all government ministries. MFMR should work closely with MPS on training of staff and on recruitment processes to ensure gender inclusion in TORs and on ensuring gender balance in recruitment and promotion processes.

There are specific roles of women in certain areas, such as in community-based marine resource management, aquaculture, marketing and distribution work, which can be leveraged to get support and recognition for women.

There are women in matrilineal societies in Solomon Islands and models of women's engagement can be piloted in these areas. Three provinces have strong matrilineal cultures and positive aspects of the culture can be leveraged to gain support for women.

The Department of Women is responsible for gender mainstreaming at national level, thus MFMR needs to strengthen links with MWYCA to facilitate work on gender mainstreaming and have strategic alliances in various areas of work, both at ministry level and in the work with women in communities. MWYCA could help provide training and facilitation of work done on gender mainstreaming at MFMR.

There should be a pool of trainers to meet the shortage in capacity in all line ministries. There needs to be more collaborative work on gender mainstreaming activities, such as training and capacity-building between sectors. For the future, SINCW should strengthen ties with MFMR through its CBRM projects and other government departments.

Mainstreaming gender into the Ministry of Fisheries means analysing changing gender roles and finding out where and how women's roles can be strengthened or supported. There has to be progress in the transition stage of gender inclusion work, where women's participation progresses from descriptions of their involvement in meetings and fishing activities, to an analysis of the different aspects of their participation.

The governance of fisheries resources in Solomon Islands is at two levels. The national government machinery is responsible for national issues through its various line ministries. At another level, there is the provincial level governance structure. The Ministry for Provincial Government coordinates development assistance to the provinces. At each provincial centre there are fisheries personnel, who work closely with Ministry of Fisheries staff. Provincial government activities are governed by the Provincial Government Act, which provides for provinces to make ordinances in relation to natural resources use and management. Provincial governance will support work on gender mainstreaming at the community level, thus links to the provincial offices need to be strengthened by MFMR.





Photo: Ariella D'Andrea, FAME, SPC

## 6. Institutional capacity provincial agencies

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Each survey started with a question on what the mandate was of the specific provincial department. It was clear from the responses that each provincial department had its specific provincial mandates. For instance, the Provincial Agricultural Department in Isabel implemented agricultural livelihoods projects for the national Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL); the Women's Development Desk (WDD) in Guadalcanal and Isabel Provinces prioritises the provision of activities and structures to support economic empowerment for women and youth. All Central and Guadalcanal provincial divisions worked closely with their respective counterparts from national government ministries. By contrast, they work very little with the other provincial divisions. Respondents thought that this was because of the sector-based viewpoint and silos. For instance, the Provincial Fisheries Officer would work closely with MFMR, but have little collaboration with the Provincial Agriculture Office. In Isabel Province, however, sharing field trip resources was reported, as well as open discussions about plans of divisional offices, most notably among the different offices within the Community Affairs Division and the Environment and Climate Change (ECC) Division. The Community Affairs Division is made up of the Tourism Desk, Culture Desk, Sports Desk and Youth Desk. It was observed that these were one-person cubicle offices in a single room, so they could easily have discussions amongst themselves and share resources across the office.

Although the analysis of relationships suggested links within sectors and across scales, compared to between sectors within the one scale (i.e. provincial level), some important problems in this province- national level relationship were noted. One respondent in Isabel Province stated that projects often come pre-designed from the national ministry and so, although planning and implementation happen at the provincial level, there is no room for tweaking of initiatives (implying that if gender is not considered in national level planning, it cannot be integrated at the provincial level). In Central Island Province, one respondent reported on a large data collection activity being a 'ward profiling' activity (led by the Ministry of Planning and Geographic Information Services) that is supposed to help provinces design programmes and development initiatives. The respondent was not certain whether the ward profiling was gender-sensitive and was also unsure whether the data were available or not (thereby indicating that there is a disconnect between the data collection activity and the users of the data). Ultimately, the recommendation from these insights is that the government ministries, at the national level, need to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into projects, and these should also be discussed with the provincial government before being carried out.

Respondents were asked to provide a list of other ministries or departments, civil society organisations (CSOs) and NGOs with which they worked. As expected, Guadalcanal Province (where the national capital Honiara is located) had the highest number of links with CSOs and NGOs, and also noted links to SPC, NDMO, the New Zealand and Australian High Commissions and NGOs like World Vision and Red Cross. Isabel Province noted the presence of only The Nature Conservancy (TNC) whose Isabel Environmental Program Manager also acts as a seconded Environment and Climate Change Division (ECCD) officer. Funding for the ECCD work is supported substantially through the contributions of TNC.

In terms of links with organisations with a mandate closely aligned to gender concerns, the strong active presence of the Mother's Union (a women's church group of the Anglican Church of Melanesia) was notable in Isabel, but not in the other two provinces. Through TNC's ridge-to-reef programme, the Mother's Union was brought on board, tasked to carry out advocacy work with communities on environmental issues relating to mining, the legal rights of landowners and general awareness on resource management. In addition, in the northern part of the province, TNC has helped to establish KAWAKI, a women's group belonging to women of Kagau, Wagina and Kia of the Arnavons Community Marine Conservation Area, which is Solomon Islands' first ever nationally registered marine protected area under the Protected Areas Act. The respondent reported

that the involvement of women in resource management was felt to be important due to the matrilineal system of heritage in the province.

There were no current and active links identified between the provincial government and NGOs in Central Province. World Vision used to be active, but is not active anymore. There is a World Vision office located in Tulagi, but no one is using it. In comments similar to those from Isabel Province, women in Tulagi were reported to be outspoken people in the area of conservation.

Respondents in all three provinces considered fishing activities to be male dominated and women's roles were restricted to activities such as collecting seaweed, shells and other sea resources on the reef and coastal areas. Kronen and Vunisea (2007) showed that, while women rarely go out and fish exclusively for finfish, they do play a major role in the collection of invertebrates. In Tulagi, women do not usually fish or engage in fishing activities. This was reported to be the same for the Buala Maringe Lagoon area. Women supported their husbands or male counterparts in cleaning fish and selling fish at local markets. Central Provincial fishers, however, often targeted their sales for the Central Honiara Market; in this case it was mostly the men's job. Most times, the men bring their own catch to sell in Honiara Market.

It was felt that women tended to be busy with agricultural farming activities and selling their garden produce at the local market. In terms of agricultural activities, the MAL officer in Isabel expressed the view that women engaged more in food security activities for household consumption, and men engaged in livelihoods for income-generation. When asked whether there were gender inequalities in accessing benefits from fisheries (or other sectors) the majority of respondents agreed there were (75% in Guadalcanal and 60% in Central Province). In Isabel, one respondent observed that low self-esteem among women in communities prevents them pursuing benefits in general. However, one respondent said that there was no gender inequality: *'People have the right to fish and do things. It depends on the women if they want to fish.'* One respondent felt that men's and women's relative benefits from agricultural activities do not differ, as benefits are at the household level.

Responses suggested that there were some attempts across all provinces to address gender inequality in different ways and to very different degrees, but the efforts are not specified in work plans and programmes and so are often discounted or are not coordinated but sporadic.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) has supported many of the activities in the three provinces through projects that promote crops such as copra and cocoa, and the establishment of piggeries. MAL has tried to address gender differences in how its livelihood/agricultural development programmes are delivered. Examples provided suggested this meant ensuring women were the target group for certain activities. In Isabel Province, women are the target for poultry, piggery and farming activities, as there is observed more success and smooth running of operations when women lead these compared to men. Most of these activities are government-funded projects. In Central Province MAL took a different approach, encouraging women to attend training offered (to both men and women), but stated that cocoa and coconut projects are targeted at men.

In terms of how provincial departments have addressed gender differences in programmes and service delivery, respondents took this to largely refer to women's participation in activities and stated that there is no united effort or discussion within each provincial level to address this. The perception seems to be that women's savings schemes, having women's grants and having the Women's Desk Officer (WDO) on board is 'addressing' gender differences or gender mainstreaming.

## 6.1 Key barriers and overcoming barriers

The lack of technical capacity was consistently raised as one of the main barriers to gender mainstreaming. All those interviewed at MFMR highlighted the need for capacity-building. Three of the eight MFMR



staff interviewed also indicated the need for tools and methodologies that could help them conduct gender assessments and gender analysis.

There has not been much training on gender and gender mainstreaming and almost half of all respondents from the ten line ministries identified this as a major challenge. The lack of technical capacity contributed to the lack of interest and pursuance of gender related work. Three of the ten ministries stated that this capacity building work could be done at inter-sectorial level to support exchanges and learning opportunities between ministries.

Most respondents said there should be support mechanisms in place and there is a need for continuous, targeted training for staff to boost confidence in providing technical assistance for gender mainstreaming. Six of the ministries interviewed stated the need to have a space for discussion at ministry level before gender mainstreaming work is implemented in communities. NGOs and development partners were in agreement that lack of technical capacity was a barrier to the work on gender and there should be collaborative work with CSOs on training and capacity-building to help address barriers. There was also the suggestion from two ministries, MWYCA and MECDM, to identify and build the capacity of gender champions.

## 6.2 Political commitment to gender mainstreaming

None of the three provinces noted the existence of a gender policy. Central and Isabel Provinces do, however, implement gender activities that are aligned to the current provincial government policy statements document. The document sets out the overall work of the provincial government, and all divisions develop their action plans and implement work that is aligned to the provincial government policy statement. It is unclear whether these provincial statements are aligned to the national government's policies or not. The Central Islands policy statement 2012–2016 is due for revision. The Guadalcanal provincial office does not have a gender policy, but it does have a gender policy component in the Women's Desk Division and it works in line with the Ministry of Women Policy.

Responses suggested that the provincial attention provided to social and gender issues varies across the provinces and also across the different departments, with a rating ranging from low to high. In Central Province, only one respondent stated that it was low, whilst the rest provided a rating of medium, and only one of the four interviews with the Guadalcanal Province officers provided a rating of high. When asked to elaborate further as to the reasons behind the ratings, a common reason provided for a 'high' score was that programmes put efforts into encouraging the active participation of women in meetings and projects. Another common reason for considering attention on gender issues to be medium to high was the existence (but not necessarily involvement or collaboration) of the WDD. The WDD was highlighted as the 'lead' for gender issues in the provinces and is considered an initiative to promote and advocate for addressing gender differences/issues.

In Isabel Province, 71% of respondents provided a medium to high rating, and highlighted four distinctive points that were not evident in the other provinces. The first was the matrilineal system of heritage. Because of this, respondents felt that the populace is aware of the important role of women and the need to include them in activities. Although respondents felt that the men often excluded women from much of the decision-making when it came to deliberations on economic development, there is no restriction to women's participation and contributions in decision-making. A study by Maetala (2009) shows that in the matrilineal systems in places like Isabel, Makira and Guadalcanal, women are seen as important decision-makers and decisions are often made with respect to the woman's position. Women do not, however, challenge the decisions and power of men because they were brought up to respect the elders. Findings of other research in Melanesia (e.g. Macintyre, 2008) show that it is false to assume that, in a matrilineal descent system, women are more empowered in decision-making than in a patrilineal descent system

The second reason for giving a medium to high rating highlighted the existence of the Isabel Council of Chiefs (ICC). The province is governed using a tripod system – chief, church and provincial government. TNC and WDD are reported to be members of the ICC in an advisory capacity and, as such, have the opportunity to bring gender and environmental issues to the forefront. In a recent meeting of ICC, a recommendation (which was ultimately supported) was submitted to the Paramount Chief for the official recognition of women in the matrilineal system in customary marine tenure, and that this should mean that their role in resource management should also be recognised.

The third reason was the active existence of the Mother's Union and its resource management advocacy activities under the TNC programme.

The fourth reason was the fact that women have access to development grants through the Provincial Capacity Development Fund and the Rural Capacity Fund.

There was little evidence of institutional commitment to gender mainstreaming by any of the provincial departments. A male respondent from Guadalcanal Province Lands Office stated: *'There is no framework put in place specifically for gender.'* However, in Central Province there have been some activities that pay attention to social/gender issues – largely through WDD. Generally, all responses from the Guadalcanal Provincial Government Office showed there was low to medium attention to social or gender issues, even with the existence of WDD and its effort to implement gender activities. One male respondent from the Fisheries Division commented: *'There is no emphasis on gender with one Women's Development Desk,'* and another said: *'To carefully address gender issues is an expensive exercise. There is no clear budget allocated to address gender equality – need extra money or, other resources.'* According to the Administration/Finance and WDD divisions, gender/social issues are based on staff employment and well-being. It was not clear from information gathered what activities WDD undertakes in Guadalcanal Province. However, in Central Province, the WDD officer gave a rating of high attention for gender issues and low for social issues. WDD attempts to address gender issues by implementing the economic empowerment of women and young girls through the savings club initiative. As part of this initiative, material such as dye for dyeing clothes to sell was provided. WDD works with the Tulagi women's saving club, referred to as Vaivine, as a means to take care of the social issues in the province. Overall, in Central Province and Guadalcanal Province, respondents gave a rating of low to medium in mainstreaming gender.

Three common constraints noted across all provinces were the lack of awareness of gender issues by leaders and officers, culture and people's perceptions of gender and women's roles, and a lack of funding to resource offices to do work in terms of funding and human resources (each discussed in the subsequent sections). Another constraint was limitations in working in partnership with national ministries. One WDD mentioned that, although she requests to be involved in MWYCA work and training in communities, she is bypassed in favour of working with community development officers instead. Yet another constraint, highlighted by the Mothers' Union<sup>6</sup> in Isabel Province, was that there is often disagreement by people on the overall work of the Mothers' Union and their foray into resource management advocacy work, stating that it should focus on church work for women instead. These are common gender biases and are a reflection of what people think of what a woman's work should be.

A male respondent in Central Province stated that a barrier was NGOs having different gender objectives. According to the respondent, if all NGOs worked together under one or the same objectives to achieve gender equality, it would be easy. There are too many NGOs, each having its own objectives/agenda/goals, and they come and go, bringing confusion on the work of gender in the province.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.themothersunion.org/about-us/where-we-work/worldwide/solomon-islands>

A number of suggestions were provided to overcome those constraints. Two common responses were: the need to develop a gender policy for each province, including the provincial government, and the need for gender training at the officer and leader levels. In Central and Isabel Provinces, the idea to formalise a women's committee was suggested. One respondent in Isabel Province stated that an Isabel council of women or a ward council of women to raise women's voices and concerns could be a way to overcome gender constraints.

### 6.3 Technical capacity

The absence of programmes to address gender inequalities was linked by respondents to the low level of awareness of gender issues and lack of resources provided. All respondents across the three provinces remarked that there was low level of understanding of gender issues by staff in provincial offices and almost all respondents stated that there were insufficient resources to support integration of gender issues. Overall capacity for integration of gender into programmes and services was reported to be low in terms of organisational culture, technical capacity, financial resources, and commitment and leadership.

Nearly all respondents pointed to the WDD officer as the gender focal point because of the title, although one WDD officer stressed that gender mainstreaming is not her mandate. Whilst each province has WDD officers, this emerges as insufficient to address and mainstream gender into the programmes of other agencies. A respondent from WDD explained that, while she is always inclusive in implementing her gender-responsive activities, the lack of awareness and prioritisation of gender across other sectors of provincial government makes it hard.

The majority (seven out of ten) of respondents stated that they have participated in gender training or knew of officers who had attended gender training convened by the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCA). Despite this, all respondents felt that there is a need to increase the capacity of staff in their provincial government offices (a finding common across Guadalcanal, Central and Isabel Provinces). According to all respondents, there needs to be more gender training and awareness at the provincial level and it should focus particularly on leaders. Suggestions for building capacity included: adapting a participatory approach, creating a permanent provincial gender post/position, focusing training on other major sectors, integrating gender into community engagement work (for example, MAL extension officers), and utilising regional church gatherings.

### 6.4 Organisational culture and accountability

There were many perceptions about women's and men's roles, opportunities and potential that could be linked to culture or social norms. For example, women should be doing household chores, women are shy and so do not seek assistance from authorities, men do not appreciate women having higher roles than them. Similar views were also highlighted in the ADB *Solomon Islands Country Gender Assessment* (2016), e.g. women are responsible for raising children, running the household and providing food; men are authoritative in their decision on women's role in the home and community.

Although there are no coordinated or focused gender programmes, there are staff who lead discussions on gender (apart from the WDD), such as officers from MAL. The extent to which programmes take into account different needs of men and women depends entirely on staff implementing the work. The Agriculture Division in two of the three provinces does undertake initial gender assessments by using a participatory research approach (PRA) and so are able to identify gender issues and facilitate training that involves both men and women.

Concerning accountability for improving gender mainstreaming, respondents in Guadalcanal Province commented that it is everyone's responsibility to address gender issues. The WDD was again highlighted as the lead office for accountability but one WDD officer said that if gender is allocated to a specific ministry budget, there should be an administrative body with the responsibility to monitor the funding for gender programmes and progress.

No females held any of the top positions of Premier, Provincial Secretary or Chief Administrative Officer in all three provinces. In Guadalcanal Province, respondents could not identify any mechanisms that would support and promote women as leaders. Two respondents in Isabel Province identified the WDD as the office to promote women as leaders. In addition, the Mothers' Union and the Girl's Friendly Society (GFS), a young girls' club under the Anglican Church, were identified as options to provide training for women's leadership. The GFS was, however, inactive at the time of survey. Respondents frequently named the WDD and the provincial premier as champions for supporting gender work; other people mentioned included officers from the health and medical services who had raised awareness in communities about NCDs and other illnesses.

To create a receptive environment for gender-responsive planning, there needs to be raised awareness of gender and gender issues by officers, most particularly the leaders in the province, as ultimately it is the leaders who approve the budgets. According to all respondents from the three provinces, partnerships and networks should also be sought and strengthened. Gender programmes and activities could be featured in meetings and discussions, and work reports could be distributed to all staff and captured in annual reports. This could all be encapsulated in the development of a gender policy.

## 6.5 Financial resources

Financing of gender mainstreaming processes and programmes is inadequate and lacking. National ministries provide funding to their provincial offices but this is not for gender-focused activities. Independent provincial budgets are available but, unless there are specific gender programmes put forward, no funding will be allocated to gender. In all three provinces, all divisions, including WDD staff and programme, are funded by the provincial government through the Provincial Capacity Development Fund (PCDF), which was mentioned by Central and Isabel Province respondents as a source of financial support. PCDF is sourced by the Provincial Government Strengthening Programme (PGSP), a programme that acts as an implementing agency of the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS). PGSP assists and financially supports all provincial government offices in Solomon Islands.

Increasing financial resources available for gender-responsive or gender-focused work is constrained for a number of reasons. First is that provincial coffers depend entirely on revenue sources and budget forecasts, the former being from grants to the province from the national ministries and from income generated at the provinces. This is exacerbated by the narrow economic base reported in Central and Isabel Provinces. A second constraint that one respondent suggested is that, even when funding is allocated to gender-responsive programmes, it may be misused or shifted away from women's programmes towards other areas (perceived to be of higher priority). An example was provided where a Finance Ministry staff member reduced the budget that had initially been allocated when it became evident that the programme it was intended for would target both men and women, stating that men should not be involved in the programme when it is a WDD activity.

## 7. Gender analysis of current MFMR policies and legislation

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There is a range of regional and global priorities and policies of relevance to the fisheries sector in Solomon Islands: the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, The Pacific Plan, the Revised Pacific Platform of Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality (2005–2015) and the Pacific Leaders' Declaration on gender equality, which was reiterated in the last Forum leaders' meeting in 2016.

In terms of recent fisheries policy developments, in 2015, 126 countries globally made voluntary commitments to *Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (FAO 2015). These guidelines contain extensive commitments to gender and social equity. In terms of Pacific fisheries policy, the recent publication, *A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy* (SPC 2015), is described by some to mark a step-change in mainstreaming gender into fisheries (Andrew 2017). Specifically, the strategy states:

Gender relations have a significant effect on the course of development and so the voice of women and youth must be heard and acted upon effectively in all future CEAFM<sup>7</sup> strategies. In addition to playing a greater role in decision-making, women and youth must have more equitable access to the benefits flowing from coastal fisheries.

Outcome # 7 of the strategy commits to 'More equitable access to benefits and decision making within communities, including women, youth and marginalised groups,' and management plans should 'take account of equity issues, especially those involving gender and youth'.

Commitments to gender are not, as yet, reflected in Solomon Island national level policies. For example, a systematic analysis of Solomon Islands environment and fisheries policies/strategies found that gender was rarely mentioned (Table 3 – highlighted in red). Where gender was mentioned, it was often only in a very superficial manner (Cohen, Song & Morrison 2017). One of the few mentions of gender occurred in the *Principles for best practice for community-based resource management (CBRM) in Solomon Islands* (Alexander *et al.* 2011; considered a policy, given the broad commitment made to these principles through the Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Area Network), briefly noting that in the early stages of establishing CBRM;

An understanding of the social fabric, livelihoods and issues within the community will help target programs towards the most appropriate community sectors, take advantage of existing networks or governance structures and ensure broad and inclusive participation of all stakeholders. A gender analysis is recommended.

Important socio-economic information includes: Tribal structure, languages, cultural and religious values, local governance system, role of church, existing interest groups or information networks, leadership, resource ownership, livelihoods, assets, gender roles and the role of children, conflicts, issues and threats, expectations for CBRM.

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<sup>7</sup> community-based resource management



**Table 3.** The 22 most cited Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines). Guidelines themes and their presence (indicated by grey) or absence (white) in regionally, nationally and provincially relevant policies and law (Source: Cohen *et al.* 2017)

		Monitoring research info / awareness raising	Fisher participation	Gender	Human rights	Institutional coordination and strengthening	Tenure rights	Human and social development	Climate change	Adaptive capacity	Management for sustainability	Post-harvest economic development	Co-management	Co-management	International fish trade	Equitable access and distribution	Integrated approaches	Compliance	Resource competition	Safety at sea	Transboundary fishing	Migration	Political recognition
	SSF Guidelines*	20	17	17	16	16	14	10	9	8	8	8	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	^
Regional	MSG Roadmap																						
	New Song																						
National	Constitution																						
	Fisheries Act																						
	MFMR Corp plan																						
	SI-CTI NPOA																						
	SI NAPA																						
	SI Dev Strategy																						
	CBRM Principles																						
Sub-national	Western Ordinance																						
	Malaita Ordinance																						

In Solomon Islands, all government agency leaders are contractually accountable to the Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy. However, informal discussions with leaders of fisheries and environment departments indicate that ‘clear, targeted sector-based gender policies are absent, and in practice human and fiscal capacity are too low to meaningfully consider gender’ (Pers. Comm. Agnetha Vave-Karamui, Ministry of Environment, Solomon Islands). Similarly, both government and NGO partners of FIS/2012/074 said that donors are calling for gender to be considered within community-level engagements, yet they state they do not have adequate capacity to meet these obligations in a meaningful way. These trends are probably similar in other Pacific countries.

## 8. A gender mainstreaming strategy

MFMR has a *Gender Implementation Strategy 2011–2014*, now out of date. In consultations, MFMR staff expressed their wish that, rather than develop a new strategy, they revise and make current this strategy, in particular increase its alignment with the new MFMR Strategy 2017–2019, the MFMR Corporate Plan 2015–2018 and the four focal areas (Table 4). As a result, revisions made to the strategy are aligned to each of the four MFMR focal areas which are mapped to the Democratic Coalition for Change policy objectives as in the MFMR Corporate Plan 2015–2018.

**Table 4.** MFMR focal areas and Democratic Coalition for Change policy objectives

MFMR focal area	Democratic Coalition for Change policy objective
Focal area 1. Fisheries resources and ecosystem management	c. Improve and strengthen the contribution of small-scale fisheries to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security and socio-economic benefits of fishing communities
Focal area 2. Private sector development and investment	d. Establish a market-led sustainable aquaculture development throughout the country e. Distribute the benefits of Solomon
Focal area 3. Fisheries compliance	h. Improve and increase the contribution of commercial and large-scale tuna fisheries to national revenue generation, food and nutrition security and socio-economic benefits of Solomon Island citizens
Focal area 4. Governance and institutional development	Review the Fisheries Act

On 3 August 2017, a meeting was held at MFMR to discuss what these revisions should be. Meeting attendees were representatives from WorldFish (Delvene Boso, Chelcia Gomese, Helen Teioli) and MFMR, representing a range of MFMR divisions (Rosalie Masu, Nina Taniveke, Assaneth, Duta, Sylvester, Ivory Akao, John Leqata, Alex Carlos, Stenneth Atu, Lionel Luda). Each division was asked to look at cooperate plan, the now out-of-date *Gender Implementation Strategy* (particularly activities and indicators) and consider the work of their respective divisions. Each division made suggestions as to how gender could be better accounted for. The results of the discussion are reflected in the revisions to the strategy as ‘Key Activities under the identified priorities of the MFMR Corporate Plan 2011-2013’ (Table 5).

**Table 5.** MFMR key strategy activities and indicators

DIVISION	KEY STRATEGY ACTIVITY By 2019 we will have...	INDICATOR We will have succeeded by 2019 if...
MFMR (Ministry wide)	<p>...conducted gender training for MFMR staff;</p> <p>...conducted training on analyzing sex disaggregated data to inform policy and decision-makers on the status of women;</p> <p>...developed a template for divisional reporting of gender activities and issues; and</p> <p>...adhered to an equal opportunity employment policy.</p>	<p>...gendered training has been conducted for all MFMR staff and has resulted in the planning and implementation of gender-specific interventions; and staff understand basic gender concepts in fisheries management;</p> <p>...sex disaggregated data are summarised in annual reports and utilised to inform policy and MFMR activities;</p> <p>...MFMR's annual reports include a section on gender activities conducted by each division; and</p> <p>...MFMR is recognised by staff and sector partners as having an equal opportunity employment policy and has increased the ratio of female to male staff, particularly in the Aquaculture and Provincial Fisheries Divisions.</p>
Offshore	<p>...developed two or three principles for engagement of MFMR compliance officers, with attention to female staff safety.</p>	<p>...the principles for engagement of MFMR compliance officers have been drafted and implementation is reported in ministry progress reports.</p>
Provincial Fisheries	<p>...developed community fisheries centres that provide for business and/or employment opportunities for women.</p>	<p>...business and employment opportunities for women and communities have been identified and implemented.</p>
Aquaculture	<p>...conducted a gendered market chain analysis for seaweed and tilapia activities in Solomon Islands; and</p> <p>...conducted training in seaweed and tilapia farming, together with business training for women.</p>	<p>...gendered market chain analysis has resulted in planning and implementation of gender-specific interventions in aquaculture activities; and...</p> <p>...men's and women's knowledge about farming, handling, financial management and marketing of seaweed and tilapia has improved and more women are involved.</p>
Policy, planning and projects	<p>...equal representation of male and female staff in the Projects Technical Working Group.</p>	<p>...MFMR through the working group is making informed decisions on project requirements to accommodate gender sensitive measures.</p>
Research and Management Unit	<p>...obtained the view of women's groups and communities in the consultations of the Inshore Fisheries Regulations; and</p> <p>...developed key inshore species management plans incorporating analysis of sex disaggregated data and gendered views of key target stakeholders.</p>	<p>...the Inshore Fisheries Regulations are gazetted; and</p> <p>...the key inshore species management plans are drafted with gendered incorporations.</p>
CBRM Unit	<p>...developed awareness material that is targeted at different groups within a community, including women;</p> <p>...conducted training for CBRM staff on community fisheries management plans that incorporate women's contributions;</p> <p>...collected baseline surveys that include socio-economic information from areas conducting the surveys; and</p> <p>...strengthened partnerships with NGOs and community-based organisations.</p>	<p>...CBRM staff and provincial fisheries officers are able to provide gender-sensitive advice and information to communities interested in CBRM;</p> <p>...the CBRM Unit staff are trained on gender and have developed standard operating procedures for CBFM and making informed decisions; and</p> <p>...MFMR staff and sector partners are aware of the strategy and its alignment to the MFMR Corporate Plan 2015–2018 and MFMR Strategy 2017–2019.</p>

## 9. Recommendations

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- In terms of community-level management for coastal fisheries and community-level engagement of women and men in extension activities, there are lessons and guidance materials available. The application of these tools in fisheries management, fisheries extension and aquaculture extension provides a substantial opportunity to increase gender sensitivity and equity in management and extension activities, and in the resultant distribution of fisheries benefits.
- There is a rich body of literature on gender (broadly) in Solomon Islands, although most studies on coastal fisheries are gender blind. Solomon Islands attracts substantial research attention around marine resources and the fisheries sector. Explicit (well communicated and actively encouraged) national research priorities could promote sex-disaggregated research on fisheries use and benefit distribution, gender aspects of power and decision-making in resource management, and gender in livelihood initiatives. This may help reduce this research and information deficit and contribute to longer-term and more meaningful consideration of gender in the fisheries sector.
- Women continue to be largely involved in the fisheries sector. Their participation could be better quantified with research conducted by national and international researchers, and also with improvements of sex-disaggregation in regular MFMR-led monitoring activities.
- We reiterate the recommendation of Kruijssen *et al.* (2013): 'There are several potential entry points for upgrading marine resource value chains, including exploration of different models of coordination and collective effort among fishers and gleaners, especially for women, and provision of training and awareness on alternative processing options to improve fish and shellfish preservation in order to reduce wastage and increase shelf-life.' A key area for further research is how the performance of marine resource value chains can be improved without increasing pressure on the ecosystems that provide the products marketed through them.
- MFMR should try to be part of the taskforce for the upcoming national census to ensure that there are questions on fisheries participation that are sex-disaggregated.
- A formal request should be made to ensure the release of the complete version of the 2015 gender study of the fisheries sector by Barclay, Payne and Mauli (2015) to MFMR; it is currently available only in summarised form (Krushelnytska 2015).
- Increasing coordination and networking of MFMR with agencies with gender expertise offers substantial opportunities to increase capacity in a sustainable way.
- An updated gender mainstreaming strategy for MFMR will help identify loopholes and challenges in gender work carried out by the ministry and can also highlight areas of collaboration and networking with NGOs and partners which should be strengthened; action toward this recommendation was commenced during the preparation of this report.
- It is recommended that the efforts to update the MFMR gender strategy be continued – SPC and national partners should provide appropriate support upon request.
- The key activities and the monitoring and evaluation proposed by MFMR for inclusion in the gender strategy should be finalised and supported.
- Responses from provincial interviews made it clear that the mandate for provincial divisions and offices needs to be prescribed in a gender policy before attention can be paid to gender mainstreaming and work can be done towards it. WDD is leading the push for it in the provinces with a gender policy for the WDD, but this could be extended across the board.

- Given the importance and high reliance on WDD in the provinces, there should be direct consultation with WDD in the design of support or mainstreaming activities.
- In some provinces, there are other agencies and avenues that can be recognised and encouraged to build capacity around dealing with gender in environmental issues (i.e. via TNC, which has demonstrated success in acknowledging and working with gender in environmental management) rather than reliance on the provincial governments alone.
- Respondents in the provinces raised the point that they collaborated more at the national level than across sectors at the provincial level. A simultaneous pathway through which to build provincial capacity is to ensure that nationally designed activities (that will be delegated to the provincial level) have included gender as a key consideration.
- In the provinces examined in this study, there are often very few agencies with gender capacity. Without adequate planning and provision of support, a recommendation for increased coordination and networking between agencies at the provincial level might place a substantial burden on WDD (being, in some cases, the only agencies in the provinces with gender capacity).
- There is a role for continuous, targeted training for staff to ensure capacity-building to conduct gender mainstreaming. This training should be done through collaborative efforts with CSOs, MWYCA and MECDM, and also with NGOs that have current and proven training and gender capabilities. Strategies must simultaneously be employed that build the capacity and increase the voice of both male and female gender champions.
- There is a need for training for better understanding of gender issues in all divisions of MFMR. The training should cover the differential uses of the coastal zone by men and women, the different access and user rights to resources, value chains and the participation of men and women, and marketing and distributing networks for fisheries products. From the training, staff should acquire competence in gender analysis and assessment, in the inclusion of men and women in community-based work, and in ensuring the practical participation of women. Gender training should be conducted in collaboration with TNC, WorldFish, MWYCA (agencies that have demonstrated capacity in the area of gender and natural resources/fisheries management).
- Whilst gender training has a role to play in improving gender mainstreaming, there simultaneously needs to be work plans developed for MFMR and for gender focal points within other ministries – plans that align to ministerial gender work plans. This measure ensures that capabilities built into gender training are actually put into practice. This may include the development of reporting mechanisms to MWYCA.
- To facilitate gender budgeting, enabling policies at the national level need to be identified and links to community priorities strengthened to start incorporating this into the budgets of line ministries.
- There is substantial room for increased recognition of the national policies that already exist in various ministries (such as MDPAC, MWYCA, and the Policy Unit of the Prime Minister’s Office and other line ministries) that can be built on as enabling mechanisms for the promotion of gender and human rights.



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## 11. Appendices

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### Appendix 1 - Focus group discussion method, community level

**Our objective:** The objective of this focus group is to understand gendered aspects of the fisheries sector from community-level, men's and women's perspective. Given that this is being conducted in only one community, the data collected here are not broadly generalisable, but can be looked at alongside other local studies that have explored local fishing roles, participation, decision-making, marketing and management.

**The focus of these questions:** These questions focus on the different roles that men and women play in fishing, and also aquaculture (if relevant). They also touch on the socially constructed constraints and opportunities that men and women experience differently. The focus group is insufficient, however, to dig down into understanding the norms and relations in depth – it looks more at how these play out in terms of the fisheries sector.

**Group structure:** The focus group discussion will be conducted with groups of 5-10 men and women *separately*, and then the group will be brought together and results presented back. Ideally, and perhaps at a later date in a different study, these focus group discussions would be repeated and may already be a part of the establishment of management – if the data were compared and contrasted, that would allow for some broader patterns in men's and women's roles and opportunities around fisheries to be drawn.

**Discussion and notes:** Focus group discussions will be conducted in Pijin, and responses will be recorded in written English at the time – notes will be typed up upon return to the office. Note: for a focus group recording and then writing notes later doesn't work so well. When taking notes you not only record the final answers people give, but also the discussions taking place for people to arrive at an answer – this includes recording if some or one member disagrees.

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**Introduction:** Thank you for meeting with us today. Organisations like the Pacific Community [explain what that is] and WorldFish [explain who we are] want to learn about how women and men use marine resources for their livelihood. This information will help those organisations develop better support for people in Solomon Islands. [Please be careful to manage expectations – don't mention a "project" for example]. Today we want to hear from you about the way people here are involved in fishing – when we say that we mean all kinds of activities, from preparing fishing equipment, harvesting fish, shells, mangroves, etc. from coastal areas, cooking or selling what is harvested and looking after the resources in the sea. We will ask eight questions – please discuss them as a group – there is no right or wrong answer, we are really interested in all the different answers and thoughts that people have when we ask these questions.

### RESOURCE AND ACTIVITY MAPPING

Note to facilitator: These activities are discussed and described on page 46 of the manual 'Community-based marine resource management in Solomon Islands: A facilitator's guide'. Read that before heading out into the field to get a broad understanding of why and how do to this activity. More specific guidance for this particular task is provided below.

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Note to facilitator: Please ask respondents to draw a resource map of their village, indicating important places, especially for fishing and collecting resources, or for aquaculture (you can ask them to draw this first with your broad guidance and then ask Question 1 and Question 2 to get more specifics).

**Discussion Question 1:** For people from this village, which areas of rivers, sea or coast do: (a) men fish or gather marine resources and (b) women fish or gather marine resources? *[Note for facilitator –ensure again there is an understanding that ‘fishing’ is understood broadly as explained above. I suggest you use a big sheet of paper and make different lists as a summary that the people in the group can see]*

**Discussion Question 2:** Are men or women in this village involved in aquaculture (i.e. having a small space in the sea, at the beach or on the land to grow fish, shells, seaweed)? If yes, what roles do men play, and what roles do women play? *[Note for facilitator – Prompt for all aspects: preparation of any equipment, preparation of the space or pond, preparing the food, keeping the pond or space clean, harvesting, marketing]*

Note to facilitator – draw up this table on big paper and help the group fill it in to capture the information coming from question 2 – and the columns will provide you with prompts to get more information.

Activities (include both fishing, gleaning, and aquaculture)	Type of fish, shell, or invertebrate	Number of hours in a day or a week	For food/ income/customary purpose/others	Performed by women	Performed by men

**Discussion Question 3:** For people from this village, what kinds of fish, shellfish, crustaceans or plants do (a) men catch mainly and (b) women catch mainly? From where do these species come (when you look at the map). *[Note for facilitator – you can list these in the table, but in your notes please do capture any additional explanation they provide. I suggest you use big paper and make different lists as a summary that the people in the group can see]*

**Discussion Question 4:** How have these activities and the roles that men play, and the roles that women play, changed over time? For example, did men or women used to do more or less than a certain type of fishing 5 years ago compared to now? If so, is there a reason for this change?

**Discussion Question 5:** Which fishing activities are the best? Please tell us why. *[Note to facilitator: Prompt for why it is preferred – Is it because it brings an income? The family like to eat it? It’s plentiful and easy to find? It is important for a customary practice? – you can use something to demonstrate this on their lists, like a star, but the most important thing is you capture their explanation of why it is important – and whether that explanation captures any gendered aspects].*

## MARKETING

**Discussion Question 6:** Who in the village or in your family is responsible for selling resources from the sea, coast or rivers? *[Note to facilitator – clearly you want to see if there are gendered roles here – so you may need to prompt for more detailed answers. Please ensure you talk about markets broadly – there may be some things that are sold locally, and others than mean a person needs to interact with an international buyer, or that a seller must travel to a market].*

**Discussion Question 7:** Where do men and women sell their resources? Who decides what to sell and what to consume in the home or village? Is this decision made prior to the fishing activity? How are decisions made on ways to use the money earned from sales?

## MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING

**Discussion Question 8:** Who in the village holds the responsibility for looking after the resources in the sea, on the coast or in the rivers? If other men want to be involved in decision-making about how resources are managed, how can they be involved? If other women want to be involved in decision-making about how resources are managed, how can they be involved?

## ACCESS TO SUPPORT AND EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

**Discussion Question 9:** If someone from outside has come to this village to work on fisheries, marketing, aquaculture or management, how have they worked with the men? How have they worked with the women?

## 24 HOUR CLOCK EXERCISE

You can simplify the table below provided as an example in two ways – breaking up the times into something meaningful to the community (rather than clock hours) and grouping the women and the men into adults and youth – if that is more meaningful to the community. *[Note for facilitator – this exercise can be completed only if the group is still engaged and wanting to continue. By the time you get to here, the group will likely need a break before they commence with the activity below.]*

**Discussion Question 10:** List the tasks and activities of women and men from the time they get up to the time they go to sleep. The table should be filled vertically – by column (the mothers' activities from the moment she gets up until she goes to sleep; then the girls'; then the elderly women's, etc.)

**Discussion Question 11:** The information provided will help identify the differences between the women's and men's daily time use in terms of labour, leisure time, etc. How much time is dedicated to fishing/aquaculture activities by women and by men – including processing, selling, maintenance of equipment, etc.? It helps us to situate the fisheries activities in the context of rural livelihood and multiple activities people perform.

Example:

	Women				Men			
	Mothers	Girls	Elderly women	Other women in the house	Fathers	Boys	Elderly men	Other men in the house
5:00 AM								
6:00 AM								
7.00 am								
.								
.								
<b>Include all hours</b>								
.								
.								
9 :00pm								
10:00PM								
11:00PM								
12:00 PM								



## Appendix 2 – Provincial government and NGO interview method

**Our objective:** The objective of this interview is to understand the overall enabling environment for gender equality in the province or provincial department.

**The focus of these questions:** These questions focus on seeking to understand the provincial commitments for gender, capacities and resources available to support gender work, understanding the barriers and what can be done to address the barriers, and obtaining general insights at the provincial level.

**Sampling:** Interviewees for provincial consultations were identified at the meeting with SPC and MFMR on 14 June, 2017, when it was recommended that provincial consultations be held with provincial secretaries, planning officers, and fisheries officers. For Isabel Province, it was recommended that we include the Mother’s Union.

**Discussion and notes:** Interviews will be conducted in Pijin, and responses will be recorded in written English at the time – notes will be typed up upon return to the office. When taking notes you not only record the final answers people give, but also the discussions taking place for people to arrive at an answer – this includes recording if some or one member disagrees.

<b>Name of Line Province/Department</b>	
<b>Name of Interviewee(s)</b>	
<b>Title(s) of Interviewee(s)</b>	
<b>Date of Interview</b>	
<b>M/F</b>	
<b>Email</b>	

### The Context

1. What is the mandate work of your department? What work do you do that relates to the fisheries sector? What are the key issues addressed in the province? What is the province doing to address those?
2. Which other line ministries/ departments do you work closely with? Which CSOs, NGOs do you work with?
3. Which development partners do you work with/ have you worked with in the last 5 years?
4. What are the major fisheries activities men engage in and what activities are performed by women? Do you think men and women can be affected differently by the issues you are trying to address? How? Are there any data to support this?
5. How has your institution/department tried to address gender differences in the programmes and service delivery?

### Political Will/Commitment to Gender Mainstreaming

6. How would you rate the amount of attention given to social and gender issues, as a development issue in your provincial office? High, medium or low? Why?
7. Does your province have a gender policy? Do you know of any gender policies that the province aligns itself to? Do you know of other policies/regulations that support gender work in fisheries and other sectors?
8. Does your province use sex disaggregated data or include/conduct gender analysis in designing your programs/projects? Or in implementing the program? How is this information collected?
9. Do you think that there are gender inequalities that prevent women from benefiting from fisheries – and/or prevent them from benefiting from your services? If yes, how does your province address this problem? Do you think that men have different priorities than women in fisheries? If yes, which ones? How does your province/department address gender inequality in work implemented?

10. What is the level of understanding of gender issues by the staff of your provincial office? Is there training, awareness, inclusion of gender issues in their work?

11. Are there sufficient resources to support the integration of gender perspectives in the work of your department/province? Can you explain resources allocation on gender related work?

12. What do you think are the constraints in addressing gender issues (gender equality, gender analysis/assessments) in the work of the province?

13. What can be done to overcome those barriers?

14. Do you know of any factors that would support a better integration of gender issues in the work of the province?

### Technical capacity

15. How would you rate the overall technical capacity of your department/province to identify gender issues, to integrate a gender perspective into your programs and services, and monitor impacts? High, medium or low?

16. Is there any staff member that is designated the gender focal point for the department/province?

17. Have you ever participated in training on gender mainstreaming or any other gender-related training? Are there any gender mainstreaming or gender-related training for staff in the department/province? Can you describe this please.

18. Is there a need to increase technical capacity in gender mainstreaming in your department/province?

19. What would be the most strategic and effective way to increase technical capacity for gender mainstreaming in your department/province?

### Organisational culture and accountability

20. Are there staff in the department/province who take the lead to talk about gender issues at meetings and can provide advice on gender mainstreaming?

21. Are heads of programs and sections open to discussions on gender mainstreaming work in the department/province?

22. To what extent are the staff of the department required to make sure that men's and women's different needs are included in their work and that the programs and projects benefit women and men equally?

23. What preliminary steps would have to be taken to create a receptive environment for implementation of gender responsive planning and budgeting?

24. What existing mechanisms could be used and/or adapted to improve accountability for gender mainstreaming. Who should be made responsible for mainstreaming gender in your institution? Do you think it would be useful if addressing gender issues in fisheries (or mainstreaming gender) were to be part of people's responsibility – maybe in their job description?

25. How many women and men occupy the top 3 positions in your institution? Permanent secretary, undersecretary, directors. Can you give us the number of men/ women and where they work in your province/department/section?

26. Does the department/province have mechanisms that can support and help promote women as leaders and decision-makers? Can you explain.

27. Who are the champions for gender equality in the department/province?

28. What actions are needed to support gender mainstreaming process in the department/province?

### Financial resources

29. Do you think your department/province is financing gender mainstreaming process adequately? Why do you think that? Do you think that development partners finance gender mainstreaming adequately? Explain.

30. Are you aware if your department/province has expenditure (budget) specifically set aside to target gender equality and the empowerment of women?

31. What constraints are faced in increasing financial resources for the promotion of gender equality/ addressing gender issues in GSD?

Summary Questions		Ratings/ Responses		
		High	Medium	Low
32. How would you rate the overall enabling environment for gender equality in your department/province	a. Commitment and leadership			
	b. Organisational culture that encourages people to look at gender issues in the fisheries sector			
	c. Accountability & responsibility systems to make people address gender issues			
	d. Technical capacity to do mainstreaming			
	e. Adequate resources to mainstream gender			
33. How would you rate the overall enabling environment for gender equality in the province?	a. Commitment and leadership			
	b. Organisational culture			
	c. Accountability & responsibility systems			
	d. Technical capacity to do mainstreaming			
	e. Adequate resources			
34. How would you summarise the main barriers to gender mainstreaming in your department/province?				
35. What can be done to remove or reduce these barriers?				
36. How would you summarise the main enabling factors for gender mainstreaming in your department/province?				
37. What can be done to make these even more effective?				
38. What else needs to be done?				
39. Would you like to make any final comments, ask any more questions or give feedback on this interview?				

## Appendix 3 - Fish trader one-on-one survey method

**Our objective:** The objective of this interview is to understand gendered aspects of small-scale fish marketing from the perspectives of men and women present and selling produce at provincial markets. When we say ‘fish’ here we mean it to include all produce harvested from the sea, coastal areas, or rivers (so this should include finfish, seaweed, shellfish, mangrove, crustaceans) and also cooked versions of these products.

**The focus of these questions:** These questions focus on the different roles that men and women play in fish marketing. Questions are designed to understand the roles that men and women play in selling fish at markets and, just as importantly, questions will bring us information about who and how fish are transported to markets, who caught fish that is intended for markets, who handles the money from sales. Questions also touch on the socially constructed constraints and opportunities that men and women experience differently.

**Sampling;** You will identify interviewees opportunistically. So you will need to go to a market, where fish (finfish, seaweed, shellfish, mangrove, crustaceans) are being sold and ask to speak with people selling produce. If there are men and women playing this role, then it is ideal if you can speak to both men and women. Ideally, you will conduct the interview one-on-one – but given that you are in a public place this may be difficult to control. Be respectful, don’t push for responses, and ask if you can come back later if the fish trader is busy.

**Discussion and notes;** Interviews will likely be conducted in Pijin or English if that opportunity is available. Responses will be recorded in written English at the time – notes will be typed up upon return to the office. Note that taking an audio recording and then writing notes will take a long time, and audio recording may not work so well in an outdoor and public space. Use voice recordings as a back-up later and just take excellent notes at the time. You may want to do this with two people: an interviewer and a note taker.

**Introduction:** Thank you for meeting with us today. Organisations like the Pacific Community [explain what that is] and WorldFish [explain who we are] want to learn about how women and men use and sell marine resources for their livelihood. This information will help those organisations develop better support for people in Solomon Islands. *[Please be careful to manage expectations – don’t mention a ‘project’ for example].* Today we want to hear from you about the way people here are involved in fishing for sold seafood and selling the fish – when we say that we mean all kinds of activities: preparing fishing equipment; harvesting fish; collecting shells, mangroves, etc. from coastal areas; cooking; and, especially, selling what is harvested and managing the money that comes from this selling. We will ask eight questions – please discuss them as a group – there is no right or wrong answer, we are really interested in all the different answers and thoughts that people have when we ask these questions.

**Question 1:** *[Note to facilitators. Follow the table below, using the headings as the questions – try to get as many different types of fish, shells, etc. as possible. If many, start from what they consider to be the most important. If they provide more interesting information, use the space below to capture it.]*

What fish or other marine resources (invertebrate or sea food, fish for fish and chips) do you sell?	How are they caught (hand line, trolling, spear, gleaning, etc. or aquaculture)	Who are they caught by? (indicate relationship to that person: myself, husband, wife, brother, etc.) and if they are M or F)	Have you always sold these fish?

**Question 2:** Are there species you sell now, but you did not before? Which ones? Why? *[Note to facilitator, you can make a note on the table and then add the reason below.]*

**Question 3:** Are there species you used to sell but you don't now? Which ones? Why?

**Question 4:** Who in the village where you come from, or in your family, is mostly responsible for selling resources from the sea, coast or rivers? Where do men and women sell their resources? *[Note to facilitator – clearly you want to see if there are gendered roles here – so you may need to prompt for more detailed answers. Please ensure you talk about markets broadly – there may be some things that are sold locally, and others that mean a person needs to interact with an international buyer, or that a seller must travel to a market.]*

**Question 5:** Note to facilitator, use these boxes, but also add notes.

How often do you come to market to sell? How long did it take to travel here? How do you get here?

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> every day                  | <input type="checkbox"/> less than an hour | <input type="checkbox"/> walk           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 times per week         | <input type="checkbox"/> one or two hours  | <input type="checkbox"/> taxi           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> once per month             | <input type="checkbox"/> half a day        | <input type="checkbox"/> community boat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> only a few times each year | <input type="checkbox"/> all day           | <input type="checkbox"/> private boat   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> truck                      |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other                      |  |   |

**Question 6:** *[Note to facilitator; This is the follow up question so if the respondent is a woman, ask her about men; if the respondent is a man, ask him about the women.]*

Do you like coming to the market? *[If yes]* What are the things you like about coming to the market?

Are there things that you don't like about coming to the market?

Do women/men, in general, like to come to the market? Why? *[Note to facilitator – If the respondent is a woman, ask about women in general; if the respondent is a man, ask about men in general.]*

Do you know if women/men like to come to the market, why?

**Question 6:** Who else from your household is coming to the market to sell fish? Or sell something else?

**Question 7:** About how much fish/marine resources do you keep for consumption at home and how much do you sell to the market?

- Normally we keep everything to eat at home
- We sell only a little, and keep most for home
- We keep only a little, and sell most
- We normally sell most fish and shells etc



**Question 8:** How is the decision made about what to sell and what to eat? Who decides? Is this decision made prior to the fishing activity?

**Question 9:** *[Note to facilitators – don't press too hard here. If people don't want to answer this question that is fine.]* How is the money from selling of fish being used in your household? What do you pay/buy with it? How are decisions made on ways to use the money earned from sales?

**Question 10:**

Have your mother and grandmother (father and grandfather if the respondent is a man) been involved like you in fishing and selling fish? Can you tell me a little about that?

Were they involved more or less? (Circle the answer and then add notes if there is some discussion.)

Were men (or women if the respondent is a man) always involved like they are now or has it changed if you compare with your father and grandfather?

If so, is there a reason for this change?

**Question 11:** Do you think you get a good income from selling fish? What would help you to earn more? *[Note to facilitator: The respondents may provide an answer that is not related to fisheries, which is fine.]*

**Question 12:** Has any organisation or the government provided assistance or support related to marketing produce? If yes, how have they worked with the men? How have they worked with the women? Did you benefit from this support?

## Appendix 4 - List of people consulted

Names	Designation	Government Ministry
Agnetha Vave Karamu	Chief Conservation Officer	Ministry of Environment
Rosemary Pepa	Deputy Director, Environment Ministry	Ministry of Environment
Dr Chris Vehe	Policy Secretary, Resource Sector	Policy Unit- Prime Minister's Office
Michael Hobra	Director	Ministry of Agriculture
Andrew Melanow	Deputy Director	Ministry of Agriculture
MuDonnel I Hiva	Coordinator- Agricultural Livelihoods Empowerment Programs	Ministry of Agriculture
Eddie Hori	Deputy Director of Projects	Ministry of Agriculture
Nancy Legua	Under Secretary Operations	Ministry of Provincial Government
Robert Kaua	Director	Ministry of Provincial Government
Theresa Paikai	Deputy Director - Budget Unit	Ministry of Finance
Joshua Theigma	Principal Budget Officer	Ministry of Finance
Ronald		Honiara City Council
Mathew Walekoro	Senior Planning Officer	Ministry of Planning and Aid Coordination
Solomon Marea	Principal Program Design and Development	Ministry of the Public Service
Daniel Ramo	Acting Director, Social Sector	MDPAC
Lynn	Gender Officer	MDPAC
Paul Jay Tua	Hapifis Coordinator	MFMR
Patrick Kekete	Provincial data Officer/Hapifis Project	MFMR
Pauline Soaki	Director	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs
Casper	Coordinator	SINCW
Andrew E Houlia	Deputy Director	Ministry of Culture and Tourism Culture Department
Kristy Michelle Nowland	Markets for Change, Solomon Islands, Manager	UN Women Solomon Islands
Helen	Research Officer	WorldFish
Ronald	Honiara City Council Director	Honiara City Council
Fisheries Staff		
Anterlyn Tuakana	Statistics Office	Division of Statistics (MOF)
Loyce Pabulu	Statistics Office	Division of Statistics (MOF)
MFMR		
Ferral Lasi	Deputy Secretary, Director Fisheries	MFMR
Dr Reuben John Sulu	MFMR Consultant/MISSIF Inshore Fisheries Adviser	MFMR
Annie		
Rosalie Masu	Deputy Director, Inshore Fisheries	
Ronnell		
Duta Bero Kauhiona	Project Officer, CBRM Unit	MFMR

## Appendix 5 - Key institutions and stakeholders in the fisheries sector

Institution	Role	Link to MFMR
Ministry of Health and Medical Services	Authority for sanitary health and hygiene	Fish as food inspection/ cooked and raw seafood sold
Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology	National coastal planning and biodiversity planning, climate change and MPAs	Coastal management, climate change work and EIAs
Ministry of Finance and Treasury	Government recurrent budget planning	MFMR budget approval Customs department responsible for all fish that leave the country
MWYCA	National gender policies and mainstreaming responsibilities	MFMR gender mainstreaming policy to be linked to the National Gender Policy. Training and capacity building
Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services	Patrol of territorial and archipelagic waters	Patrol, enforcement work on policies
Ministry of Public service	Recruitment and training of public servants	Human resource development and training, gender training
Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening	Fisheries management in the provinces	Fisheries management processes and community level engagement
Ministry of Planning and Aid Coordination	National development planning responsibilities	External aid guidelines
Ministry of Rural Development	Development projects in constituencies	Work on projects like ice plants and fish centres to support fish marketing
Ministry of Provincial Government	Provincial Government Development, Provincial Government Acts.	Work with communities on fisheries development and management
PMs Office, Policy Unit	Sectorial policies and inclusion of priorities in government priorities	Development of the MFMR Policy
SINCW	Links national ministries to provincial and community gender focal points and groups	Helps conduct training and capacity building on gender in communities
NGOs WorldFish, SLMMA, WWF, CI and others	Work in communities and have offices in provinces	Collaborative work on fisheries development and management
Other Partners, UN Women, Honiara City Council	Work on markets for change in Solomon Islands, work with market vendors and the municipal authority	Work with women engaged in marketing and distribution in urban centres, regulations and policies on markets.

Central Provincial Government Office	Guadalcanal Provincial Government Office	Isabel Province Government Office
1. Hudson Sanga (Fisheries Division)	1. Willie Kokopu (Fisheries Division)	1. Jeffery E'eniara – Agriculture officer (MAL)
2. Jacob Wale (Fisheries Division)	2. Stephen Maoni (Fisheries Division)	2. Milligan Pina – Planning Officer
3. Jacinta Sale (Women's Development Desk)	3. Malachi Tefetia (Fisheries Division)	3. Loretta Soaki Women's Development Desk (WDD)
4. Simon Teva (Tourism)	4. Vaera Pulekera (Admin/Accounts & Finance)	4. Brenda Manedika Tourism Department
5. Vanita (Agriculture Division)	5. Ben Salepo (Lands Division)	5. Rosta Hiromana Mother's Union
6. Alan Christian Siale (PS)	6. Ellen Joy (Women's Development Desk)	6. John Pita The Nature Conservancy
	7. Helina Vavanga (Commerce Division)	7. Fraser Kavali Fisheries Officer, Fisheries Department
	8. Mary (Agriculture Division)	

## Appendix 6 - Line ministries and links to MFMR

The MFMR aligns its work to national government ministries that are responsible for development planning (MDPAC), finances (MOF), the PM's Office, especially the Policy Unit, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for dealings with foreign fishing vessels and regional and global treaties. The MFMR also links with the Police Force for surveillance and enforcement work in the fisheries sector. Although there is no direct work with the Ministry of Agriculture at the moment, both MFMR and MOA work within the food security and livelihoods space. Women fishers are generalists and selling and marketing work is not confined to fisheries as they are also farmers and food gatherers.

### The Prime Minister's Office - POLICY UNIT

The Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PIMEU) at the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (OPMC) oversees all policy implementation. The unit collaborates with policy units in the sectors to come up with policies that will be implemented at sector level. PIMEU monitors policies and gets quarterly feedback from ministries. The PMO links through policy work with MFMR. The unit also links with the PMO through development initiatives between the MFMR with provincial offices and links with the MWYCA and its policies. Policy frameworks within each ministry could be used to collaborate with and seek assistance of PIMEU. Gender equality discussions at the national level through existing national policies can then be included in the National Fisheries Policy. It is important for MFMR to work with PIMEU on gender inclusive considerations. The Office of the Prime Minister Policy paper (2016) also has gender inclusiveness as one of its objectives; thus political will is seen in the highest offices in the Solomon Islands Government.

### MDPAC- The Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination

MDPAC oversees national institutional and development partners' programmes and projects. There is a gender focal point in the ministry and most of what she does is related to the MWYCA and national policy issues. Under the Aid Management and Development Cooperation Policy, MDPAC, in cooperation with line ministries and the Ministry of Public Service, develops and implements a comprehensive and effective capacity building programme. The ministry conducts budget appraisals submitted by each ministry and the line ministries deal with implementation. The presence of a gender focal point indicates political will to support gender work. The MFMR links to MDPAC through budget requests and donor funding. Proposals for gender responsive budgeting and allocation of funds for gender mainstreaming are appraised through MDPAC.

### MOF-Ministry of Finance

MOF is responsible for negotiating terms and conditions of budget support programmes provided by multilateral financial institutions, and is responsible for debt management for the country. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for all government recurrent planning and budgeting for the social and productive sectors, working within budget priorities and guidelines. For new budget lines to accommodate new inclusions like gender mainstreaming, a paper needs to be written and lobbied to get financed. An MOF officer has recently returned from a gender responsive budgeting training, which indicates some political will. For gender mainstreaming to be sustained long term, there needs to be inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the proposed budget to the Ministry of Finance.

### Statistics Division/Ministry of Finance

The Statistics Division falls under the Social Section of the Ministry of Finance. All sex-disaggregated data collected depend on the involvement of the line ministry in the development of questionnaires for national surveys. The main challenge faced by the Statistics Division is not having ministry representatives to be part

of the design, planning and development of the questionnaires. Usually in a survey there is a users' committee, which should be comprised of stakeholders in the survey to be conducted. If the MFMR is part of this committee, questions on men's and women's participation in the different areas of the fisheries sector can be included in upcoming surveys. The next survey will be in 2019, so for next year MFMR need to be on the user committee to ensure that gender-specific questions in the fisheries sector are asked. There is evidence of increased political will and acknowledgement of the importance of gender inclusiveness in the work of the Statistics Division.

### **The Ministry of Public Service**

The Ministry of Public Service (MPS) is organised into three divisions: the Organisational Development and Employee Performance Management (EPM) Division, the Employment Services (ES) Division, and the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM). MPS ensures that the public service recruitment and selection processes, and the retention and separation processes and procedures are based on merit and are impartial. MPS has an important role to play in helping identify the capacity-building needs of the Solomon Islands Government. With the assistance of the Pacific Community, IPAM is undertaking gender training programmes for gender focal points and introducing gender-inclusive programming and gender sector analysis; this shows that political will and commitment are high at that level. The Public Service targets gender training for the public servants of the government and this will be one of the most enabling factors for gender mainstreaming work in the fisheries sector. With trained gender focal points and staff, the Public Service has taken the lead in mainstreaming gender considerations into the country's public servants curriculum.

### **The Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening**

The Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening coordinates development assistance channeled to the nine provinces. From discussions with the ministry, there is political will and commitment to ensure gender inclusion in programmes and projects across provinces. The link with Fisheries Department in the provinces is through value-chain development and how fishers from the various communities in the provinces link with buyers and sellers from Honiara and other markets. The changing nature of women's engagement in the fisheries sector was highlighted by the ministry. More women are now engaged at various points along the fish value chain. Women are now esky sellers, middle buyers and engage actively in marketing of fish products at the supply and market points. One of the areas that presents opportunities for women is the aquaculture sector, especially tilapia culture.

Some provinces have different cultural contexts, e.g. Guadalcanal and Isabelle Provinces are matrilineal societies and women have more say, so work in these provinces on gender mainstreaming could be easier, given the enabling cultural environment. There is a lot of need for gender training and awareness work at the provincial level.

### **Ministry of Women Youth and Children's Affairs**

The main activities of MWYCA include mainstreaming of gender and helping formulate policies that will guide the work on gender at the national level (Solomon Islands Government 2011). The development of the Country Gender Assessment (ADB 2015) was a collaborative process involving multiple stakeholders, and findings and information of the CGA are used to raise awareness and support the ongoing gender mainstreaming efforts that have been initiated by the government. The main purpose of the National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020 is to address the current gender inequalities in Solomon Islands. The policy will inform the process of developing gender-sensitive legislation, policies, procedures and practices that will address the needs, priorities and aspirations of all women and girls. It will shed light on several gender priority areas that require the attention of all sectors of government, as well as civil society partners. The action plan that is promoted through the policy is based on multi-sectorial and coordinated approaches across the government



in line with the NDS action plan. The Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy creates an enabling environment for translating government's commitments to gender equality and women's human rights into reality and the policy also provides an enabling mechanism for the development and implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy in the MFMR. There is political will now to address gender issues at national level. To ensure there is commitment, there needs to be resource allocation for gender mainstreaming work. There is also a need for greater capacity and expertise in gender work. There should be more networking amongst gender focal points in the Ministries and work with partners strengthened to ensure that gender mainstreaming work is addressed throughout government.

### **Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management & Meteorology**

Two of the units in the Ministry of Environment work with the Ministry of Fisheries and these are the Conservation Section and the Community-based Resource Management Section. This collaborative work is guided by the Solomon Islands National Plan of Action and the Coral Initiative co-sharing. Any collaboration work has to come through the Ministry of Fisheries Research unit. There is joint work on CBRM consultations in communities. Other areas of focus include the work on the Integrated Ocean Policy, environment impact assessments, marine protected areas and work on CITIES. Climate change is also a cross-cutting issue for both Ministries.

There are policies in place to guide collaborative work done by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Fisheries, but these are not inclusive of gender and human rights issues. The Ministry of Environment has a gender focal point and, despite her knowledge on gender-inclusive approaches, she echoed the need for further awareness, information sharing and training of gender focal points. Appointees to these positions meet the gender requirement under the National Gender Policy, but there need to be more collaborative work on gender mainstreaming activities like training, capacity building between sectors.

### **Ministry of Agriculture**

The agriculture sector is the most important sector for the Solomon Islands national economy. It provides for and sustains 85 per cent of the rural population with food crops, cash crops and livestock for their daily livelihoods, food and social security. Agricultural exports are a major source of export earnings. Enhanced production of staple foods is essential for food security and the wellbeing of the rural population, but a twin-track strategy includes the development of commercial agriculture and exports as key to growth. The MOA has 34 women officers who deal specifically with women farmers. Women play a leading role in the food security sector and their inclusion in projects has started to address gender biases and barriers. Women also play a dominant role in food production activities, and policies within the ministry have started to recognise women's contribution. Political will and commitment for women's work has started to change, and accountability mechanisms for gender inclusion, although not in place, are more facilitative of women farmers' roles. There is not much collaboration with the MFMR. The Medium Term Development Plan (2016–2020) for the Solomon Islands Government has as one of its objectives support for the disadvantaged and vulnerable women and youth. Women's participation in the agriculture sector as a productive sector is supported by these policies.

### **Ministry of Culture**

The Ministry of Culture is in charge of all cultural institutions, norms and heritage sites. Taboo sites and most areas for community-based management are also under their jurisdiction. The ministry does culture mapping and documentation of traditional knowledge and skills, including those related to fisheries. The ministry also has documentation of traditional practices in the provinces and the varying roles of men and women. The Culture Ministry works closely with the provincial government. The ministry tries to be gender-inclusive in hiring of staff and has a balance of men and women. Thus there is some degree of political will

and commitment to gender equity. The ministry currently has no working relationships with the MFMR. The ministry is aware of gender differences in land ownership and access and has records of cultural norms in the different communities in Solomon Islands.

### United National Women

Under the UN Markets for Change programme, which is carried out in the two main markets in Solomon Islands, women are specifically targeted in forming associations and having a voice as vendors. The idea of associations in Solomon Island is a new concept so there are challenges in the setting up of associations as there has to be rigorous training on elections, sector leaders and their responsibilities, the constitution, reporting requirements. Other areas of focus for UNWOMEN is training in financial literacy and business skills and capacity building of local government personnel, gender training, rights of vendors, waste management, food handling and other areas of interest. Expanding this type of work to other market centres in Honiara is difficult, given that the roadside markets are operated illegally. Many women operate out of these roadside markets and, without legal recognition of the marketing sites, most of what they do is not enumerated and is unseen.

### Solomon Islands National Council of Women (SINCW)

The SINCW has membership from the across the nine provinces and has representatives in all provinces. The organisation focuses on women in leadership, decision-making and advocacy work on a whole range of gender issues and has set up resource centres in all the provinces but these are underutilised and could be used for training purposes by the MFMR and other line ministries or NGOs. The organisation has a lot of interest in aquaculture as an alternative to fishing for women. Tilapia, milkfish, eel fish and crab farming are potential areas women could engage in. Aquaculture could also be potential avenues for income-generation for women. Women development officers in the provinces are not directly accountable to the MWYCA, as they are employees of the provincial offices. Once government develop policies such as the gender policy at the MWYCA, then the provincial office aligns their work to these policies. In the past few years there has been a lot of advocacy work which now should move to more tangible work and products that add value to women's lives. Methods and approaches of teaching gender issues in provinces has to be innovative and use real situations and contexts that people understand. For the future, the SINCW should strengthen ties with the MFMR through its CBRM projects and other government departments. The Solomon Islands National Council of Women has also been mandated to be the link between the governmental and civil society networks in the GEWD's implementation, monitoring and coordination plan (SIG 2014).

### Honiara City Council

The Honiara City Council has ten divisions, one of which is the Honiara market. Women who sell at the market need a license to buy and sell. The other markets outside of the main Honiara market are illegal markets so there is little information on fees and other costs. The Fishing Village and all other roadside markets are not legal markets as there are only two recognised markets in Honiara. Enforcement of policies in the market space is one of the biggest challenges the council faces. The council currently works with UN Women in setting up associations and keeping the markets clean and safe for vendors.

### WorldFish

WorldFish works closely with MFMR and most collaborative work is on research in coastal areas, aquaculture and gender-related work. Currently, WorldFish does work with the CBRM unit in conducting gender workshops in communities and working together on management interventions. WorldFish also collaborates with the provinces on fisheries work. Currently, they have ongoing work on livelihood and food security in Malaita. WorldFish is currently undertaking the gender assessment work for SPC on the proposed Food Security and

Livelihoods Project. WorldFish has done a lot of gender mainstreaming work and has conducted a significant amount of gender assessment work in Solomon Islands and so will be well placed to work with MFMR on gender training and awareness work,

WWF, SILMMA, OXFAM and TNC are NGOs that work within the fisheries sector. Most of the work undertaken by these NGOs is community-based and deals with men and women, and will be good entry points for the introduction of gender-sensitive approaches in communities.







