Pacific Community
Communauté du Pacifique

SPC FAME

Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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Contents

ABBREVIATIONS

ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
AI	artificial intelligence
CBFM	community-based fisheries management
CCVA	Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment
CFAP	Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (SPC FAME)
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific
CSEPTA	Climate Science for Ensuring Pacific Tuna Access (project)
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (Australia)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
FAD	fish aggregating device
FAME	Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems division (SPC)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FFA	Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
FVON	Fishing Vessel Ocean Observing Network
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GCF RTP	Green Climate Fund Regional Tuna Programme (also known as Adapting Tuna-dependent Pacific Island Communities and Economies to Climate Change project)
GEDSI	Gender Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion
MCS&E	Monitoring, Control, Surveillance and Enforcement
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
OFP	Oceanic Fisheries Programme (SPC FAME)
OLLO	Offline Longline Observer
PaFMaC	Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management and Compliance
PMSB	Pacific Marine Specimen Bank
PEUMP	Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRAS	Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy
RFMM	Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
RTMCFA	Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture
SCoFA	Sustainable Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture for Pacific Livelihoods, Food and Economic Security
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPC	Pacific Community
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
WCPO	western and central Pacific Ocean

FIGURES

Foreword

In 2025, the Pacific Community (SPC) Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) capability again diversified and improved its services to members. The resilience and agility shown by SPC FAME through the challenges of 2024 were carried through into 2025, positioning us to continue growing the high-quality science and practical support members need. 2025 also renewed our focus on strengthening the systems and partnerships required to operate effectively at scale. This annual report synthesises SPC FAME's results and service delivery during 2025 and reflects our commitment to transparent programming, focused monitoring, independent evaluation and learning from Pacific voices, motivated by a relentless drive for improvement in delivering more and delivering better to our members.

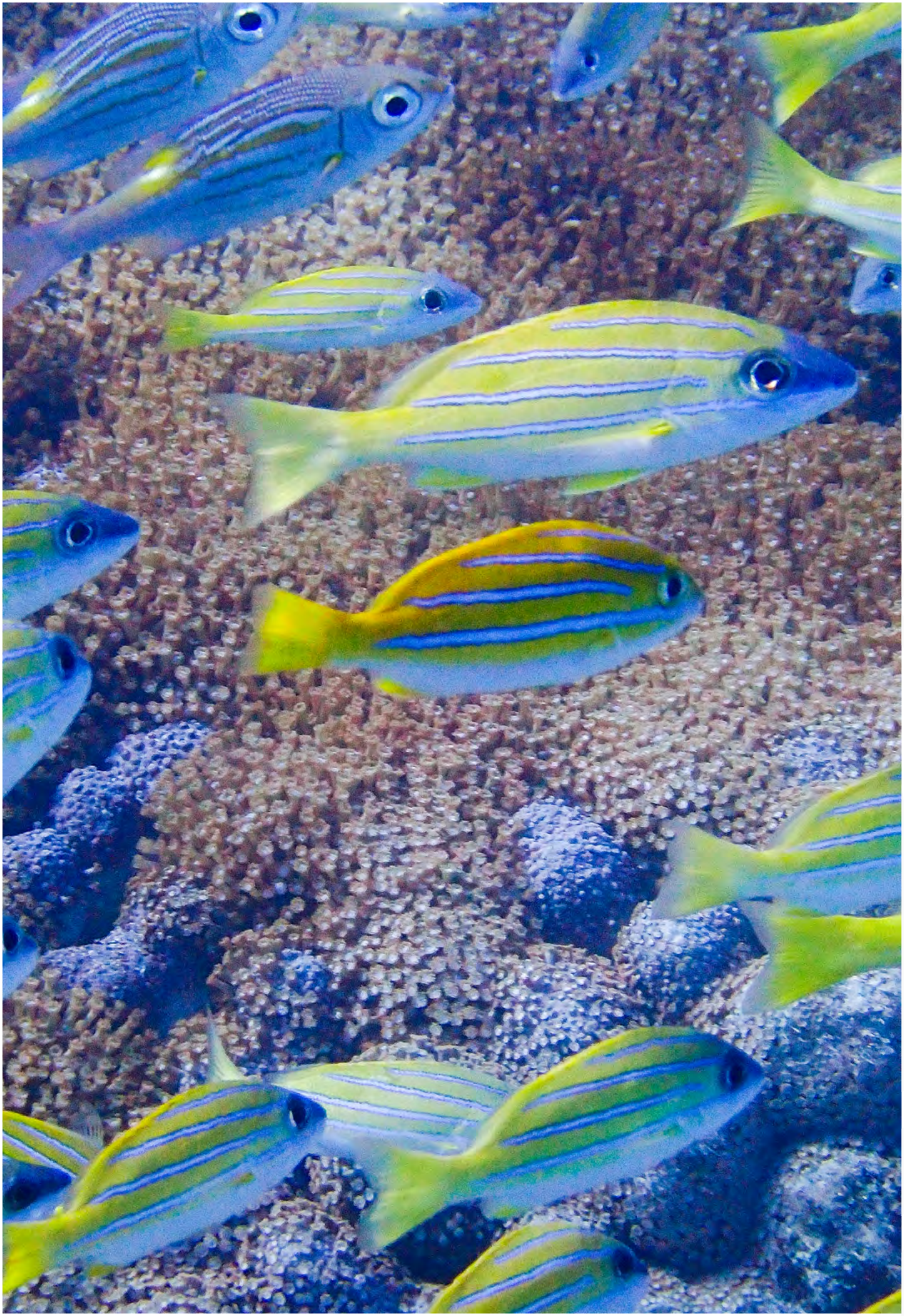
SPC FAME again grew substantially in 2025, increasing to 47 project and programme grants, maintaining the focus on expanding science and technical staff capabilities, and with an additional EUR 92 million added to the overall medium-term portfolio – driven by the Green Climate Fund Regional Tuna Programme (GCF RTP). The award of the GCF RTP was nine years in the making, building on member direction and SPC FAME's proven track record of working at the interface between tuna fisheries and climate. The 2025 publication of the *Climate change implications for fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific Islands region* report is a further key contribution, strengthening the evidence base for climate resilience across the region. The co-design with members of the report format and national chapters highlights our constant drive to better communicate key technical messages in a meaningful and usable way.

With growth comes a responsibility to strengthen operations and delivery as *kaitiakitanga* of vital resources. In 2025, SPC FAME advanced a deliberate programme of efficiency and capability improvements, including planning for a new Marine Ecosystems Programme to strengthen integration across climate change, ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture priorities, and improving internal processes in alignment with the OneSPC Transformation Programme. In collaboration with SPC's Partnerships, Integration and Resource Mobilisation Office (PIRMO), we are also developing a long-term fundraising plan to strengthen resource mobilisation.

Regional engagement remained a core strength in 2025. Throughout the year, SPC FAME supported major regional convenings and decision-making processes, including the 17th Heads of Fisheries Meeting (HoF17) in Australia and the 6th Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting in Niue. At the 22nd Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, management decisions for tuna fisheries were considered and adopted based on the best available science – science that SPC FAME continues to provide as a cornerstone of regional tuna governance. To ensure these platforms continue to guide our collective direction and those Pacific priorities progress through formal regional pathways, our members directed officials – supported by SPC and the Forum Fisheries Agency – to develop the next generation regional fisheries policy framework.

For all the progress to date and the work to come, I extend my sincere appreciation to our members, partners and donors for their continued trust and collaboration, and to the SPC FAME staff for their dedication and hard work.

Neville Smith
Director, SPC FAME



About SPC FAME

The Pacific Community (SPC) through the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems division (FAME) has been generating scientific evidence, knowledge and innovation to support the sustainable management of regional and national fisheries and aquaculture resources for more than 60 years. Our overarching goal is to ensure that fisheries and aquaculture resources of the Pacific region are resilient, and managed sustainably for economic growth, food security, and cultural and environmental conservation.

SPC FAME's strategic direction is shaped by regional and sectoral fisheries and aquaculture convenings and frameworks. These strategic influences include the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting, the Heads of Fisheries (HoF) meeting, the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA), and the Community-based Fisheries Dialogue. FAME's priorities are also guided by regional bodies like the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Committee, Parties of the Nauru Agreement, the South Pacific Group and the Marine Sector Working Group, and by regional frameworks such as the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – pathways to changes: The Noumea strategy* (the New Song). All SPC FAME priorities are aligned with or endorsed by high-level regional structures.

SPC FAME's work is supported by strong partnerships with member governments, regional organisations, donors, academic institutions, civil society, and other divisions within SPC. Our work is achieved through the support of various donors, partners, and SPC internal funding from member contributions.

SPC FAME is structured around two programmes of work: the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (CFAP) and the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP), with a third new Marine Ecosystems Programme (MEP) planned for establishment in 2026. The Director's Office provides implementation support and strategic direction across all programmes and cross-cutting projects. SPC FAME's role is to serve our members' needs through generating scientific evidence, knowledge and innovation, enhancing capacity, and building trusted relationships to support sustainable management of regional and national fisheries and aquaculture resources.

SPC FAME is supporting SPC's mission to progress all Pacific people's rights and well-being through science and knowledge, guided by a deep understanding of Blue Pacific contexts and cultures. To achieve this mission, the *SPC FAME Business Plan 2022–2027* outlines seven key objectives. This annual report is structured around these objectives, highlighting achievements during 2025.

Guided by the concept of *te wa* (the I-Kiribati word for canoe), we are journeying towards discovery and learning, integrated with Pacific knowledge and empowered by trusting relationships and enduring partnerships that nurture openness and shared responsibilities for our blue ocean.

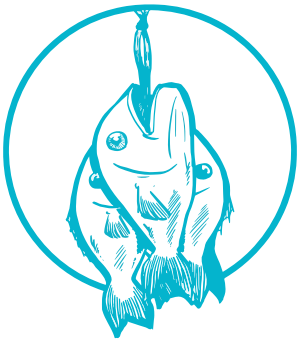
Fundamental to this journey are our SPC values. Through *gida gaituvwa* (unity), we foster a spirit of togetherness across the Pacific, uniting diverse communities and partners in a shared commitment to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. In our *aroha* (care), we show our dedication to safeguarding marine resources and supporting the well-being of Pacific communities, enabling responsible stewardship and mindful actions that protect both people and ecosystems. As part of *kaitiakitanga* (stewardship), we are dedicated to the responsible management and safeguarding of Pacific marine resources, ensuring their sustainability and resilience for current and future generations. Finally, in our *enginkehlap* (generosity), we are committed to collaboration with Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) that fosters sustainable fisheries, mutual support, resilience, and growth.

SPC ORGANISATIONAL

Aroha
Care

Gida Gaituvwa
Unity

Kaitiakitanga
Stewardship



Enginkehlap
Generosity

2025 SPC FAME DONORS

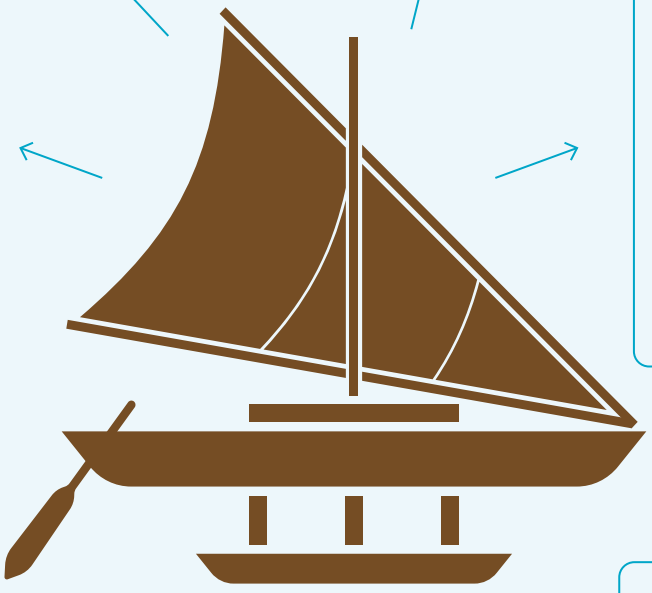
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
European Union (EU)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)
French Ministère des Armées
The Green Climate Fund (GCF)
Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA)
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)
Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)
International Seafood Sustainability Foundation
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
World Bank Group
Tri Marine Management Company
United States Department of State
University of the Sunshine Coast
University of Wollongong
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

Regional frameworks, policies, legislation and compliance

Te wa remains a traditional and sacred craft that requires careful planning guided by generational knowledge and specific skill sets that have been passed on from generations. It represents the regional frameworks, policies, legislation, and compliance measures that are developed and endorsed by members to provide regional guidance and direction.

Pacific knowledge integrated with science, innovation and research

The steering paddle (*te bweerua*) helps to move *te wa* forward and is essential for navigation: Pacific sailors are outstanding navigators. They interpreted the formation and colour of clouds to identify islands. Birds and species of fish would give an indication of distance to land. Star paths and ocean swells were used to navigate distances. At SPC FAME, we will use Pacific knowledge, integrated with science, innovation and research, to better inform our journey.



Our people

The sail (*te ie*), mostly made of mat woven by women, harnesses wind to propel *te wa* forward. It represents our people – resilient, adaptive, and equipped with skills and resources to move forward on this journey.

Data management and utilisation

Information about weather and ocean swells are critical to prepare and navigate *te wa*. It represents our ability to manage and provide up-to-date scientific data on fisheries and aquaculture.

Capacity and capability

The **hull** of *te wa* is the main body that carries people and provides storage. It symbolises our role as a provider of technical and scientific advice to our members by embracing emerging technologies, capacity and capability to guide the journey.

Resilience and sustainability

Te wa is made from vegetal components. They are carefully chosen to be flexible, resistant to humidity, sun-proof, shock-proof and able to stand the test of time. It represents our effort in supporting the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the region to be resilient, sustainable and responsible.

Building trust, partnership, and regional coordination

The **outrigger float** (*te rama*) links to the **cross beams** (*te kiaro moti*) that balance and steady the canoe and keep the hull upright. It represents our relationship with our members, partners, donors and stakeholders. The relationship is built on trust, mutual respect and sharing and collaboration. The steadiness rendered provides us with the confidence and support to navigate known and unknown challenges.

SPC FAME 2025 IMPACT SNAPSHOT

DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

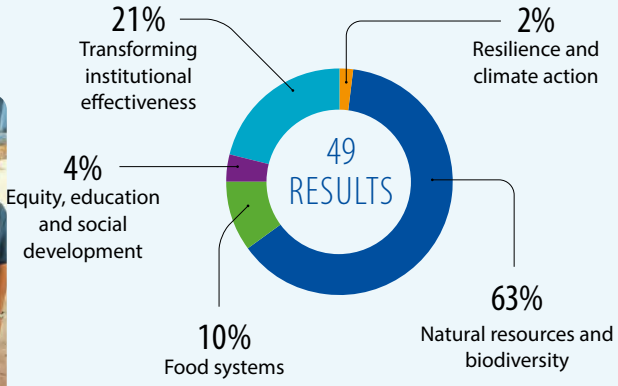
72,404 samples collected to the PMSB

18 PICTs using SPC FAME developed apps like Ikasavea, Onboard and OLLO

7678 market surveys processed via Ikasavea

Ikasavea – supporting data collection and science for coastal fisheries

SPC FAME RESULTS ACHIEVED BY KEY FOCUS AREA



DEVELOPING SPC MEMBER CAPABILITIES

1300 Pacific Islanders trained by SPC FAME (351 women, 949 men)

98% gained new knowledge (of participants surveyed)

94% able to apply new skills at work (of participants surveyed)

120 new member requests for support from 17 PICTs

Not just going with the flow - adapting Pacific fisheries to climate change

Working regionally for science – scaling up close-kin mark–recapture sampling

KNOWLEDGE, SCIENCE, AND INNOVATION

598 knowledge products produced and made available

25 research publications

Progress on regional science assets – Research Vessel *Pasifika*, improved high-performance computing

EVIDENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

Eight stock assessments (4 oceanic and 4 data-limited coastal)

35 management plans and legislation supported by SPC FAME

All western and central Pacific Ocean major tuna species are biologically healthy according to latest stock assessments (South Pacific albacore, bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin)

Supporting the growth of community-based fisheries management

Empowering change – lessons from PEUMP's GEDSI journey

Success story

Ikasavea – supporting data collection and science for coastal fisheries

CONTEXT

In many Pacific Island communities, coastal fisheries are a vital source of food, income and cultural identity. However, the complexity and diversity of coastal fisheries – including the wide range of target species and varied points of landing, sale and exchange – makes accurate and timely data collection challenging. In the absence of a centralised and standardised approach to data collection, important coastal fisheries management decisions are sometimes based on anecdotal, inaccurate or incomplete evidence. As pressures on coastal fisheries intensify, there is a growing demand for more evidence-based management. PICTs and SPC FAME are working to address these data issues at the source through the Ikasavea app.

CHANGE PROCESS

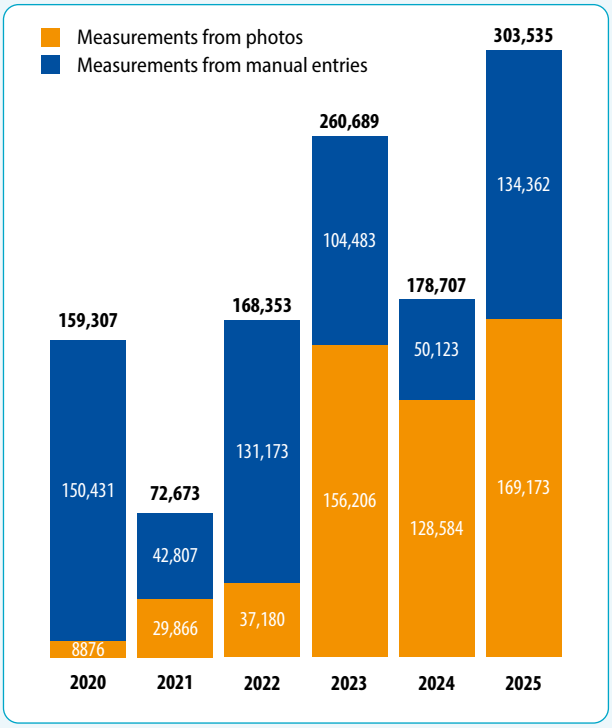
First released in 2020, Ikasavea was developed by SPC through the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme, to enable fisheries officers and surveyors to collect data on fish and invertebrates at seafood markets, landing sites, and other locations. Ikasavea is designed to function offline, allowing users to gather data in remote areas and synchronise it later with a secure web portal. The system also automates the initial stages of data cleaning and analysis, summarising catch composition, sizes of fish and invertebrate species, and market dynamics. Ikasavea supports sustainable fisheries management by providing accurate, timely data on what fish and invertebrates are being harvested and sold – providing solid evidence to inform management decisions at both government and community levels.

A standout feature of Ikasavea is its ability to analyse photos of fish taken on calibrated mats or measuring boards using artificial intelligence (AI). Based on these photos, the Ikasavea AI can estimate weight, measure length, and even identify the species of over 700 nearshore finfish species. This streamlines the data collection process by reducing the need for manual entry and expert identification in the field. In the last three years, AI measurements from photos have represented more than half of the total measurements captured in Ikasavea (Figure 1).

There has been very strong uptake of Ikasavea across the region. To date, 17 PICTs have used Ikasavea and a further two PICTs are moving towards adoption. In line with this growth, the number of active enumerators using Ikasavea has more than doubled since its inception, from 61 in 2020 to 158 in 2025. To support the use of the app by members, SPC has delivered 37 Ikasavea trainings, reaching 470 participants from 20 PICTs.

SPC has also provided strong technical support to further enhance the app and expand the number of modules. From an initial focus on market surveys, Ikasavea has expanded to support landing, socio-economic and community surveys, as well as biological sampling. In 2025, SPC worked to modernise the app to improve performance and user experience. SPC also merged the Tails app (for artisanal tuna data entry) into Ikasavea to ensure its long-term support.

Figure 1: Total measurements in Ikasavea from 2020 to 2025 from photos and from manual entries



RESULTS AND IMPACT

Through Ikasavea, fisheries managers now have quicker and more efficient access to more reliable data to manage sustainable coastal fisheries across the region. To date the app has recorded over one million measurements, with Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Samoa being the leading contributors.

The use of Ikasavea is bringing tangible improvements to the way that SPC members are managing their coastal fisheries. Some notable examples include:

- Samoa has effectively scaled up digital monitoring through weekly market surveys, socio-economic assessments, and creel surveys. Fisheries staff now conduct daily data checks, app updates, and verifications, with data directly feeding into quarterly GDP statistics via the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, as well as into reports for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO).
- In Kiribati, the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources has used Ikasavea to digitise creel surveys, improving efficiency and staff confidence.

"From the creel surveys and socio-economic surveys [data collected using Ikasavea] we are able to identify what is the best way possible to regulate some of the highly dominated catch on the coastal fishery zone. We were able to identify from the analysis of this data some of the most important parameters of the fishery that we wish to regulate [...] in terms of looking at the size limits of those specific fisheries"

Tooreka Teemari, Director of Coastal Fisheries Division, Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Kiribati

- In Fiji, the shift from paper-based to tablet-based data collection significantly reduced manual workloads by eliminating 2–3 days of weekly spreadsheet data entry, minimising errors and freeing staff for other responsibilities.
- PNG transitioned from paper-based survey interviews to Ikasavea following training in 2022. Subsequent impact evaluations in 2024 found the use of Ikasavea had increased capacity and confidence among fisheries officers, made data collection more sustainable, and improved coastal fisheries monitoring.

Fisheries staff in Pohnpei, FSM, using Ikasavea to capture measurements for crayfish.

LESSONS LEARNT

Ikasavea illustrates how the considered use of new technologies like tablets, AI and machine learning can be harnessed to streamline processes and benefit PICTs. SPC FAME has learned that the successful adoption of the Ikasavea app depends on tailoring support, survey modules and workflows to each PICT's unique fisheries sector and market conditions. Offering hands-on training, accompanied by ongoing troubleshooting and online support, have been crucial to overcoming real-world challenges and ensuring accurate, consistent data collection. The merger of Tails and Ikasavea illustrates that apps also need to be maintained, supported long term, and periodically reassessed to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose. The development of Ikasavea continues as technology evolves and AI models are refined.

Sharing data with communities and stakeholders fosters trust and encourages sustained engagement – especially when the benefits of accurate data collection are equitably distributed amongst all those involved. When it comes to using data to inform management decisions, public perception must also be addressed. This is particularly important when the data collected and its policy implications do not align with community perceptions of a fishery.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS BY SPC FAME OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1

Enhance strategic oversight, efficient operational systems, partnership, and collaboration with other SPC divisions, our members, and partners

Growing SPC FAME's portfolio

2025	Management and resourcing
€29.5	Annual budget in millions
95%	Budget execution rate
47	Project and programme grants
157	Staff (50% women, 50% men), 41% from PICTs

In 2025, SPC FAME's portfolio expanded to 47 projects and programme grants, up from 40 in 2024. This growth reflected a major increase in the overall lifetime value of the portfolio, with approximately EUR 92 million added during the year. The increase was driven almost entirely by the Green Climate Fund (GCF)-funded Adapting Tuna-dependent Pacific Island Communities and Economies to Climate Change project (also known as the GCF Regional Tuna Programme [GCF RTP]), which is valued at around EUR 91 million over 7 years, and complemented by several small new projects.

In 2025, the SPC FAME annual budget was EUR 29.5 million, representing a 5% increase from the 2024 budget. The budget execution rate in 2025 was 95%, compared with 91% in 2024. This indicates that despite the significant growth driven by the GCF RTP, SPC FAME was able to successfully deliver across its portfolio.

As of January 2026, SPC FAME comprised 157 staff, with an equal split of 50% women and 50% men, and 41% Pacific Islanders. By programme, OFP remained the largest with 97 staff, followed by CFAP with 36 staff, and the Director's Office with 24 staff. Staffing levels remained largely consistent between 2024 and 2025.

Enhancing efficient operational systems and processes

SPC FAME continued to strengthen operational efficiency in 2025 to better support members, deliver a growing portfolio, and align divisional systems with SPC-wide reforms. Key systems improvements during the year included:

- developing dedicated national portals where members can securely access information on the progress of their requests, capacity development activities, and SPC FAME service delivery in their countries;
- planning for a dedicated Implementation Support Unit within the Director's Office to strengthen delivery capacity;
- planning for a new Marine Ecosystems Programme (MEP) to better align the SPC FAME's organisational structure with its strategic priorities;
- completing all divisional preferred supplier agreements;
- initiating development of a new planning and implementation tracking tool;
- commencing the development of a long-term fundraising plan in collaboration with SPC's Partnerships, Integration and Resource Mobilisation Office (PIRMO);
- investing in staff capability and performance through the FAME Academy; and
- initiating strategic workforce planning aligned with SPC's organisation-wide OneSPC Transformation Programme.

Responding to member requests

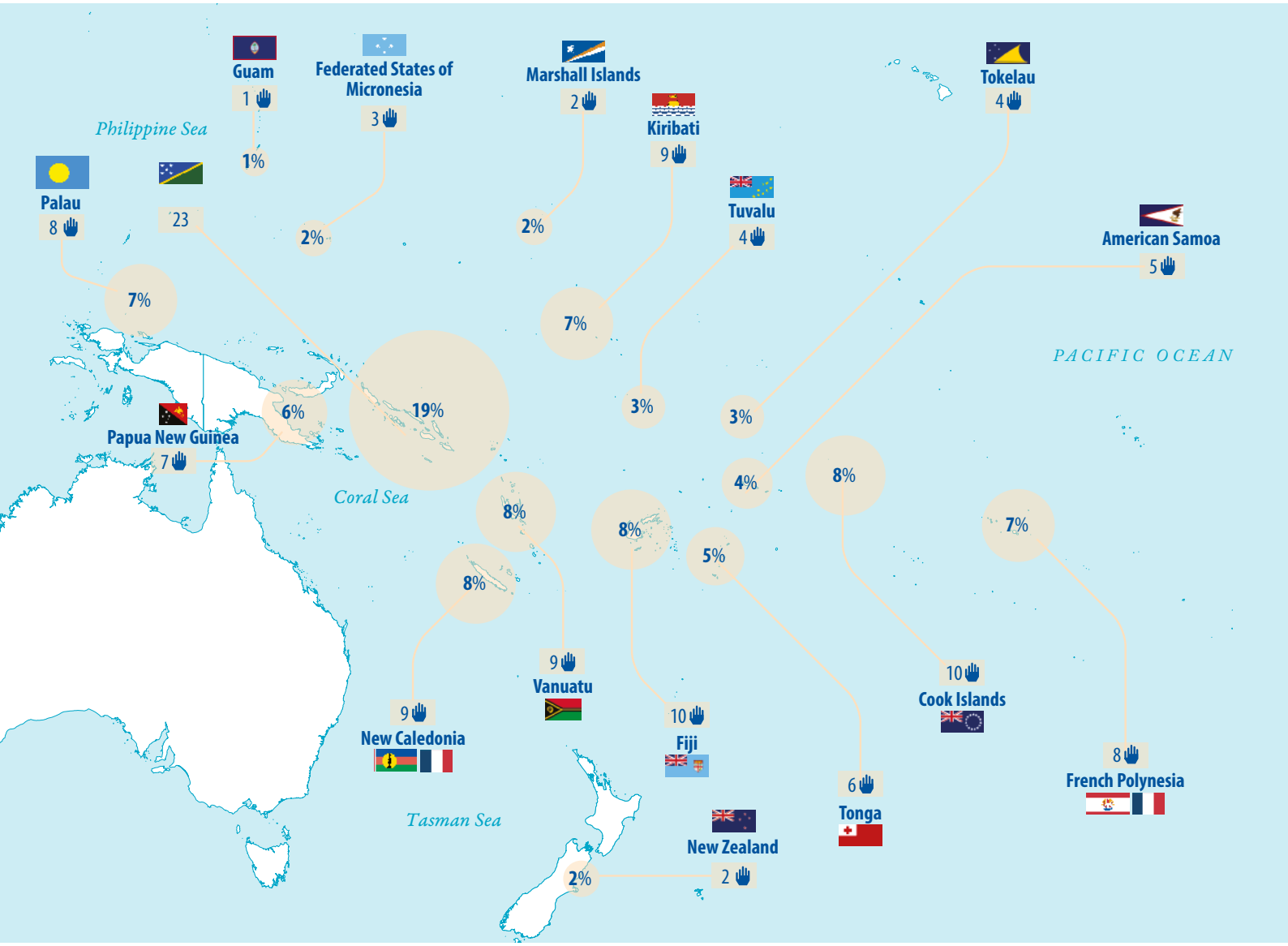
In 2025, SPC FAME received 120 actionable technical support requests (data as of January 2026) through its official Member Request Management System across 17 SPC members (see Figure 2). This represents an increase in formal requests compared with 2024 (108), reflecting sustained demand for SPC FAME's technical support services.

As at the end of the reporting year, the overall completion rate for 2025 requests was 45% (n = 54 completed). This rate is lower than the 2024 completion rate (51%) probably reflecting the higher number of new requests in 2025. At the end of 2025, 61 requests remained open and will continue into 2026. Open requests comprised: 38 under regular progress, 16 under SPC review, and seven requiring member and SPC review to confirm scope, actionability and/or priority. A further 4% of requests in 2025 (n = 5) were formally closed as they were no longer relevant.

Priorities discussed by members during the 17th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting (HoF17) and the pattern of technical support requests received in 2025 provide a consistent picture of where demand for SPC FAME services is strongest. Across the region, members are focused on strengthening fisheries production and value chains (five requests), domestic offshore fisheries development (18 requests) and strengthening enabling functions like data management (13) and science (14).

Overall, the request profile confirms that members are seeking practical support – ranging from developing fisheries operations and training, to applied science and technical advice that underpins investment decisions, improved management and long-term sustainability.

Figure 2: Percentage of official requests for technical support by PICTs in 2025.



Supporting regional engagement

In 2025, SPC FAME continued to play a central role in supporting regional fisheries governance and strategic and technical engagement, working closely with the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), WCPFC, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and other Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) partners. Regional platforms continue to strengthen collective direction-setting across oceanic fisheries, coastal fisheries and aquaculture, support implementation coordination, and ensure that priority issues are advanced through formal regional pathways.

HoF17 provided a key technical and strategic foundation for ministerial decisions and follow-up actions. Chaired by Australia and hosted in Hobart, the meeting enabled members and partners to engage on an extensive technical agenda, discussing 31 technical papers and 19 presentations. HoF17 was better attended than the previous year's HoF16 (84 participants) with 113 participants in attendance. This figure includes 68 representatives from 23 SPC members and 45 observers. When surveyed, 95% of HoF participants agreed that they gained new knowledge from the meeting. Some of the priority action areas emerging from HoF17 included:

- strengthening regional strategic science assets, including the regional research vessel (RV *Pasifika*), options to secure skipjack-focused tuna tagging capability, expansion of the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank, establishment of laboratories for fisheries biology, science training and reference functions, and high-performance computing;
- accelerating digital transformation, including unified electronic data capture systems (Tails/Ikasavea), improved national training and guidance for e-tools, and further exploration of cloud-based and emerging technologies to strengthen fisheries information systems;
- scaling up community-based fisheries management (CBFM), including strengthened enabling policy and legislation, community monitoring and enforcement, and improved linkages with climate resilience priorities;
- advancing climate change science and adaptation planning for fisheries and aquaculture, including use of the updated Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and continued development of the regional Climate Change Strategy for Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture; and
- progressing regional policy coherence, most notably the extension of the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and the New Song to allow time to develop the next-generation regional fisheries policy framework.

At the 6th Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM6) in Niue, the communique provided a strong mandate for coordinated regional action. Ministers approved the revised RFMM Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, with a review planned in the next 1–2 years. They extended the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and the New Song to 2026 to allow a member-led process to design a new integrated regional fisheries policy framework for endorsement at RFMM7. SPC and FFA are providing technical support and coordination to this process. Ministers also endorsed key HoF17 priorities, including scaling up community-based fisheries management, strengthening regional science capacity, and the Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy (PRAS). At a higher level, these priorities were reinforced through regional governance processes, including a dedicated fisheries update prepared for Pacific Island Forum officials and leaders.

RTMCFA8 bought together 150 participants (56 women, 94 men) and was attended by delegates from 20 SPC member countries and territories. The meeting advanced several technical action areas including supporting member-led implementation planning for regional strategies like the PRAS and the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Climate Change Strategy. Collectively, RTMCFA8's outcomes position the region to move from strategy and pilots to scaled implementation based on digitisation, stronger economic evidence, and coordinated planning.

The 22nd Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC22) served as a key science to management forum, where members updated major conservation and management measures for western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) tuna fisheries, adopted a harvest strategy for South Pacific albacore, as well as advancing work on other stock harvest strategies, monitoring and compliance, and climate integration (see Objective 4 for further detail). SPC FAME supplied the scientific foundation for these decisions, providing stock assessment outputs, analyses of candidate management procedures, and technical guidance on data and monitoring systems to support evidence-based outcomes.

HoF18 participants visit an Australian national research vessel *Investigator* in Hobart.


RTMCFA participants discuss fish aggregating device techniques.

OBJECTIVE 2

Provide, and facilitate access to and interpretation of fisheries, aquaculture, and marine ecosystems information and knowledge

Develop and curate fisheries-related scientific and technical knowledge

In 2025, SPC FAME produced and made available 598 new knowledge products, over 100 more than the previous year. These publications included 96 technical and scientific papers, of which 71 were produced for the WCPFC Scientific Committee and 25 were published in peer-reviewed journals and external publications.

In 2025, SPC FAME knowledge products have been downloaded 21,366 times by PICTs – with Fiji (23.6%), New Caledonia (23.5%) and Solomon Islands (11.6%) the top three countries by number of downloads. Globally, across all users, products have been downloaded over 1.57 million times in 2025. When compared to 2024, these figures show a significant increase in the number of people both within and outside the region accessing SPC FAME's science and technical knowledge. The most downloaded resources were the *Legal guide to enabling and strengthening coastal fisheries co-management in the Pacific*, *Fish smart rules - tips and tools for community-based fisheries management practitioners to revive fishing grounds*, and the *SPC Fisheries Address Book 2025 – Répertoire des pêches de la CPS 2025*.

One of the key resources published by SPC FAME in 2025 was *Climate change implications for fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific Islands region*, an updated climate change vulnerability assessment (CCVA). Drawing on contributions from 32 scientific institutions across the Pacific and beyond, a layout co-designed with fisheries officials from the region, and peer review from around the globe, the book provides the region's most current and comprehensive evidence base for climate-informed decision-making. This publication is already being used to inform policy responses across the region including SPC technical support to members (see the success story 'Not going with the flow – adapting Pacific fisheries to climate change' on page 14 for more details).

Communications, awareness and visibility

Overall, there were fewer SPC FAME communications in 2025 than in previous years. As part of our ongoing commitment to strengthen visibility of SPC's work through social media platforms, SPC FAME published 199 posts across all SPC social media platforms in 2025. This is significantly lower (by 35%) than the number of posts in 2024 (305). As a result, the performance of posts in 2025 was also weaker with slightly fewer impressions (535,141 compared with 557,430 in 2024) and a lower engagement rate (6.4% compared with 11.6% in 2024). The reduced communications output reflected capacity constraints within SPC FAME including the loss of a key communications focal point in 2025. In 2026, SPC FAME will resource more communications and outreach roles to improve visibility and understanding of our work with members and the wider community.

Community member in Solomon Islands reads a new brochure on fisheries regulations.

Despite these challenges, SPC is also working to support the communications capabilities of members. In early 2025, the SPC Public Health Division (PHD) and SPC FAME worked together to deliver a digital communications masterclass for fisheries and health promotion officers across the region. Over 150 people from 15 PICTs attended these sessions, reflecting the strong interest of these fisheries and health staff to develop the communications skills needed to effectively engage with communities. This masterclass was so well received that PHD and FAME created another masterclass on media delivered in late 2025. In another example, SPC FAME and Solomon Islands government worked together to develop an awareness-raising toolkit to increase awareness and familiarity with fisheries regulations in Solomon Islands.

Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning

As part of our broader commitment to accountability and improvement, SPC FAME undertook four independent reviews in 2025.

- A tracer study of vocational placements supported by the Climate Science for Ensuring Pacific Tuna Access (CSEPTA) project funded by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The review found that vocational placements help participants develop deep technical skills and create a multiplier effect where one person's learning generates broader returns for sector-wide capacity. The findings of the review will influence SPC FAME's wider approach to placements.
- A final evaluation of CSEPTA is currently underway and set to finish in early 2026. The findings from this review will inform the tuna science component of the GCF RTP and other related projects.
- A mid-term review of the Pacific Regional Framework on Aquatic Biosecurity is set to be finalised in early 2026. The findings from this review will inform regional biosecurity efforts and the implementation of the Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy.
- A mid-term review of the SPC FAME business plan is set for completion in early 2026. SPC will develop a management response in collaboration with members that incorporates the review recommendations into an updated version of the business plan. A short summary of the review findings is provided below.

The mid term review marked an important milestone in implementing the SPC FAME business plan and reflects SPC's commitment to using monitoring, evaluation and learning to guide strategy. Overall findings were very positive: SPC FAME's work is relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable, driven by world class applied science, highly valued technical support and strong relationships with members and partners. Its work aligns well with regional priorities and has delivered tangible results, especially in oceanic fisheries, data systems and GEDSI (gender equity, disability and social inclusion). The review also identified constraints, including limited resourcing for coastal fisheries, outdated corporate systems and low engagement with the business plan as a strategic tool. The main improvement area identified was the integration of cross-cutting themes – GEDSI, climate and digital transformation. The review concluded that SPC FAME is well positioned but requires a clearer change agenda and sharper strategic focus to evolve in a rapidly changing regional context.

In late 2024, SPC FAME completed an independent mid-term review of the Sustainable Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture for Pacific Livelihood, Food and Economic Security (SCoFA) project (funded by MFAT and Australia's DFAT) and the Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management and Compliance (PaFMaC) project (funded by the United States Department of State). Overall, the mid-term review found that both projects are highly relevant and coherent, aligning closely with regional priorities, the needs of PICTs, and donor strategies. In its management response, SPC FAME accepted all recommendations and is working to action them. Some examples include further clarifying the process for prioritising member requests, supporting greater coordination between donor partners, and participating in the OneSPC Transformation Programme to address procurement issues.

SPC FAME also hosted nine internal reflections to support learning and improvement processes with 47 staff participating. The outputs from this process have informed this report.

Success story

Not going with the flow – adapting Pacific fisheries to climate change

CONTEXT

Across the Pacific, climate change impacts – heatwaves, rising sea levels, ocean acidification and more intense cyclones – are disrupting fisheries, aquaculture and marine habitats, affecting both livelihoods and ecosystems. Climate change is projected to cause declines in coastal fish across all PICTs by 2050, especially under higher greenhouse gas emission scenarios. Climate and environmental patterns are also shifting tuna distributions across the Pacific, directly affecting abundance, recruitment and catches. These impacts make climate change one of the defining challenges for sustainable fisheries management in the region.

Despite this, Pacific Island countries face major barriers to accessing global climate finance. The high accountability and technical requirements of funds like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) make it difficult for small administrations to apply successfully, even when the need is urgent. Moreover, only a small fraction of climate adaptation and mitigation funding reaches fisheries and aquaculture.

CHANGE PROCESS

Building on decades of fisheries science and collaboration with members, SPC FAME's support is helping PICTs strengthen their capacity to understand and respond to the growing impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture – moving from science, to information, to action. This means not just understanding the changes happening in our oceans, but equipping countries with the tools and evidence they need to act decisively.

In 2025, SPC FAME published the *Climate change implications for fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific Islands region*, a comprehensive CCVA of oceanic, coastal and freshwater fisheries, and aquaculture. It connects the dots across these areas to show how climate change impacts are already shaping the future of Pacific fisheries and aquaculture and their repercussions for food security, economies and livelihoods. This assessment came together through collaboration between 32 scientific institutions including SPC fisheries scientists, climate specialists and publication experts translating complex science into clear, accessible language – ensuring the findings are not just accurate, but actionable. For SPC members, its real value lies in the national chapters which offer country-level climate projection results and exclusive economic zone-level impacts, providing the evidence and foresight needed to design practical adaptation actions. The CCVA was launched at the 2025 UNFCCC conference of parties in Belem, Brazil.

SPC FAME's work on helping Pacific tuna fisheries adapt to climate change is anchored in the climate intelligence system (CIS). The CIS has three key parts: (1) the collection of relevant climate, ocean and fisheries data including biological sampling; (2) the transformation of those data into meaningful information using advanced modelling tools like SEAPODYM; and (3) practical advice for governments and regional agencies to integrate climate change into management. Together, these three elements make the CIS a living system – connecting science, data and decision-making to help Pacific nations stay ahead of a changing climate.

SPC FAME is also developing a regional Climate Change Strategy for Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture in direct response to member requests for stronger regional guidance on addressing climate change in these sectors. The strategy will serve as a roadmap to help Pacific nations strengthen resilience and adaptation across coastal and aquaculture systems. This strategy represents the Pacific's first dedicated response to climate change for coastal fisheries and aquaculture. The strategy was welcomed by ministers at RFMM6 in Niue as a critical regional action, and SPC has been tasked to take it forward for final intersessional endorsement.

"The Climate Change Strategy for Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture aligns well with our national strategies and climate effort. Firstly, regarding climate financing that would be one of the main important actions conducted in the regional level to support national countries."

Rocky Kaku, Research Officer,
Vanuatu Fisheries Department, at RTMCFA8

RESULTS AND IMPACT

SPC FAME is helping PICTs to adapt their fisheries to climate change not only through providing an evidence base, but also the programming support needed to secure funding. In 2025, a landmark breakthrough occurred as the GCF committed USD 107.4 million for the Regional Tuna Programme, marking the first major climate finance investment dedicated to supporting Pacific fisheries adaptation. This follows the USD 7.9 million Adaptation Fund Resilient Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture in Nauru project officially started in 2025 as a partnership between the Government of Nauru, SPC FAME and the SPC Climate Finance Unit. These projects not only enable countries to strengthen resilience and protect livelihoods but also build the skills, systems and infrastructure needed to access climate finance.

The OFP and CFAP are also putting science into practice by advising PICT fisheries agencies on the integration of climate change considerations into their fisheries management. For example, in 2025 SPC FAME worked closely with Tonga on their national Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Strategy and with Solomon Islands on their National Tuna Fisheries Climate Change Adaptive Strategy 2026–2031.

LESSONS LEARNT

The kind of robust science SPC provides is more than data – it is what gives Pacific nations credibility when seeking climate finance. Solid evidence helps decision-makers and funders trust that climate finance investments will deliver real impact.

There is strong momentum to mainstream climate change into fisheries policies – a shift from treating climate change as a side issue to making it a core part of fisheries management. However, lasting change takes sustained support. As such, close collaboration with the FFA remains key, along with continued sharing of CCVA findings and other climate fisheries publications, so that every new policy builds on shared regional science and Pacific experience.

Members discuss the CCVA draft country chapters at HoF17.

OBJECTIVE 3

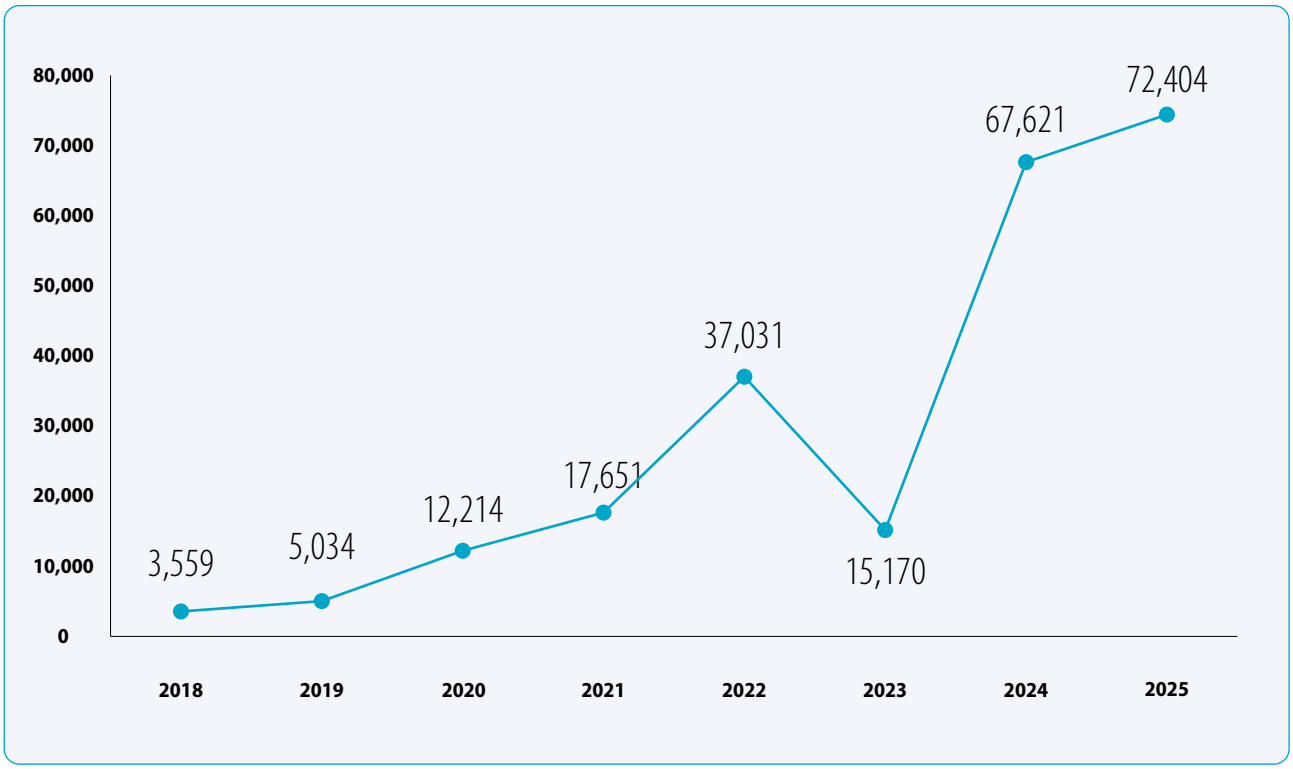
Enhance data collection and provide data management services for fisheries, aquaculture, and marine ecosystems

Research infrastructure, biological sampling, tagging and data standardisation

After significant refurbishment and expansion of SPC FAME laboratory facilities in 2024, the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (PMSB) is now operating as a world-class biobank. The PMSB supported by its biological data system (BioDaSys) allows near-real-time data entry. The PMSB upgrade also enabled establishment and modernisation of training and reference laboratories (including fish ageing/sclerochronology, genomics, and histology), designed to support national fisheries science capability through attachments and hands-on access.

In 2025, a record 72,404 tissue samples were collected (data as of January 2026), bringing the total number of samples in the PMSB to 422,488. In this year 35,424 PMSB samples were analysed, with the majority analysed offsite by SPC partners CSIRO (Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) and IRD (France's Institut de recherche pour le développement). This marks a second consecutive year of record-breaking sample collections and analysis for the PMSB (see Figure 3). This trend continues to be driven by the investment in key projects like CSEPTA and the new GCF RTP, the refurbished and expanded laboratory facilities, and close collaboration with science partners on the analysis of samples.

Figure 3: Annual contribution of samples to the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank.



This sampling capacity is translating into new scientific advancements. An example is advancing close-kin mark–recapture techniques by identifying the first pair of South Pacific albacore kin pairs (see the success story 'Working regionally for science – scaling up close-kin mark–recapture sampling' on page 19). In another example, in a collaboration between SPC and IRD, billfish samples from the PMSB were assessed using sophisticated chemical analysis to measure their methyl-mercury – a toxic form of mercury – levels. The research found that methyl-mercury levels in blue and black marlin were significantly lower than previously assumed based on simpler measurements. This has important public health implications for fish consumption guidelines for PICTs like New Caledonia where marlin is commonly consumed.

In 2025, SPC FAME advanced a suite of regional strategic science assets that underpin evidence-based fisheries management and member services. Most notably, foundational steps were completed to move the SPC research vessel from concept into build readiness, including establishment of an approximately USD 25 million build-phase fund, operationalisation of a dedicated project management unit, and completion of vessel design/specifications and build tender documentation (now in final review). The procurement process is underway for both a shipyard and a vessel management company. With construction set to begin in 2026, early work is already underway to scope sustainable operational financing, governance arrangements, and privileges and immunities requirements.

After a pause in 2024 due to the lack of a suitable vessel for tagging, SPC FAME returned to tuna tagging in 2025 with a 45-day tagging cruise in the central Pacific. In total, SPC FAME caught and released 43.2 metric tonnes of fish, with 4446 fish tagged.

In 2025, SPC FAME expanded the Fishing Vessel Ocean Observing Network (FVON) to the Pacific Islands region. FVON is a global initiative to engage commercial fishing vessels as 'ships of opportunity' for oceanographic and climate data collection. In its first year, SPC FAME deployed 24 oceanography monitoring units on fishing vessels, building on and reinforcing SPC FAME's collaboration with industry. As FVON expands, it will provide critical data for climate resilience, stock assessments and ecosystem monitoring.

Finally, improved high-performance computing capacity was developed at SPC to support computationally intensive modelling (including SEAPODYM), complementing existing third-party high-performance computing access. This modelling is crucial to the climate intelligence system and the wider stock assessment work done by SPC FAME.

Scientist using the SPC FAME genetics lab in Noumea.

Improving fisheries data collection, management and utilisation

In 2025, SPC FAME undertook significant work to modernise core data management systems. More specifically, SPC replaced its outdated Visual Vox Pro database with a more modern, secure and accessible SQL server. The SQL server houses key databases like *Fish master* which inform all of SPC FAME's scientific and technical outputs. After two years of co-development and testing with fisheries scientists, SPC also rolled out a new internal data extraction solution (MD2) which automates extraction processes, enables more flexible formatting, and better accommodates new stock assessment models. The SPC FAME Stock Assessment and Modelling team is also developing new software to implement management strategy evaluations. This work is an investment in the long-term sustainability and quality of SPC's data systems and scientific outputs.

With SPC support, 19 PICTs submitted their WCPFC Part 1 report on fisheries research and statistics, with 13 PICTs meeting WCPFC reporting deadlines (a significant improvement from 2024 when nine PICTs met the reporting deadline).

In 2025, SPC FAME-developed data collection apps continued to be well used across the region with 18 PICTs relying on these apps as part of their fisheries monitoring and management. This includes 16 PICTs using tuna-focused apps (Offline Longline Observer [OLLO], Onboard, Onshore) and 17 PICTs who use Ikasavea in their coastal fisheries management (see the success story 'Ikasavea – supporting data collection and science for coastal fisheries' on page 5). In 2025, while the number of 7678 market stall surveys processed via Ikasavea saw a modest increase from the previous year (6561 in 2024), there was a significant increase in the number of coastal landing surveys (3381 in 2025 from 1700 in 2024). Improvements to Ikasavea in 2025 include the merger with Tails, exploring preset configuration, and completion of the redevelopment to the .NET MAUI framework to ensure long-term support and compatibility for the platform. Work is also underway to develop new applications for monitoring, control and surveillance, small-scale fishers, and aquaculture hatcheries and farms.

2025 saw significant progress in the adoption of the e-reporting app OLLO with usage jumping from 35% of longline trips in 2024 to 57% in 2025. In PICTs where SPC FAME delivered training in 2025 (Samoa and French Polynesia), 100% of trips were reported using OLLO. SPC FAME undertook significant redevelopments to OLLO in 2025 to add more features like location mapping and automation of trip summaries. OLLO has reduced the wait time on data from weeks to a matter of hours.

"OLLO has really helped improve my observer work by minimising errors with data quality checks, shedding some unnecessary workload with filling header details and page numbers. [...] Photos, GPS and trip summary features are some of the most helpful features that has made my work a walk in the park." Observer

Conversely, electronic monitoring is progressing more slowly due to infrastructure and funding constraints. However, a new country-workshop model trialled in Samoa offers a promising pathway for tailored electronic monitoring implementation.

Offloading tuna in Noumea prior to port sampling.

Success story

Working regionally for science – scaling up close-kin mark–recapture sampling

CONTEXT

Climate change brings significant uncertainty to the management of tuna fisheries which are essential to the well-being of Pacific Island nations. To navigate this uncertainty, more sophisticated scientific approaches like close-kin mark–recapture (CKMR) are needed. As part of the wider climate intelligence system, this approach to genetic sampling enables more accurate assessment of fish abundance and a deeper knowledge of population structures which will help PICTs better understand the impact of climate change on WCPO tuna fisheries.

WHAT IS CKMR?

CKMR is a variation of the traditional mark–recapture concept (e.g. conventional tuna tagging). Instead of physically tagging fish and recapturing them, CKMR relies on bioinformatics. Small tissue samples are sequenced to create unique genetic profiles. Scientists then identify parent, offspring or sibling pairs in the samples, and these 'kin pairs' provide estimates of absolute population abundance and other key demographic information.

CHANGE PROCESS

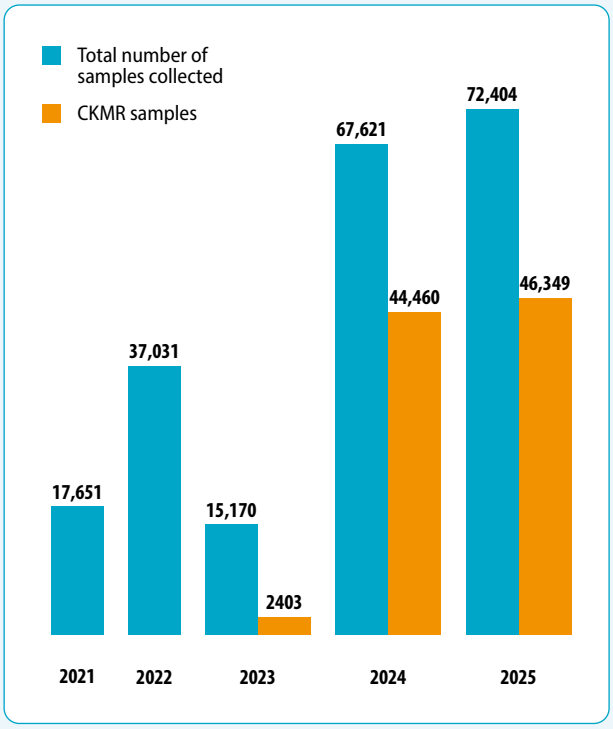
Beginning in 2023, under the Climate Science for Ensuring Pacific Tuna Access (CSEPTA) project funded by New Zealand's MFAT, SPC FAME has rapidly scaled up CKMR in the Pacific. To establish the needed sampling capacity, SPC FAME has hired subregional coordinators located across the Pacific in Solomon Islands, Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Fiji. The team has been travelling throughout the region training port samplers and fisheries observers in CKMR and biosampling techniques. SPC FAME has also hired five specialist port samplers to boost sampling efforts. SPC is partnering with MRAG Asia Pacific to implement the sampling programme and with CSIRO to process and analyse the samples. CKMR sampling will continue under the new GCF RTP.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

From 2023 levels, there was a 1631% increase in the number of CKMR samples collected in 2025. Collection has expanded from just two countries to cover 10 PICTs, New Zealand and Westport, USA. Over the last two years, CKMR samples have accounted for over 65% of all samples contributed to the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (Figure 4). Moreover, CKMR contributions have made 2024 and 2025 record years for sample collection (see Objective 3).

SPC FAME has made significant progress in developing the sampling capacity needed to operationalise the climate intelligence system. Since its inception, SPC has trained 320 people (38 women, 282 men) in CKMR and biological sampling techniques with a focus on training port samplers and observers. These trainings have been instrumental in driving up CKMR sampling numbers with this cohort alone responsible for 90% of CKMR samples collected (89,670).

Figure 4: CKMR sampling contributions to the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank.



2025 saw a landmark achievement – SPC sampling efforts identified the first set of South Pacific albacore kin pairs. This discovery demonstrates the feasibility of applying CKMR to key Pacific tuna species and paves the way for more accurate stock assessments based on genetic sampling. So far, over 43,000 samples are being analysed by CSIRO. The data collected through this sampling programme will inform evidence-based policy decisions that support the long-term health of the region's ecosystems and economies.

LESSONS LEARNT

Regional collaboration has been key to the rapid scaling up of CKMR sampling. Collecting, storing, shipping and analysing fragile genetic samples across the WCPO presents significant technical and logistical challenges. Having SPC staff based across the region and the support of subregional offices has been key to the success of this initiative.

The strong collaboration across partners, national agencies and industry has translated to a flexible approach well suited to navigating operational complexity. For example, when the protocols around packaging and storing samples changed in mid-2024, all the partners came together, and adapted and implemented all the agreed changes within a month. Relationships with industry and fisheries agencies established through CKMR sampling are now benefiting other SPC FAME initiatives like the FVON.

Although SPC FAME has made significant progress in building regional sampling capacity, further work is needed to translate this to increased sampling. Of those trained in CKMR sampling, only 27% have gone on to engage in sampling activities. This relatively low conversion rate likely reflects a combination of turnover in fisheries staff, training people who do not collect samples as part of their roles, and limited availability of national observers to undertake sampling. To improve uptake, SPC is working with PICTs to better target training and with observer coordinators to create more opportunities for observers to participate, including through discussions at the 2025 Regional Observer Coordinator Workshop in Rarotonga.

SPC FAME staff and a port sampler CKMR sampling at the wharf in Noumea, New Caledonia.

OBJECTIVE 4

Provide scientific research, analysis, and advice for evidence-based fisheries management

Oceanic stock assessments, harvest strategies and FADs

The latest stock assessments performed by SPC FAME for the WCPFC over recent years have found that all four 'key' western and central Pacific Ocean tuna stocks (South Pacific albacore, bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin) are currently "biologically healthy" – not overfished, nor is overfishing occurring – with all stocks having a 0% probability of being overfished. In 2025, FAME conducted four stock assessments to support sustainable management of Pacific fisheries. These were assessments of skipjack tuna (the largest tuna fishery component in the Pacific), Southwest Pacific striped marlin, Southwest Pacific swordfish, and oceanic whitetip shark.

Through the consistent engagement of members, considerable progress was made on the adoption and reinforcement of harvest strategies – pre-agreed decision rules – in 2025. A central outcome of WCPFC22 was the Commission's adoption of a management procedure for South Pacific albacore (CMM 2025-01), following years of development. The Commission also agreed to an adjusted timeline for its harvest strategy workplan that led to adjustments to the management procedure for WCPO skipjack (CMM 2025-03) and tropical tuna measure for bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack (CMM 2025-02).

The Commission also strengthened the compliance and monitoring architecture through updated Vessel Monitoring System standard operating procedures, streamlined observer data requirements and workplans, and continued progression of electronic reporting and monitoring (ER/EM), including steps towards a future WCPFC electronic monitoring programme.

In 2025, SPC FAME continued significant work to enhance the capacity of Pacific fisheries professionals in stock assessment, harvest strategies and the use of oceanic fish aggregating devices (FADs) by training 157 Pacific Islanders (69 women, 88 men) across eight trainings in these areas. Almost all participants surveyed (99%, 84 out of 85) agreed that they gained new knowledge from these trainings and a further 97% (n = 82) agreed that they would be able to use what they had learnt in their jobs.

Coastal fisheries science

In 2025, SPC continued to play an important role in supporting coastal fisheries science. SPC FAME provided advice on coastal fisheries science to 13 PICTs, through in-person country-targeted workshops, online trainings and direct advice. SPC FAME also conducted a regional data harmonisation workshop in Vanuatu, with 10 PICTs in attendance. SPC FAME supported four data-limited stock assessments including via a data analysis workshop in Solomon Islands, a Kosrae trochus assessment in FSM, a Kiribati bonefish assessment, and an attachment with Samoan fisheries officers. Through a pilot with Tonga on the aquarium fish trade, SPC FAME is also investigating risk assessments as an alternative to conducting full stock assessments for multi-species fisheries.

PICTs are using the scientific evidence developed in collaboration with SPC to inform their management decisions. For example, Kiribati is using advice on flying fish life histories to review their legislation on flying fish size limits and periodic fishing bans. In another instance, Tonga aquarium management advice given by SPC will be incorporated into a management plan review in 2026.

Community-based fisheries management

In 2025, FAME continued to contribute towards the growth of CBFM in the region by directly supporting six PICTs with their implementation of CBFM. For example, SPC supported Solomon Islands in the development of CBFM action plans for Makira and Temotu provinces. Through a series of workshops and consultations, the process has begun shifting government operations towards recognising and elevating customary governance systems that already guide community stewardship. This work underscores the value of building on existing community practices around fisheries management, with full adoption and implementation expected to advance in 2026. CBFM continues to benefit from very strong support from SPC members at the highest level. In line with this, members are increasingly demonstrating their ongoing commitment by creating permanent CBFM positions within national agencies.

In 2025, SPC FAME strengthened strategic partnerships with regional projects like MiCOAST (funded by Kiwa) and Pathways-2 (funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research [ACIAR] and DFAT) to advance the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling Up CBFM. For instance, key partners Kiwa and FAO supported the fifth Community-based Fisheries Dialogue with funding and logistics which allowed for this crucial meeting mechanism to continue, despite SPC funding constraints. SPC FAME also began a new partnership with *Te Pātuitanga Ahumoana a Kiwa* (a New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries programme) to support the use of traditional knowledge in fisheries management.

Although there were no face-to-face CBFM trainings in 2025 due to funding constraints, SPC FAME continued to engage with members through other channels including remote engagement, CBFM webinars showcasing practitioners' experience from across the region, the Echoes of Oceania platform for relevant resources, and the 450-person strong CBFM Community of Practice (see Objective 7).

Enhancing compliance with coastal fisheries laws and policies

In 2025, SPC FAME supported the development of 15 new or updated coastal fisheries and aquaculture management plans in five PICTs. Of these, 11 were in draft and four were adopted. This work included review of the Cook Islands FAD management plan, developing a sport fishing management plan for Tonga, and a sea cucumber management plan in Kiribati.

SPC FAME supported the development and updating of 20 pieces of coastal fisheries and aquaculture legislation across six PICTs. These legislations include drafting an aquaculture bill for French Polynesia, Solomon Islands draft Sea Cucumber Management Plan, and Wallis and Futuna draft regulations on fisheries co-management. SPC FAME also worked with Tuvalu to co-author a scoping paper on institutional and legal challenges to monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement (MCS&E), with further work to be progressed in 2026. Finally, existing subnational fisheries legislation from five Palauan States (Aimeliik, Airai, Koror, Ngarchelong and Ngeremlengui) has been made available on REEFLEX (with over 40 new legal texts and 200 regulatory measures added). Previously, only some of Koror's fisheries legislation was readily available online. This cataloguing and indexing of coastal legislation will support greater awareness of relevant regulations.

In 2025 SPC FAME trained or mentored 149 Pacific Islanders (31 women, 118 men) in law, policy, planning, and MCS&E in fisheries and aquaculture. These participants came from six PICTs. Almost all participants surveyed (98%, n = 56) agreed that they gained new knowledge from the training. Much of this capacity building took place across six trainings covering MCS&E for coastal fisheries funded under SCoFA, PEUMP and PaFMaC.

Socio-economic and economic research for fisheries

In 2025, SPC FAME supported nine PICTs in economic and socio-economic aspects of fisheries. SPC FAME support included:

- a livelihood scoping study in Cook Islands for Aitutaki to identify livelihood options for small-medium enterprise development;
- reviewing *Reimaanlok* (a conservation management planning framework) socio-economic activities including train the trainers for the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI); and
- in French Polynesia, socio-economic analysis across a series of different matters including lagoon fisheries, skipjack tuna coastal fisheries, oyster farming and aquaculture development.

In 2025, SPC FAME published two socio-economic assessments: an *Assessment of travel expectations of recreational fishers in the Pacific Islands region* and a review of the socio-economic impact of FADs in FSM.

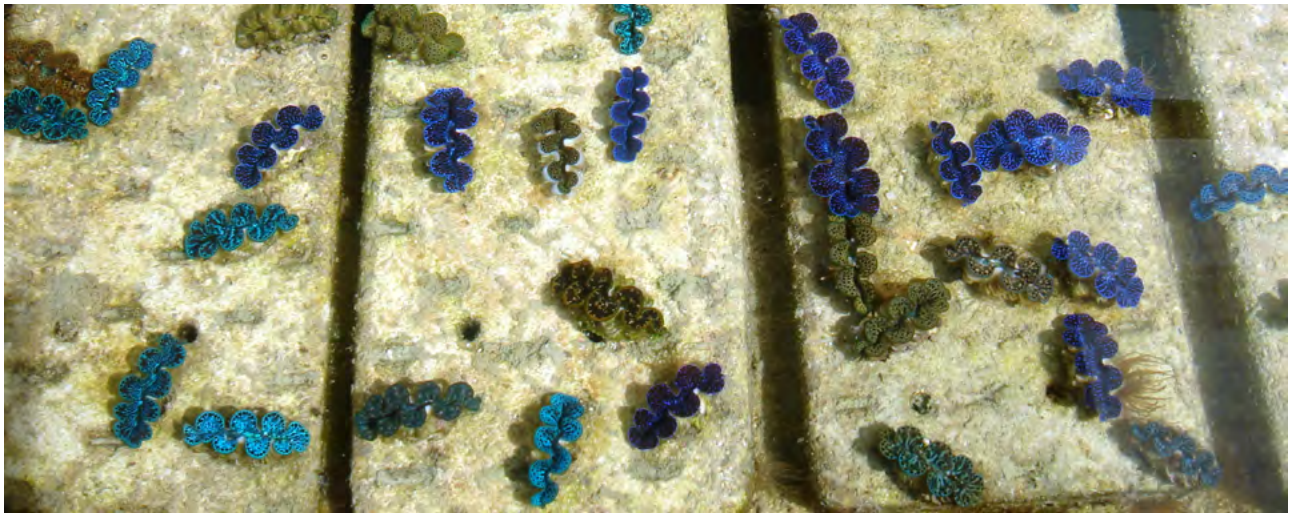
At a regional level, after receiving similar requests from French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and Tonga, SPC FAME is developing a tailored tool for PICTs to undertake species profitability analysis. The preliminary design was presented at RTMCFA8, and further development is planned for 2026. SPC FAME also advanced work to develop ocean accounting using data from Digital Earth Pacific.

Although face-to-face training was limited in 2025, SPC continues to engage members via the socio-economic community of practice. This community of practice provides practitioners with a space to access resources and share information and experience relevant to their work. Currently, SPC is working on the creation of a training course on socio-economic methods, with work underway to determine the optimal format and content.

Coral restoration in Palau.

OBJECTIVE 5

Strengthen the contributions of Pacific islands aquaculture and fisheries towards sustainable, biosecure, equitable and more secure food systems



A giant clam hatchery in Tarawa, Kiribati.

REGIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE CONSUMPTION

The most recent analysis of aquatic food consumption (April 2024), produced by SPC and the University of Wollongong with ACIAR support, underscores the continued importance of fisheries and aquaculture to Pacific food systems. Aquatic foods are the most accessible and widely consumed animal-source foods for coastal communities in the region. Based on harmonised household survey data from 14 PICTs (excluding PNG, Fiji and several territories), per-capita aquatic food consumption averages 43.3 kg/person/year. Fresh fish account for around 70% of aquatic food consumption, comprising reef fish (~34%), pelagic fish (~14%) and unclassified fresh fish (~22%). The analysis reinforces how central aquatic foods remain to Pacific diets and livelihoods. Across the countries covered, aquatic foods are consumed by around 92% of people, but consumption varies markedly by subregion – highest in Micronesia (63.8 kg/person/year) and lowest in Polynesia (22.4 kg/person/year).

Supporting aquatic biosecurity

In 2025, SPC FAME supported seven PICTs in developing national biosecurity standards. This included delivering shrimp histopathology training in French Polynesia and Fiji, reviewing import legislation for giant clams on behalf of Kiribati, and assisting French Polynesia with several oyster translocation scenarios (i.e. import of Pacific oysters from France and movement of Pearl oysters within the country). In support of the translocation of new genetic lines, SPC FAME has actively worked on importation of tilapia broodstock from Asia to Fiji.

In addition to these national efforts, other more regional activities were undertaken. These included finalisation of the review of the Pacific Regional Framework on Aquatic Biosecurity. This framework is designed to assist all PICTs in developing national aquatic biosecurity plans. SPC is working closely with partners CSIRO and the World Organisation for Animal Health on the Pacific Networked Diagnostics and Support project and the Pacific Animal Health Laboratory Network to increase livestock (including aquatics) diagnostic capacity throughout the Pacific Islands region.

OBJECTIVE 6

Identify diverse and sustainable livelihood options for SPC member PICTs

Livelihoods

SPC FAME worked with nine PICTs in 2025 on the deployment and use of nearshore anchored FADs and the development of alternative/supplementary livelihoods. SPC FAME trained 53 people (seven women, 46 men) in sustainable fishing methods across Cook Islands, Fiji and Solomon Islands.

To support the development of new commodities, SPC FAME assisted with midwater fisheries in New Caledonia and provided technical support for new target species (squid and deep-water crabs) in Fiji. SPC FAME is also working with PICTs to improve the use of underutilised bait fish resources following the closure of pole-and-line fisheries in many jurisdictions. SPC FAME is currently in the process of planning trials with New Caledonia, PNG, Solomon Islands, RMI and Kiribati to explore the potential for these fisheries.

In 2025, SPC FAME supported the deployment of nine new anchored FADs across Cook Islands, FSM, Samoa and Solomon Islands. In addition, to support global best practice, an SPC staff member travelled to Grenada in the Caribbean to advise on the rigging and deployment of 11 subsurface FADs. SPC FAME also supported a survey of 16 FAD deployment sites in Cook Islands and Samoa and the deployment of two digital tracking buoys. As part of the GCF RTP, SPC FAME helped all 14 participating PICTs to audit their existing national FAD programmes. The results of these audits will help countries to identify their FAD priorities and benchmark progress over the life of the GCF RTP. Once GCF support to national FAD programmes is fully underway in 2026, SPC expects to see significant growth in FAD-based fisheries throughout the region.

Supporting aquaculture production

SPC FAME provided technical advice to seven PICTs on issues related to aquaculture production in 2025. This included policy guidance for the Solomon Islands National Aquaculture Management and Development Plan, advice on setting up a giant clam hatchery in Tokelau, and support introducing a new variety of Indonesian seaweed in Kiribati.

In 2025, SPC FAME continued directly supporting five aquaculture enterprises in Fiji through the MFAT-funded Sustainable Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture for Pacific Livelihoods, Food and Economic Security (SCoFA) business grants. Through one of these grants, GrowaFish Fiji is receiving assistance with technology transfer to acquire a larger hydroelectric system to power their hatchery, expand their larval tanks, enhance drainage and construct new ponds to improve production. In addition to these grants, SPC FAME is helping JH Pearls, a well-known pearling company in Fiji, to investigate predator interactions affecting their pearl oysters in Savusavu. Based on the findings from this study, JH Pearls is looking to implement a combination of methods including exclusion netting and targeted fishing techniques to reduce predation at their farm sites. SPC FAME is also providing in-kind support to an ACIAR project on a similar topic looking to help mangrove oyster farmers.

In 2025, SPC FAME trained 57 Pacific Islanders (24 women, 33 men) from 12 PICTs in aquaculture production and animal diagnostics. Most trainings focused on hatchery techniques for key species like black tiger shrimp and giant clams. Almost all training participants surveyed agreed that they gained new knowledge from the trainings and agreed that they would apply what they learnt in their roles (97%, 31 out of 32).

At a regional level, in 2025 SPC FAME finalised the Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy (PRAS) which was endorsed by regional fisheries ministers at RFMM. The PRAS is designed to assist all PICTs in aquaculture development and includes a section on regional aquatic biosecurity. RTMCFA 2025 focused on implementation planning for the PRAS, with all members present participating in discussions on how best to move the PRAS forward.

OBJECTIVE 7

Support the development of national capacity and enhance capabilities in fisheries and aquaculture among PICTs

Overview of training and other capacity development activities

Training is a key mechanism through which SPC FAME strengthens the capacity and capabilities of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors across PICTs. In 2025, SPC FAME delivered 87 trainings to 1300 Pacific Islanders (351 women, 949 men) with participants representing 20 PICTs. The most well represented PICTs in trainings were Solomon Islands (243), PNG (213) and Fiji (138). Based on available attendance data, 68% of 2025 participants were between the ages of 31 and 59 years old.

In 2025, trainings touched on almost all of SPC FAME's technical areas, with topics ranging from drafting fisheries legislation to stock assessment techniques. However, the topics that reached the most people were around observer training (305 participants), data collection, management and reporting (261), fishing techniques, tagging and biological sampling (148) and coastal fisheries MCS&E (136). In 2025, 22% of SPC FAME trainings were vocational (19 out of 87 trainings), and these reached 277 Pacific Islanders (20 women, 257 men) from 12 PICTs. All vocational training was part of the Pacific Islands Regional Fisheries Observer training programme.

In 2025, SPC FAME continued to diversify its capacity development offering to members. For example, the year saw growth through the SPC FAME-supported communities of practice (CoPs) in areas such as CBFM (Echoes of Oceania CoP), and socio-economics (SECoP) to complement traditional training workshops. Togetherm these CoPs have a combined membership of 550 people and provide a relatively cost-effective way of facilitating peer-to-peer exchange and sharing resources between practitioners across the region. In 2026, SPC FAME is looking to further embed and strengthen the use of CoP as a capacity development tool.

Change in knowledge and practice

SPC FAME maintains a robust programme of monitoring, evaluation and learning related to capacity-building initiatives. For most 2025 trainings (75%, 69 out of 87), post-training evaluation surveys were conducted – covering more than half (60%, n = 782) of all training participants. These surveys provide strong evidence that SPC FAME trainings are both improving knowledge and supporting knowledge application across PICTs' fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Nearly all survey respondents (98%, n = 764) agreed that they acquired new knowledge from trainings. In the same surveys, 94% (n = 733) of respondents agreed that they would be able to use their learning in their work and 93% (n = 725) agreed that SPC FAME trainings were relevant to their work. From the participants of vocational trainings, an even higher proportion agreed that they gained new knowledge (99%, n = 206) and that they would apply what they learnt in their roles (98%, n = 203).

FAD deployment training in Solomon Islands.

Fijian CSEPTA scholarship recipient,Ratu Rabeka Drauna conducting research on the reproductive biology of yellowfin tuna at Otago University.

In 2025, SPC FAME also conducted follow-up research with participants from previous training and capacity development activities. Across seven training cohorts surveyed, despite a moderate response rate (42%, 63 out of 149), all respondents reported using lessons from the training. Furthermore, more than half of survey respondents (68%, n = 43) reported improvement in their performance at work after attending SPC FAME training. Follow-up survey participants demonstrated their application of skills in diverse fields such as community-based fisheries management, drafting management plans, running small-scale fishing operations, and coastal fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance. Examples of participants involved in SPC FAME capacity development training applying their knowledge for the benefit of PICTs fisheries and aquaculture development include:

- In 2025, in a talanoa session, community members from Muanaira village in Fiji (six men and seven women) who participated in a 2024 oyster farming training reported positive impact. They noted that shared goods have been purchased using the income generated by community-run oyster faming.
- In a tracer survey of the last four cohorts of the Cert IV on MCS&E, almost all respondents (94%, 51 out of 54) reported the training contributed to enhancing their work performance. In addition, 83% reported having used the knowledge gained at the training in their jobs.
- A tracer study of academic scholarships and professional placements funded by CSEPTA found that these individual engagements transferred to wider sectoral capacity building with participants training others, implementing new systems and developing organisational programmes.

"[SPC key contact] made sure to put me in situations to be better at communicating and giving my view [...] there have been more opportunities for me to speak my mind, especially not only in our team settings, but also when we have discussions with members" Participant in the Pacific Island Fisheries Professional Programme, supported by CSEPTA

Success story

Empowering change – lessons from PEUMP's GEDSI journey

CONTEXT

Between 2018 and 2025, the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) has promoted sustainable fisheries management and sound ocean governance through a holistic approach. The integration of gender equity, disability, social inclusion (GEDSI) and human rights was an overarching objective for all PEUMP key results areas. This focus recognised that fisheries are socio-ecological systems with people of all diversities at the centre of their development and management. Through European Union and Swedish funding totalling EUR 45 million, PEUMP has established SPC FAME as a leader in applied research on the intersection of gender and fisheries in the Pacific.

CHANGE PROCESS

PEUMP funded country-based gender analyses of fisheries sectors in five Pacific Islands nations (Kiribati, FSM, Cook Islands, RMI and Tuvalu) and collaborated with world class academic institutions to develop seven gender and fisheries country factsheets for six PICTs and Timor-Leste.

PEUMP enabled the development of key regional resources addressing the intersection of GEDSI and fisheries, including:

- The 2020 *Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture* developed in collaboration with SPC's Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) division and the Wildlife Conservation Society. To date, the handbook has been downloaded over 1200 times.
- The 2023 Pacific handbook for human rights, gender equity and social inclusion in tuna industries developed in partnership with HRSD and the FFA. This product leveraged the successes and lessons learnt from the coastal handbook including deeper engagement with country counterparts, such as industry, non-government and faith-based organisations, universities and women's crisis centres in the development process. To date, the handbook has been downloaded over 800 times.

Episode 1 of the podcast Navigating Gender and Social Inclusion in Fisheries Communication.

- In 2025, research on Gender-based violence (GBV) in fisheries in the Pacific Islands region was commissioned by PEUMP to document the prevalence and impact of GBV in the sector. To date, this research has been downloaded over 800 times.

In September 2025, SPC FAME published the Navigating gender and social inclusion in fisheries communication video podcast based on the 'Stars to sail by' communications guidelines for GEDSI inclusion in fisheries. This podcast filled a critical knowledge gap on how to integrate GEDSI into fisheries communications to challenge harmful norms and promote equitable benefit sharing. As of November 2025, the podcast has already reached over 400 people with engagement on YouTube steadily increasing.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

PEUMP's work across GEDSI in fisheries directly supported efforts to advance gender equity in the industry and in the region more broadly.

GEDSI training has generated change at an individual and institutional level. Over the life of the programme, 822 people received training on GEDSI and human rights based on the modules outlined in the handbooks. Satisfaction rates with these trainings have consistently been high. At an institutional level, these trainings are also producing

results. For example, Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) staff who attended training reported that they were integrating GEDSI considerations into their work planning and community engagements. Following the training, the MFMR also established a GEDSI technical group to provide inputs into the review and update of their ministerial GEDSI strategy.

The GEDSI resources created under PEUMP have become key touch points for further action and impact. For example, The University of the South Pacific (USP) used the GEDSI handbook for coastal fisheries and aquaculture as part of the learning materials for its Gender and Environment course. The SPC–FFA partnership under PEUMP resulted in key GEDSI and human rights achievements such as the delivery of the tuna handbook and the first regional GEDSI symposium in fisheries. The Tuvalu Fisheries Authority is using the tuna handbook to help respond to issues relating to fisheries crew. More broadly, the tuna handbook has helped to facilitate discussion within the industry to reflect on their current practices and areas for improvement.

LESSONS LEARNT

Human and financial resources from PEUMP enabled strong relationships within and outside of SPC which were crucial to the achievement of GEDSI outcomes. Internally, the close working relationship between SPC FAME and HRSD teams helped to better harness resources and connect networks. Externally, PEUMP helped to develop more inclusive networks including non-state actors like the Locally Managed Marine Areas network in Fiji. SPC also worked closely with other CROP agencies including FFA, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and USP throughout PEUMP.

To progress GEDSI and human rights-based approaches in fisheries requires sensitivity, flexibility and good instincts on how much, how far, and in what ways to push for progress. PEUMP shows how effective a diplomatic approach, which recognises Pacific values and cultures as enablers, can be at embedding GEDSI and human rights. PEUMP also demonstrates the need for a learning and advocacy approach which works across community, technical and leadership levels to create change.

While Phase 1 of PEUMP laid strong foundations for gender equity through ambitious regional and national research, Phase 2 (which commenced in January 2026) will focus on more targeted work to address knowledge gaps such as the climate change–GEDSI–fisheries nexus, gender-based violence, disability inclusion and other elements of social inclusion. Alongside this, SPC will continue to offer practical support to members to implement GEDSI and human rights-based approaches.

Ni-Vanuatu community representatives speaking at the Community-based Fisheries Dialogue.

FOCUS ON OUR RESEARCH

As the regional centre for technical and scientific advice on fisheries and aquaculture, research is a critical function of SPC FAME. The research produced by SPC FAME scientists helps to elevate Pacific fisheries knowledge and awareness within the broader scientific community. In 2025, SPC FAME contributed to 25 research publications (23 peer-reviewed) across 17 journals, one book and three other scientific publications. A summary of publications from 2025 is provided in the table below. In addition to these external publications, SPC continues to leverage internal peer-reviewed publications like the Fisheries Newsletter as a tool to update people on projects, activities and research being done in the fisheries space.

In 2025, a significant proportion of publications (seven out of 25) focused on fish ageing (sclerochronology). This follows a significant investment by SPC FAME in its laboratories and the recruitment of key staff to operate them. This investment has significantly expanded the region's capacity to use otoliths (small calcified structures located in the inner ear of fish) to estimate key parameters like age, growth and longevity which are critical for population assessments. In addition, otoliths provide information to counter the lack of long-term datasets in many marine environments by allowing us to reconstruct environmental histories and gain an understanding of how individuals have responded to climate and environmental changes. In 2025, while SPC FAME scientists were continuing to refine sclerochronology techniques, they also focused on identifying the knowledge gaps in both coastal and oceanic fisheries which fish life histories could address.

2025 RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

1. Taxonomic revision of *Pasiphaea* (Pasiphaeidae: Crustacea) of the southwest tropical Pacific with a description of eight new species (see below)
2. The Pacific foodfish list: a standardized list of over 1000 species of marine fish consumed by Pacific people (see below)
3. Validation and otolith-mass prediction of age and growth for cardinal snapper *Pristipomoides macrophthalmus* of the Caribbean Sea
4. Bomb radiocarbon dating and age estimation of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) of Norway
5. Otolith growth chronologies reveal distinct environmental sensitivities between and within shallow- and deep-water snappers
6. Bomb radiocarbon in otoliths and eye lenses of reef fishes from Atlantic waters of the southeastern U.S.
7. A complete otolith-based bomb radiocarbon chronology for the Baltic Sea and its use in the age validation of regional fishes
8. Jesstimation: A novel approach for estimating more accurate fish ages from otolith zone counts and measurements
9. Otolith-derived chemical chronologies reveal distinct patterns in physiology and environmental life histories of deep-sea snappers
10. Sclerochronological age synchrony corroborates remarkable lifespan and protracted asymptotic growth for a deepwater snapper (*Pristipomoides zonatus*) in the Indian and Pacific Oceans
11. Putting regional fisheries management organisations' climate change house in order
12. Impact of severe tropical cyclone Winston on fisheries-dependent communities in Fiji
13. Local- and regional-scale climate variability drives complex patterns of growth synchrony and asynchrony in deep-sea snappers across the Indo-Pacific
14. Species-specific mercury speciation in billfishes and its implications for food safety monitoring and dietary advice
15. Assessing growth, survival, and predator management in juvenile black-lip pearl oyster (*Pinctada margaritifera*) farming: insights from Savusavu Bay, Fiji
16. Both environmental conditions and fisher behaviour influence the occurrence of shark and odontocete depredation on the longline catch in New Caledonia
17. A short-lived FAD in the Pacific: Implications and adaptations in the move to biodegradable fish aggregating devices
18. Barriers to tilapia aquaculture in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste
19. Examining potential biases through prior predictive checks: Prior mis-specifications and their impact on Bayesian stock assessments
20. Evaluation of DNA barcoding reference databases for marine species in the western and central Pacific Ocean
21. Impact of degradation and time of sampling on gut microbiome composition in wild-caught marine fish
22. A quantitative evaluation of the pollock *Gadus chalcogrammus* restocking programme in South Korea
23. Building the (im)perfect beast': Strategies for identifying appropriate spatial stock assessment model complexity from an international, blinded high-resolution simulation experiment
24. Integrating isoscapes and amino acid $\delta^{15}N$ analyses to reveal migration patterns and habitat use of molids in the western Pacific Ocean
25. Nouvelle-Calédonie, un océan de savoirs: Une odyssée scientifique dans le parc naturel de la mer de Corail

Research spotlight: Describing eight new shrimp species

In 2025, SPC FAME worked closely with crustacean taxonomy experts from the Shirshov Institute of Oceanology to analyse samples collected during SPC research cruises in the southwest Pacific, representing important components of the tuna food chain. Their focus was on shrimp specimens from the *Pasiphaea* genus which live between 25 and 875 metres deep. Over the course of three weeks of intensive work in the newly refurbished PMSB labs, the team undertook detailed morphological analyses and DNA sequencing. Based on these results, the paper published in *Diversity* describes eight new species of shrimp. This discovery significantly expands the previous number of valid species (69) in the genus by 12%. In recognition of SPC FAME's contribution, the lead researcher named six of the new species after members of the SPC FAME taxonomy team.

Pasiphaea voureyae sp. nov. (WAL08-M193-54).

Research spotlight: Compiling a list of over 1000 Pacific foodfish

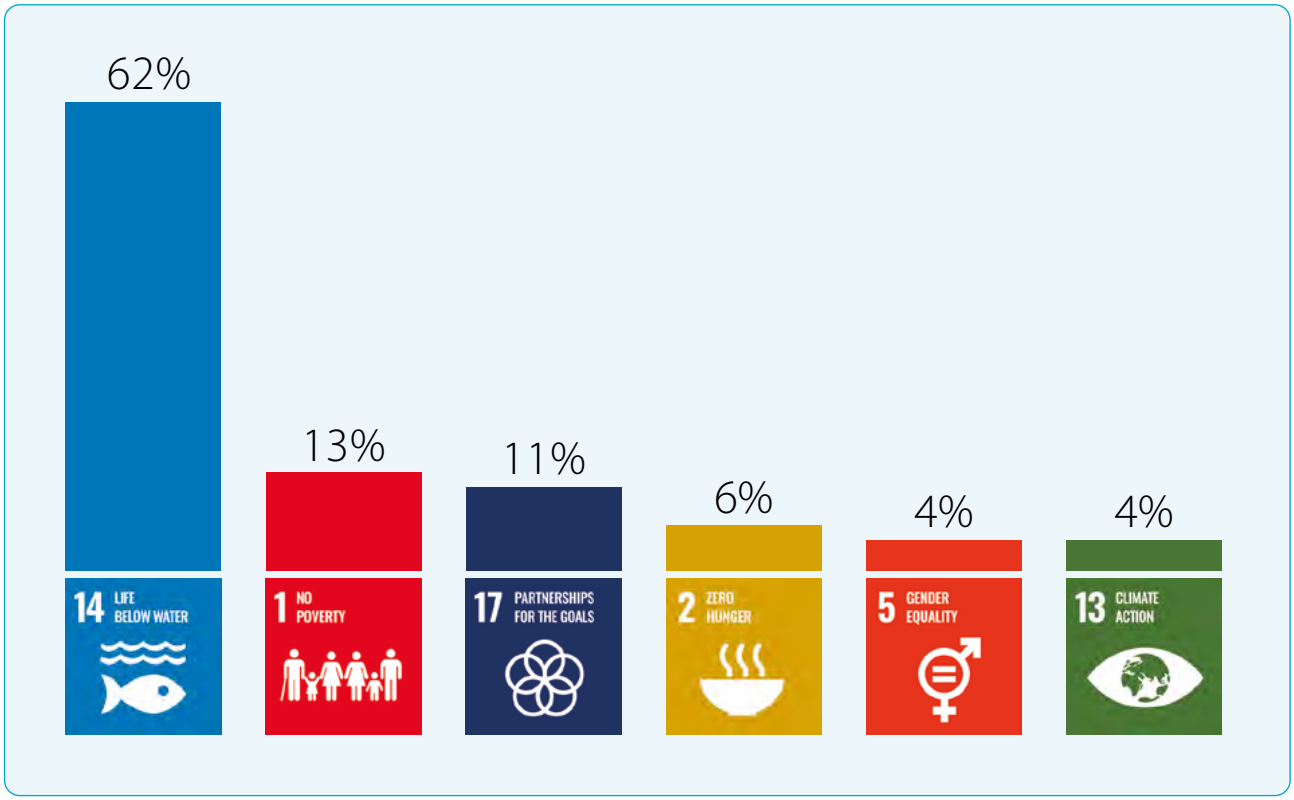
The Pacific is home to an incredible diversity of fish, with over 3800 native marine species reported and many more still undescribed. However, despite the central importance of fish as food in the region, the types and names of fishes are not uniformly described and understood. This makes aggregating and standardising data from creel and market surveys very challenging at a regional level. To address this, SPC in collaboration with ACIAR compiled a standardised set of English common names for 1031 species of marine fish. The research combined unpublished data from Ikasavea with international databases and grey literature to curate the list. The research also found that 90% of eponymous scientific names honoured citizens of European countries, USA and Australia, while no citizens of PICTs were honoured and only three women were named. The list is now available on the Pacific Data Hub and will continue to be updated.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Contributing to the SDGs

Throughout 2025, SPC FAME maintained its commitment to advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2025, SPC FAME results addressed seven of the 17 SDGs, with a primary focus on SDG 14: Life below water (Figure 5). SPC FAME also made significant contributions to reducing poverty (SDG 1), fostering partnerships (SDG 17), and ending hunger (SDG 2).

Figure 5: Results by primary SDG (47 results reported).



Gender equity, disability and social inclusion

Through our ongoing partnership with SPC's Human Rights and Social Development division and collaboration with the Gender Flagship, SPC FAME continues to support fisheries and aquaculture practitioners and managers to integrate gender, promote social inclusion and ensure environmental responsibility in their work. Enabling the greater participation of women and marginalised groups in fisheries and aquaculture is critical to increasing the benefits that flow from these sectors to the region.

In 2025, SPC FAME contributed advice on the inclusion of GEDSI in policies and plans as well as delivering GEDSI capacity building across the region. SPC FAME provided GEDSI advice on three fisheries management policies, including supporting RMI to develop a GEDSI implementation plan for the fisheries sector; and reviewing and integrating disability inclusion for the Solomon Islands GEDSI Strategy. SPC FAME also integrated GEDSI considerations into the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Climate Change Strategy. Beyond these policies, SPC FAME strengthened GEDSI mainstreaming and PICT capacity in a range of ways including delivering human rights training for Conservation International's Pacific Tuna Jurisdictional Initiative in Fiji and Samoa. SPC FAME also provided also technical advice on the Tuvalu Gender and Fisheries Analysis. SPC FAME provided regional support through a pre-HoF disability inclusion event and three GEDSI-focused HoF sessions (gender–fisheries fact sheets; GEDSI–climate nexus; GBV in fisheries). For more information, see the success story 'Empowering change – lessons from PEUMP's GEDSI journey' on page 28.

Climate change

SPC FAME's major contributions to addressing climate change in 2025 are summarised in the success story 'Not going with the flow – adapting Pacific fisheries to climate change' on page 14. Notable achievements include:

- the publication of the updated CCVA which provides a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of climate change implications for fisheries and aquaculture across 22 PICTs, using updated projections to 2050 and 2090.
- the launch of the USD 107 million GCF RTP;
- development of the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Climate Change Strategy;
- technical advice and support on national adaptation strategies for fisheries in Solomon Islands and Tonga; climate briefs have also been prepared for national fisheries agencies from 10 PICTs; and
- significant work on the SEAPODYM model to enhance its resolution from 2° to 1° (50 × 50 km).

Reef fish in Palau.

Beche-de-mer, Milne Bay, PNG

Other thematic areas

Oceans are a key cross-cutting theme embedded across all our areas of work. As such, SPC FAME plays a key role in the Ocean Flagship and pursuing its vision – *Pacific peoples voyaging together to steward a healthy, resilient, sustainable, and prosperous Blue Pacific for future generations.* As well as SPC FAME's core work in ocean science, notable 2025 achievements include the launch of the FVON and collaborations with the Early Career Oceans Professionals through the Pacific Fisheries Leadership Programme.

In 2025, SPC progressed the Food Systems Flagship as an integrated platform to help members transform food systems for nutrition, health and resilience – explicitly spanning "land- and ocean-based foods". Fisheries and aquaculture are central to this mission. SPC FAME's contributions include strengthening the evidence base (for example through stock assessments and fisheries science), future capacities (for example by CBFM training), and digital tools (such as Ikasvea) needed for sustainable aquatic foods.

SPC's Digital Flagship is driving a shift towards coordinated, user centred digital systems that modernise processes and improve service quality across the organisation. The Digital Flagship is slated to undergo a full design in 2026. For SPC FAME, digital transformation is already taking shape through the move from manual workflows to digital by default tools – such as e-reporting apps, standardised data systems, and emerging AI analytics – that strengthen data quality, speed and usability for science to policy work. At the same time, new operational tools for planning, tracking and member request management demonstrate digital solutions that enhance both internal efficiency and the experience of SPC members.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

In 2026, our focus is clear: deepen impact for members with *aroha*, strengthen regional coordination and exercise our collective *gida gaituvwa*, and ensure SPC FAME is institutionally equipped to deliver a growing and increasingly complex portfolio in a changing world.

Under the leadership of the new Director-General Paula Vivili, SPC will continue to forge ahead with the flagship approach to strengthening integration on cross-cutting issues like climate, oceans, food systems, gender and digital. In 2026, SPC FAME will focus on flagships with a strong emphasis on evidence-based climate-informed fisheries management, including the implementation of the GCF RTP and finalising the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Climate Change Strategy. As part of wider efforts, SPC FAME will also continue the important work needed to grow sectoral gender, equity, disability and social inclusion.

Regional coordination remains central to SPC FAME's work in 2026 and beyond. SPC will continue working closely with CROP partners, WCPFC, Parties of the Nauru Agreement Office, and development partners and – together with FFA – will lead the next phase of regional policy direction through the Regional Fisheries Roadmap (Roadmap 2.0). SPC will also work to improve planning and coordination for major regional convenings (including HoF, RTMCFA and RFMM). SPC FAME will expand its subregional presence and continue to benefit from in-country coordination through SPC's regional offices. In parallel, SPC FAME will progress the establishment and operationalisation of regional strategic science assets, including RV *Pasifika* and critical laboratory infrastructure, to ensure members have sustained access to the high-quality science that underpins management decisions and climate-resilient investment.

Crab, New Caledonia.

In late 2025, external consultants completed the mid-term review of the *SPC FAME Business Plan 2022–2027*. This review gave us the opportunity to reflect on progress to date. The review confirmed the continuing relevance of the business plan while identifying operational and strategic areas for improvement. In 2026, in collaboration with members, SPC will work to transform these insights into practical improvements and will document this process in a management response.

In 2026, SPC FAME will build on operational efficiency improvements initiated in 2025, aligning divisional systems and ways of working with SPC-wide reforms under the OneSPC Transformation Programme. As part of this agenda, we will undertake strategic workforce planning, and reinforce internal collaboration, communication and capacity. SPC FAME will keep investing in people internally and regionally through the Pacific Fisheries Leadership Programme. SPC FAME will also pursue structural efficiencies and operationalise the Marine Ecosystems Programme, supported by the development of a long-term sustainable financing model. These enablers will enhance delivery through stronger systems, improved coordination and visibility, and a clearer line of sight to resourcing.

The growth in SPC FAME's work reflects both the pressing need for sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and marine ecosystems in the face of existential threats like climate change, and the trust placed in SPC by our members to deliver the science and technical advice that they need. We look forward to building on the successes of 2025, drawing on the lessons learnt, new information and member guidance to deliver even stronger outcomes in 2026.

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