

PACIFIC CATALYST

Empowering leadership & learning for the future of fisheries

Context

The Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) is home to the world's largest tuna fisheries and extensive inshore fishing grounds, but also faces some of the most complex fisheries governance challenges in the world. The Pacific Islands are paving the way to resolve these challenges; however, finite resources often require the region's managers and leaders to focus on the short-term tasks of fisheries management rather than opportunities for longer-term research and policy innovation. At the same time, there is a relative dearth of young fisheries leaders and managers emerging, who can draw from global good practices to help ensure that these fisheries continue to meet Pacific Island countries' and territories' objectives, as described in the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries and the Noumea Strategy, otherwise known as A New Song for Coastal Fisheries.

To address these twin challenges/opportunities facing Pacific fisheries, the University of the South Pacific (USP), together with a growing list of partners that currently includes the University of Wollongong, Duke University, Environmental Defense Fund, and iTuna Intel has launched an international fisheries policy research and training partnership, *Pacific Catalyst*.

Overarching Goals

The overarching goals of Pacific Catalyst are to work with the region's governments and fisheries management institutions to foster the development of innovative policy solutions, and to provide a platform to support learning and leadership development for the next generation of fisheries managers. Drawing upon experiences, tools and resources from the partners and their wider network, Pacific Catalyst will be able to tap into global expertise in a directed and coordinated manner for the benefit of the region. This would be conducted in the context of supporting achievement of the region's policy objectives as described in the New Song and Regional Roadmap, and in complement to (not duplication of) existing institutions and mandates. The long-term vision is to establish a small center at the University of the South Pacific that would receive technical support from each of the partner organizations to become a Pacific fisheries policy think tank and training center.

To achieve these goals, Pacific Catalyst will collaborate with regional organizations such as the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office (PNAO), as well as national governments. This approach involves working with leaders and managers in these organizations to anticipate challenges in the region's fisheries before they occur, identifying innovative management approaches within the region to be scaled-up and replicated, and collaboratively tailoring other innovative approaches developed throughout the world that may have relevance for the region. Working with these same organizations, the Pacific Catalyst partners will also help provide targeted training and learning opportunities for young professionals, to foster greater interest, throughout the USP student body, in one of the region's most important natural resources.

In carrying out this approach, the work program will be guided by an advisory body of Pacific fisheries thought leaders. Pacific Catalyst would also have a 'light' footprint, building upon capacity currently within USP and providing support to the USP team through a global network of partners. Initial funding streams will target global philanthropy and research funding, in order to bring new resources to the region for this public good.

Advisory Body

Experts working with FFA, SPC, the PNAO, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) as well as other regional organizations are participating in the work of Pacific Catalyst as members of an advisory body. The advisors play a vital role in the work of Pacific Catalyst by: providing input on annual priorities; connecting key stakeholders in the region; highlighting emerging economic and social challenges the Pacific Islands are facing; and providing “on the ground” advice and knowledge of fishery management priorities.

The advisory body will help determine the specific work Pacific Catalyst undertakes by providing guidance on how to prioritize opportunities and identifying areas where new partnerships or collaborations would be beneficial. Based on current expertise, Pacific Catalyst activities will generally fall into the following four categories:

1. Providing economic analysis, research, and policy papers to enhance the value and performance of Pacific Island fisheries based on current needs and identified gaps in the region;
2. Supporting learning and leadership development for the next generation of fisheries managers;
3. Helping define and demonstrate the role of rights in the Pacific Islands by building a holistic understanding of how rights have been applied traditionally, and exploring options for how rights can help meet social, cultural, ecological and economic outcomes; and
4. Supporting and shaping legislative and policy reforms to provide flexibility for innovative fisheries management solutions while ensuring that Pacific Island rights are formally recognized.

Expected Outcomes

The Western and Central Pacific region is a focus of significant international aid, NGO engagement, FAO and World Bank investments and private philanthropy. Pacific Catalyst is unique in the sense that it will have a specific focus on USP, and on providing innovative, long-term policy guidance and training. Additionally, Pacific Catalyst is bringing together a coalition of experts who are cognizant of ongoing work, have the knowledge and relationships required to tap into regional expertise, and possess a range of skills and experience in fisheries governance that Pacific Island leaders can draw upon to help identify policy innovations and train future leaders.

Outcomes that Pacific Catalyst can contribute to include:

- USP Pacific becomes a hub of fishery management education and training in the Pacific region
- Durable solutions to management challenges are co-identified with leaders and shared regionally
- A new generation of fisheries managers, economists and social scientists in the region are trained and prepared to lead fisheries management and policy making into the future
- Better management outcomes for nearshore/coastal fisheries are achieved
- Subregional management programs are strengthened (i.e. Tokelau Arrangement and PNA Vessel Day Schemes)
- Rights based management approaches are further adapted to the Pacific Island context leading to implementation of innovative fisheries management policies.