

Lessons Learned from Previous Programmes and Projects in the Pacific

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Planning for Ecosystem-based Management: Managing the Environment in Small Island States

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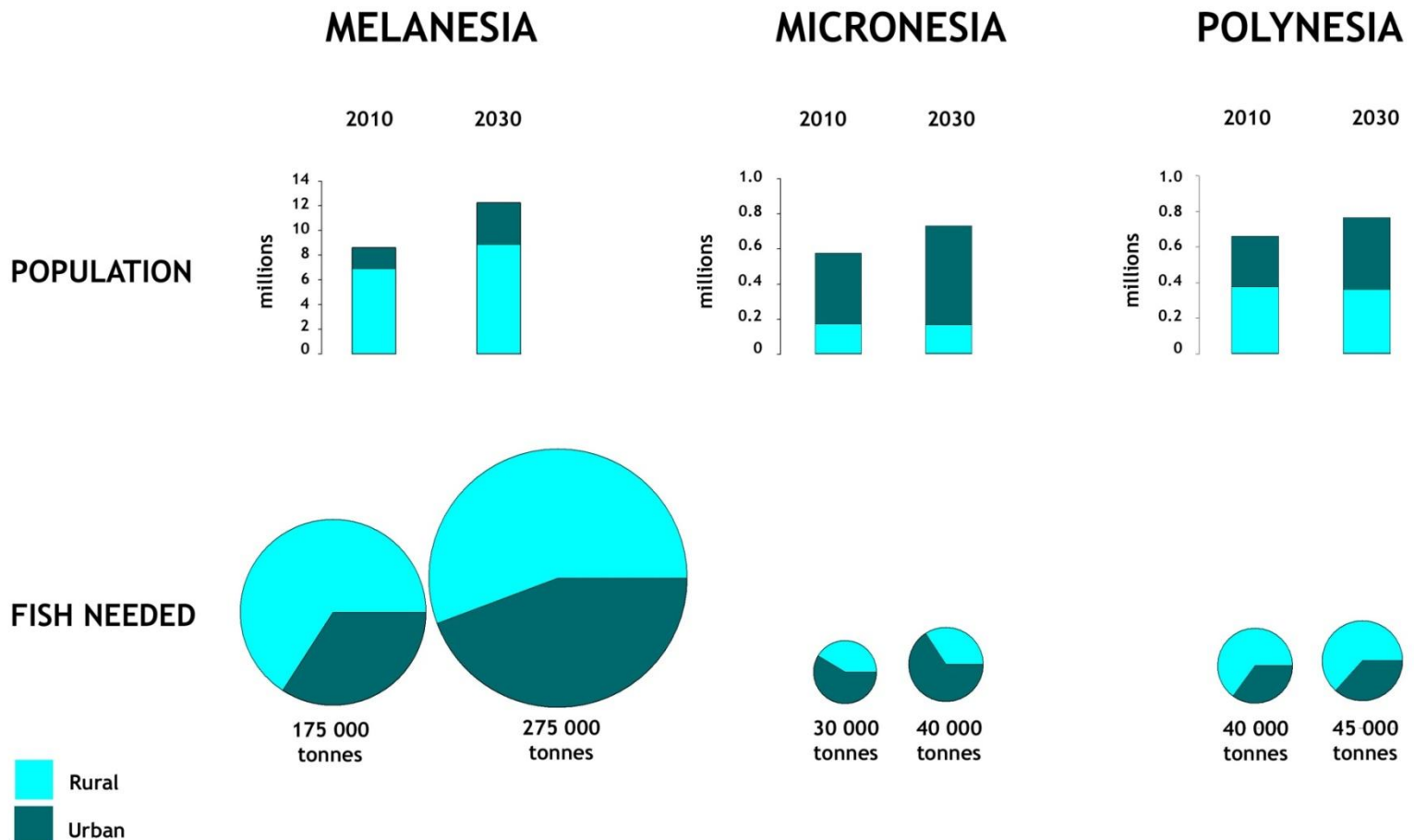


What we are dealing with:

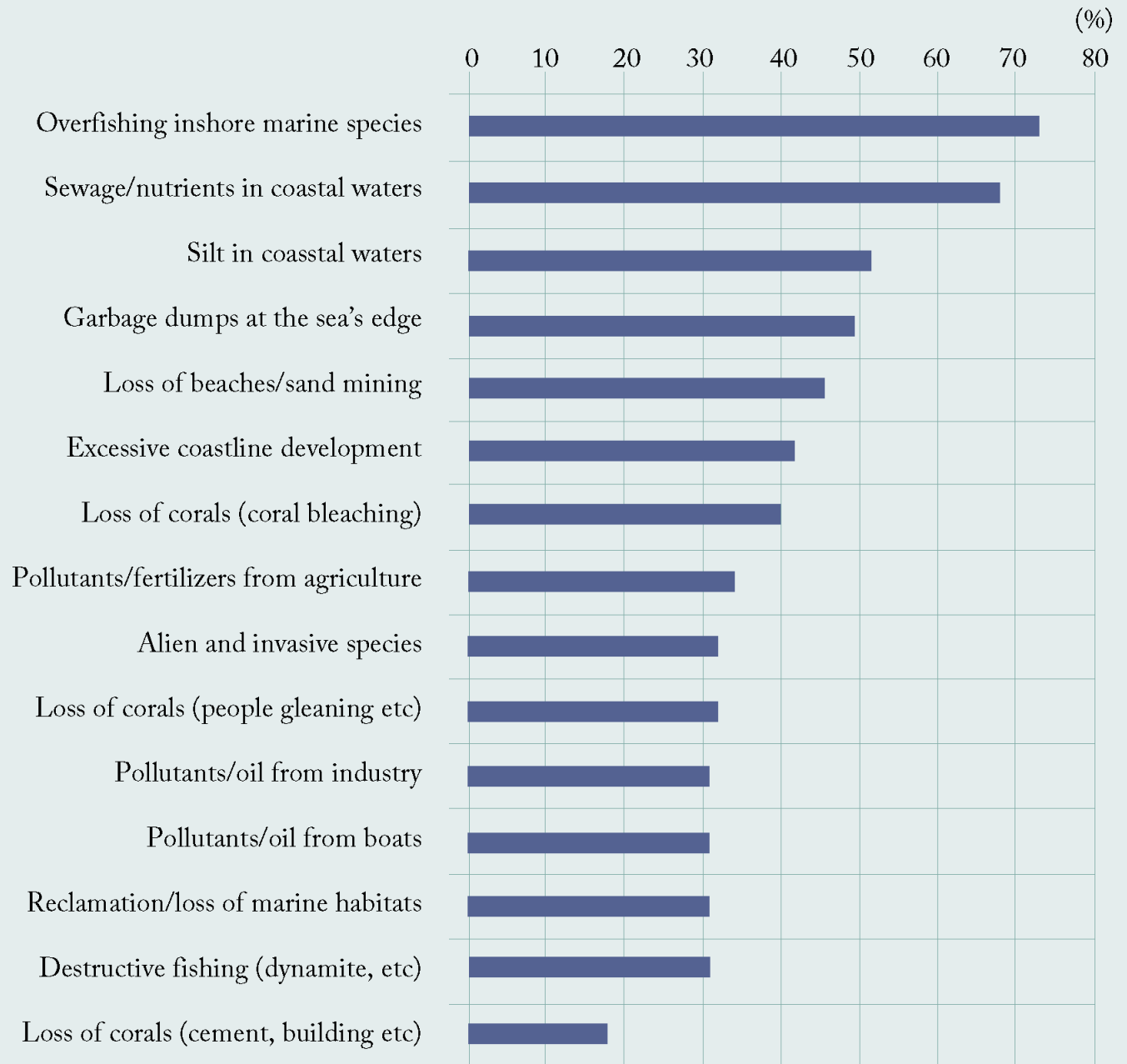
- Coastal zones contribute to the livelihoods of tens of thousands of people in the Pacific who are widely dispersed and often live in remote locations
- Utilisation of the coastal zone involves hundreds of different species of which the biology and reproductive ecology of many is still poorly understood.
- Information on their livelihood activities is very difficult in terms of logistics and costs (i.e. data poor in terms of management requirements).
- Legislation is complicated by the existence of customary tenure and resource use and access rights, and of course corruption and political self-interest.
- General lack of human and financial capacity by management and regulatory authorities, relative to the large areas and challenges they face.

Why is all this important?

Population growth will continue to increase pressure on coastal resources and associated activities in coastal ecosystems. These pressures are expected to be exacerbated by the impacts of climate change.



In a 2007 fisheries managers in 13 PICTs identified a range of non-fishery activities as having significant impacts on coastal zones.



What has been the problem so far?

In a review of conservation/management success in the Pacific it was determined that:

“greater success would result if program implementers (i.e. BINGOs, aid and CROP agencies) concentrated on community needs rather than the donor expectations or their own institutional needs”.

Why?

Pressure to deliver results within finite time periods, more often than not has acted to discourage flexibility and has often driven inappropriate approaches and methodologies.

A focus on expenditure and funding capture (most BINGO projects are unrealistically expensive) also impacts on eventual outcomes and threatens the sustainability of initiatives.

So The history of programmes/projects in the Pacific suggests that failure to understand the inadequacies of top-down planning and the limitations of externally imposed models has resulted in expensive failures.

- SPBCP,
- IWP,
- CRISP (?), and
- UNDP/GEF/CI Milne Bay project in PNG.

The Terminal Report for the SPBCP notes that:

- The SPBCP's focus on biodiversity gave inadequate attention to the social foundation for community-based management, which needed to be carefully examined and understood in order to devise and establish effective pilot approaches as proposed.
- There was an overemphasis on outputs such as Project Planning Documents and management plans at the expense of establishing and sustaining a process of management planning that would engage the communities and generate local ownership.
- The production of Conservation Area PPDs turned out to be an exercise in disempowerment, i.e. not owned or understood by local stakeholders, and building the capacity only of the consultants hired to research and write them.
- The intended outcome at the end of the SPBCP, that knowledge of the state of the biology and environment of the Pacific region would be improved and knowledge would be more readily accessible than at present was only partly met.

What were the problems?

Terminal Review of the IWP states that:

- The late commencement of community 'pilot' activities made it difficult for the PICs to achieve all their objectives with respect to solid and liquid waste management, coastal fisheries recovery, and water resource protection.
- For many of the PICs, the most acute coastal resource problems identified was the improper discharge of wastewater effluent, though this received less attention.
- Private-sector participation was not pronounced in the design and implementation of IWP.
- IWP was designed to include activities for approaching donors towards the end of the project to discuss new sources of support for IWP interventions, this did not happen.

What were the problems?

The CRISP Mid-term Review showed some success against its two main indicators:

- Partnerships and regional co-operation between institutions as well as territories, was not so easy due to the lack of connection between the Francophone and Anglophone spheres in the region.
- Some increase in MPA coverage in the Pacific, though in-the-field action remained limited.
- Research programmes delivered a significant amount of publications and presentations in symposia in the area of knowledge and management of coral ecosystems as a whole, as well as monitoring of health conditions of coral reefs.

What are the problems?

Independent Review of conservation in Fiji:

- Consultants contracted to analyse or make recommendations write reports on behalf of government departments and donors which are largely ignored by government.
- Government departments get reviewed and are given new policies and legislation, but don't implement these nor change their approach.
- NGOs spend resources engaging with communities or otherwise implementing projects but are essentially unaccountable for their priorities, their methodology and their budgets (except back to their own international offices and to donors).
- Communities see projects come and go, sometimes seeing their own priorities addressed, but long term capacity development at the community level on a national-wide scale is elusive.
- Programmes frequently fail to move beyond pilot phases and even the successful community projects may find sustainability elusive.

And then there were also the ICADs!!!!

How successful have other funded activities been?

- CSPOD, EC Coral Gardens

And then there's even more, what about past 'aid' projects dealing with fisheries management and development in the Pacific?

- Vanuatu,
- Samoa,
- Tonga, and
- PNG.

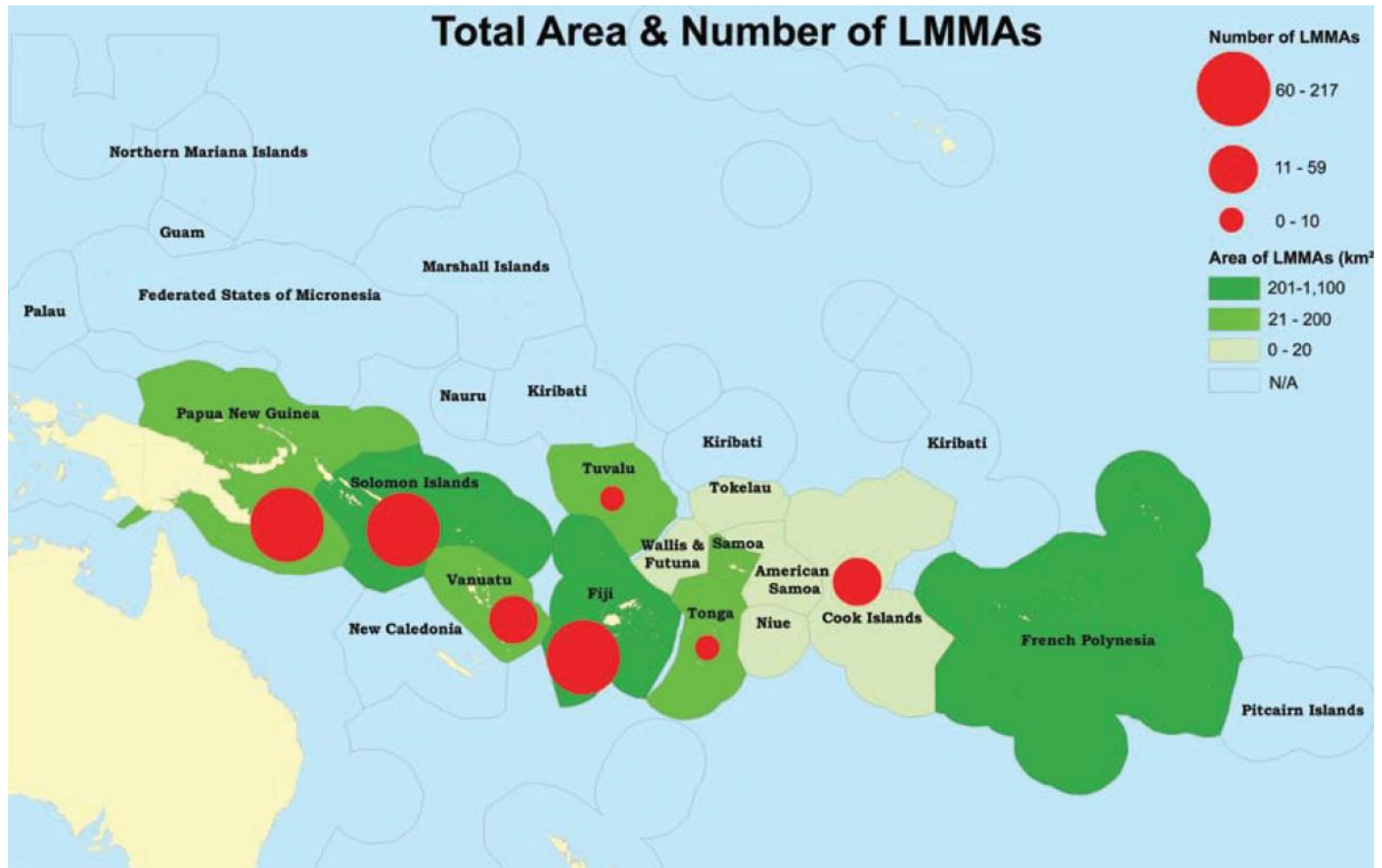
What is there long-term success?

In general, programmes/projects in the Pacific have generally failed as a result of:

- Failing to adequately account for socio-cultural conditions and indigenous knowledge.
- Not paying enough attention to what was motivating people to 'participate'.
- Raising expectations through inappropriate engagement techniques.
- Focussing on economic incentives and a predication to make 'commitments' that couldn't be fulfilled.
- The unwillingness of project management to reflect on mistakes made and modify approach accordingly.
- Not building capacity and maintaining relations with government partners and other important stakeholders.

Ok, so what do we do?

Significant environmental or fishery benefits from more MMAs are unlikely, unless communities begin to incorporate a greater range of EBM tools to address other issues in their wider fishing area, coastal zones and watersheds.



Currently, it has been estimated that more than 12,000 km² in the Pacific is currently MMAs, which involves more than 500 communities in 15 PICTs, and includes more than 1,000 km² as NTZs.

Although there is some criticism by 'preservation' conservationists and some scientists that MMAs are not suited to biodiversity conservation or fisheries management (because of scale and connectivity debates), this overlooks the fact that these MMAs may be better suited to the management objectives of communities, and may be more appropriate to local tenure and enforcement capabilities.

In the Pacific, the development of MMAs usually involves a decentralized management approach, which should empower communities because they are the main stakeholders in the management of their customary land and sea resources.

A broader perspective, such as EBM would involve communities, government, and civil society groups working together to manage resources by participating together in:

- decision making on aspects of management,
- defining access rights,
- limiting harvesting, and
- practicing enforcement and compliance.

Ok, now we are getting somewhere

For effective EBM to be implemented in the Pacific, levels of governments in collaboration with civil society, need to develop cost-effective support (given the resource and capacity constraints in many PICTs) to coordinate adaptive management in communities where natural resources are threatened and under their tenureship control.

This is already happening in some PICTs, whereby some relatively successful partnerships are evident by the acceptance and in some cases the incorporation into government structures, e.g. Fiji LMMA, Solomon Islands LMMA, PNG CMMA, and the Pacific Islands Marine Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC).

This collaboration is necessary to reduce costs and to ensure affordable long-term EBM strategies that are best adapted to achieving not only national commitments to PAs (as prescribed under commitments to the UNCBD, but also other activities, such as the BPOA, etc), but also more pressing priorities relating to food security, ecosystem resilience and adaptation to climate change.

Methods to encourage the uptake of EBM in PICs include:

- Promoting coordination and collaboration between sectors.
- Reviewing and amending relevant legislation and government policies.
- Identifying all the relevant areas or issues that affect ecosystems, and the stakeholders responsible for addressing these issues.
- Undertaking and/or commissioning targeted research (though being aware of the high costs and inherent complexities of such research).
- Applying environmental impact assessment procedures to all activities and processes that may have an impact on marine ecosystems (including fisheries).
- Broadening stakeholder consultation.
- Decentralising decision-making to better take account of all sectoral and community interests.

Continued . . .

- Promoting community-based co-management approaches wherever feasible as a primary EBM tool.
- Applying the precautionary approach (even in data poor situations).
- Ensuring compatibility of management and conservation measures at local, national and international levels.
- Reducing impacts on the structure, productivity, function and biological diversity of ecosystems, including other non-target species.
- Maintaining ecosystem integrity.
- Encouraging reversibility and rebuilding of damaged or degraded ecosystems.

So what do we need to do Steps to success?

- Fully integrate into government functions over the medium term.
- Decentralise into logistically functional management areas (provinces, districts, or similar).
- Be highly cost effective and with a likelihood of sustainable financing.
- Be based on a staggered or cumulative approach optimising trickle down or snowballing effects.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTIVE MARINE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SOLOMON ISLANDS



Sorry, just to reiterate WFC's findings

- Initiatives in community resource management that develop from genuine requests for participation from entire communities, have realistic expectations, secure stakeholder access to land and sea, and compensate for language barriers can successfully identify risks and threats to communities in order to guide adaptation planning and the assessment of possible supplementary livelihoods.
- Good community management institutions must be created and/or strengthened, provincial and national fishery officers should be brought on board, and research-for-development partnerships should be sealed with formal agreements and facilitated with effective communication.
- Management plans and monitoring methods should be simple and straightforward, tailored to local conditions so that they build on existing community norms and are realistic and sustainable.
- Decision-making tools and skills for adaptive community resource management enhance stakeholder capacity in general, improving community governance, cooperation and cohesion.