

SAMOA COUNTRY REPORT for the “Grace of the Sea Project” in Vanuatu
13th – 16th October, 2014

Title – Community-based Coastal Resource Management

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Introduction

Fisheries play a vital role in the livelihoods of all Samoans as it is the main source of protein and main source of income for most people. However Samoa coastal marine resources are very limited due to past volcanic activities and frequent natural disasters such as cyclones and tsunamis. The Fisheries Division which is mandate to conserve, manage, develop and find alternative systems to alleviate the decline of fisheries resources focus on introducing and improving farming systems for fisheries development. The developing of aquaculture, alternative fishing methods and engaging communities in co-management approach in Samoa is to improve the production and management of these resources to a sustainable level, obtain maximum benefit and introduce value adding to the harvesting to increase opportunities for income generation.

1. Overview of Coastal Resource Management Activities

Fisheries play an important part in the Samoan way of life. Traditionally Samoans have relied on the coastal environment for the protein intake and livelihood. The latest socio-economic survey in 2012/13 estimated a total of 9,066.32 tons of fish and 7,804.42 tons for invertebrates were recorded from subsistence fisheries alone. Total landings from the reef artisanal fisheries targeting domestic markets were estimated at 129.6 metric tones with a value of SAT 1.62 million during the fiscal year of 2012-2013.

Over the years there has been a steady decline of these resources through overfishing and natural disasters. Improve of fishing methods and technologies improve the fishing effort and catches with the increase in population increasing fishermen in the sea. This has a lot of impact on the limited resources. Samoa was hit very strongly by the two major cyclones in the early 1990's, the tsunami in 2009 and cyclone Evan in 2012 which is believed to have alter a lot of the resources environments and its ecosystems.

Samoa has shown good recovery in its coastal fisheries resources with the proper management measures in place. The Community-based Fisheries Management Program (CBFMP) is a 'bottom up' co-management approach in which village communities take full control and responsibilities of the management of their coastal marine resources with the Fisheries Division providing support such as the technical, financial and legal supports. To date, 100 village communities joined the fisheries program and work collaboratively with the Fisheries Division.

With the Fisheries as a lifeline for most Samoans, the Fisheries Division continues to study, research and introduce proper farming technologies to enable local fishermen to obtain maximum benefit from their fisheries activities while at the same time fisheries resources are sustained to a level that is both ecological and economical sustainable.

Fisheries management and development is dictated by the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS 2008-2012) in which the Government outlines its areas of priorities and required actions to address these priorities. This project correlate with objectives stated within the 'Strategy for the

Development of Samoa 2008-2010' which are also identified by the three of the long-term goals within the Corporate Plan of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries that focus on:

1. **Food Security:** Improved local food security sources to ensure sufficient supply of traditional healthy food and other food products.
2. **Commercial Development:** To facilitate the development of an environment that leads to a thriving and commercially successful primary sector;
3. **Sustainable Fisheries Production and Welfare through Science and Technology:** To ensure the long-term sustainability and productivity of agriculture production systems through strong science and technological base.

The Fisheries Division has developed its aquaculture section to look into alternative food sources and systems to alleviate the decline of reef fish resources..Several commodities have been developed since then but very few have become established as a subsistence activity. Commodities with potential for development have been identified for subsistence and commercial levels. These are mainly tilapia, trochus, giant clams, sea urchin, beche-de-mer, prawns, seagrape and mudcrabs.

The latest development is the introducing of new farming systems such as the introduction of polyculture in land base aquaculture, introduction of Fish Aggregating Device (FADs) to coastal areas and improving of fish farming techniques.

The inshore section is responsible for research and monitoring assessment of fisheries resources stock status, monitoring of marine and fisheries habitats to obtain biological, economical and social information of changes overtime. In addition they also monitor and collect data of seafood products landed and traded at the local market outlets to determine their exploitation rates, length-weights relationships as well as catch and effort data. All of these information collected will assist in making decisions in development of management measures for the sustainable utilization of the fisheries resources.

2. Problems and Constraints of Coastal Resource Management

Fisheries development within the coastal areas of Samoa is very limited due to its limited resources. Thus developments of alternative and improved farming systems focus mainly on improving existing fisheries to not only maintain the resources sustainably but at the same time obtaining maximum economic benefits for the local fishermen.

The main concern is the overharvesting of the fisheries resources which can lead to the failure of these very important sources of protein and delicacy. The lack of understanding by the local fishers of the resources can lead to the overfishing of resulting in the failure of the fisheries and the loss of these great protein content food and income generation for the fishing communities.

3. Existing Projects/Programs for Coastal Resource Management

The Fisheries Division (FD) with its Community-based fisheries management program (CBFMP) is a bottom-up approach to management in that each participating village develops its own strategy to manage its marine resources and its environment. The FD is mandated to develop sustainable conservations and fisheries management measures under the Fisheries Act 1988; therefore, the

FD works with communities to pursue fisheries development and marine conservation, and to provide technical assistance.

The FD has projects to;

- develop and promote aquaculture of marine and freshwater species in the communities level or individual farmers;
- conduct stock assessment of certain species such as trochus, sea cucumber
- improve demarcation of village-owned fish reserves
- carry out public awareness of the communities especially fishers on FADs (nearshore) fabrication and deployments
- carry out trainings and consultations to communities on coping for climate changes and adaptation measures
- develop and formulate village fisheries management plans and bylaws
- conduct quantitative review of management plans to assess degree of successful implementation
- conduct on-site community trainings on coral replanting and reef rehabilitation

These projects are essential opportunities to;

1. Provide the status of stock population and production value in Samoa
2. Provide alternative methods of farming systems producing more options for local people to provide food, generate income as well as employment and fisheries business opportunities
3. Improve fisheries farming systems in Samoa and develop the capacity and awareness of local people and communities in aquaculture activities
4. Improve fisheries stock through improved farming system and sound management
5. Engage communities in raising their awareness and building capacities on sustainable farming, harvesting and fishing techniques which can sustain the resources for their livelihoods and future generations.
6. Improve community participation and motivation on coastal resources sustainable management
7. Maintain, sustain and improve food security and livelihood of our local community.