

DECEMBER 2018

# Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries Phase 2: Final Evaluation Report



Cover photo by Irene Scott

## About Allen + Clarke

Allen and Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists Limited (*Allen + Clarke*) is a consultancy firm based in Wellington, New Zealand. We specialise in policy and programme development and implementation, research and evaluation, business change, operational management and risk, and secretariat and programme support services. A key component of our work is undertaking reviews and developing and implementing policies that improve the outcomes for the public. Founded in 2001, the company is owned and managed by senior staff, and has a team of approximately forty-five other senior evaluation and policy practitioners, analysts and project support staff. Our company works extensively for a range of government agencies in New Zealand, and international clients and non-government organisations in the Pacific and Asia. More information about our work can be found on our website: [www.allenandclarke.co.nz](http://www.allenandclarke.co.nz).

*Allen + Clarke* is a member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA), and our Evaluation + Research Practice staff all belong to the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES). Through these organisations, *Allen + Clarke* adheres to rigorous evaluation and ethical standards. If you would like more information about these standards, the booklet Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations is available at [www.aes.asn.au](http://www.aes.asn.au).

## The evaluation team

This evaluation was undertaken by a team of two senior consultants from *Allen + Clarke* – Ned Hardie-Boys and Nick Leffler – and Paul Wallis, who is the Lead Advisor, Fisheries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

## Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the evaluation participants who made themselves available for interviews, and to those who showed the team around the Tilapia Aquaculture Centre site and SolTuna Limited's tuna processing plant. We also appreciate the support of the New Zealand High Commission and the MSSIF Team Leader who helped to organise the schedule of interviews in Solomon Islands.

<b>Document status:</b>	Final
<b>Version and date:</b>	V2.1; 7 December 2018
<b>Author(s):</b>	Nick Leffler and Ned Hardie-Boys
<b>Filing Location:</b>	W:\MFAT\Evaluation of Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF)\Phase 2 – Evaluation
<b>Peer / technical review:</b>	Ned Hardie-Boys
<b>Verification that QA changes made:</b>	Nick Leffler
<b>Proof read:</b>	Pounamu Aikman
<b>Formatting:</b>	Nick Leffler
<b>Final QA check and approved for release:</b>	Ned Hardie-Boys

*Allen + Clarke* has been independently certified as compliant with ISO9001:2015 Quality Management Systems



Cover photo by Irene Scott/AusAID, CC BY 2.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=32168684>

# CONTENTS

<b>GLOSSARY</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose and methods of the evaluation	1
Findings and conclusions	2
Recommendations	4
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1. The MSSIF programme	6
1.2. The evaluation of MSSIF	8
1.3. Structure of this report	10
<b>2. EVALUATION FINDINGS</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1. Alignment to priorities	11
2.2. Modality	12
2.3. Governance, planning and reporting	13
2.4. Management efficiency	14
2.5. Value for Money	16
2.6. Progress on results	18
2.7. Influencing factors	19
2.8. Gender, human rights, and climate change	21
2.9. Sustainability	22
<b>3. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1. Assessment against DAC criteria	25
<b>4. FUTURE DESIGN AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1. Project focus	26
4.2. Technical inputs	28
4.3. Partnerships	29
4.4. Inclusive development	30
<b>5. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>APPENDIX A – RESULTS DIAGRAM FOR MSSIF</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>APPENDIX B – REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>APPENDIX B – EVALUATION QUESTIONS</b>	<b>42</b>

## GLOSSARY

ACA	Activity Completion Assessment
ADD	Activity Design Document
AMA	Activity Monitoring Assessment
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [Australian Government]
EU	European Union
FAME	Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystem
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
FMDI	Fisheries Management and Development Initiative
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GFA	Grant Funding Arrangement
HRA	Human Resources Advisor
IEPA	Interim Economic Partnership Agreement
IFA	Inshore Fisheries Advisor
ISC	Implementation Steering Committee
JCfD	Joint Commitment for Development
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
LDC	Least Developed Country
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MFMR	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
MOFT	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
MPS	Ministry of Public Service
MSSIF	Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries
NZ	New Zealand
NZD	New Zealand Dollar
NZHC	New Zealand High Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFA	Offshore Fisheries Advisor
PFM	Public Financial Management
PMU-TU	Project Management Unit Technical Advisor
PROP	Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program
PS	Permanent Secretary
SBD	Solomon Island Dollar
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SIMROS	Solomon Islands Marine Resources Organisational Strengthening
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TA	Technical Assistance
USD	United States Dollar
VFM	Value for Money

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the evaluation of Phase 2 of the Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) was to inform decisions on options, delivery modalities, and priorities for New Zealand's support of Solomon Island's fisheries sector.

The evaluation methodology included reviewing activity design and management documents, a selection of key technical deliverables, and various other documents. Interviews were held with key MFAT staff in Wellington and at Post as well as with MSSIF technical advisers, and representatives of Solomon Islands Government (SIG). A sense-making workshop was held with MFAT, MSSIF and Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in Solomon Islands at the end of the field work.

The evaluation found that institutional strengthening of the fisheries sector is strongly aligned with SIG priorities and that the mixed funding modality for MSSIF has served the programme well over the past four years. Planning, governance and management is driven through strong relationships centred around an Implementation Steering Committee and there are management efficiency benefits from being on SIG systems.

Overall, MSSIF has been effective with notable gains in the corporate restructure and offshore fisheries management. Support provided has had a high impact, but sustainability varies. While MSSIF has been implemented economically, and MSSIF outputs are highly cost-effective, several inefficiencies were identified. Individually contracting advisors is inefficient and coordination with other sources of funding could be improved. Finally, while gender was identified as a priority in the design, it has not received sufficient focus during implementation.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of Phase 2 of the Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) programme. MSSIF was developed under the auspices of the *Solomon Islands – New Zealand Partnership Arrangement for Fisheries Sector Development Cooperation*, and the *New Zealand – Solomon Islands Joint Commitment for Development*. MFAT commissioned *Allen + Clarke* to undertake an evaluation over July to November 2018.

### Purpose and methods of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to inform decisions on options, delivery modalities and priorities for New Zealand support to Solomon Islands fisheries. The evaluation will:

- Identify current activities that would benefit from ongoing support and identify how these could be strengthened.
- Identify new activities that would benefit from support.
- Inform decisions on the modality of ongoing and new support to Solomon Islands fisheries and what the future direction, design and support should be.

The evaluation is also intended to assess:

- How New Zealand can best support the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) to embed its restructure.
- Options for leveraging further policy and technical support under existing regional arrangements (MPI, FFA and SPC).
- The advantages and need for (or otherwise) of a bilateral programme (Technical Assistance [TA] facility and/or grant funding).
- The validity and rationale for the increased project focus on tangible investments (e.g. Nile Tilapia and Bina Harbour).
- How to assist the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) to add value and unlock the potential of local fisheries value chains.

The evaluation focuses on answering four high-level key evaluation questions:

1. To what extent does institutional strengthening of the fisheries sector, through technical assistance and a grant funding agreement to the MFMR, remain a priority for the SIG and the New Zealand Aid Programme?
2. Has the MSSIF programme been managed efficiently and is the grant funding agreement efficient as a modality to support strengthening of the fisheries sector?
3. What progress has been made in achieving the MSSIF outputs, short and medium-term outcomes? Is progress likely to be sustainable?
4. What key changes would be needed to deliver sustainable outcomes from future support to fisheries development in Solomon Islands?

The evaluation was implemented over two phases. Phase 1 involved initial discussions with key MFAT and MFMR staff, and with the MSSIF Team Leader, and a review of documents. Phase 2 saw the implementation of the Evaluation Plan, involving further review of relevant documents,

interviews with 40 stakeholders in New Zealand and Solomon Islands, an interim results workshop with MFAT Post, MFMR management, and the MSSIF Team Leader at the end of the field work in Solomon Islands, and analysis and reporting.

## Findings and conclusions

### *Alignment to priorities*

The evaluation found that institutional strengthening of the fisheries sector is strongly aligned with SIG priorities. Additionally, MSSIF remains relevant to New Zealand's priorities for Solomon Islands and for Pacific fisheries.

### *Modality*

The mixed funding modality for MSSIF has served the programme well over the past four years. The Team Leader role played out differently than expected, requiring more administrative management of the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA). Going forward, there is less of a need for long-term technical advisers but the GFA remains highly relevant.

### *Governance, planning and reporting*

Planning, governance and management is driven through strong relationships centred around an Implementation Steering Committee. There is now potential for further integration of planning and reporting into MFMR planning cycles. This would also reduce some of the programme's administrative burden.

### *Management efficiency*

There are management efficiency benefits from being on SIG systems, and processes are working well, supported by capable and committed people. There are some inefficiencies in programme management: specifically, in procurement and deployment of long-term advisors by MFAT; contracting structure; administration, including financial management and reporting responsibility; and priority sharing.

### *Value for money*

To assess value for money (VFM), the evaluation looked for evidence of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The evaluation found strong evidence that MSSIF has been implemented economically, however several inefficiencies have also been found in this evaluation. Good evidence exists that MSSIF outputs are highly cost-effective.

### *Progress on results*

Substantial progress has been made on the corporate restructure of MFMR. Support for inshore fisheries has evolved over the life of the programme, with a number of activities completed. However, it is too early to assess progress on the latest activities. The development of offshore fisheries is also considered successful, with substantial capacity built within MFMR to manage its offshore fisheries without external support.

### *Influencing factors*

A range of influencing factors impact MSSIF:



- Alignment of MFMR and MSSIF work planning has enhanced effectiveness, specifically progress on results.
- The flexible nature of the GFA has ensured that MSSIF has been able to respond to requests and support opportunities that leverage technical capabilities and the broader context for delivery, to ensure a high level of returns from investment. Strong governance is, however, required.
- The approach of pairing international part-time technical advisors with locally recruited full-time consultants, has been highly effective, ensuring continuity of support.
- Contracting advisors individually is inefficient and reduces effectiveness. All future advisors should be contracted through the GFA.
- Coordination with other sources of funding could be improved. The relationship and coordination with other funding mechanisms available to MFMR has also not always been good.
- In the same vein, overall donor coordination in the fisheries sector is currently lacking in Solomon Islands. As this phase of MSSIF draws to a conclusion, it is particularly important that MFMR establish and lead a coordination mechanism that brings potential partners around a common table, to share plans and discuss priority areas for support, to maximise the potential from engagement with a number of donors.
- Finally, the international travel commitments of the MFMR senior leadership team – that are an inevitable part of managing Pacific fisheries – do risk resulting in delays in decision making and lack of implementation progress. Hosting bilateral negotiations in Solomon Islands would reduce the international travel commitments of MFMR officials, and should be considered where possible

### *Gender, human rights, and climate change*

Gender was identified as a priority in the design but has not received sufficient focus during implementation. While the evaluation team understands that some work on a gender assessment has been completed with support from SPC, there is no evidence of gender guiding implementation decisions in MSSIF. Gender, human rights, and climate change remain highly relevant in the development and management of Solomon Islands fisheries, in both in- and offshore fisheries.

### *Sustainability*

Embedding the corporate restructure of MFMR is critical. While 20 new positions were established in the 2018 MFMR budget, securing the remaining 16 positions is critical to embedding the restructure and enabling MFMR to deliver against its mandate and in line with its plans. The sustainability of inshore fisheries work varies. With support for Hapi Fis now largely stopped, it would be disappointing if the significant body of knowledge that was developed were not leveraged. MFMR should consider how future investments in inshore fisheries incorporates, and are guided by, this knowledge product. Progress in offshore fisheries management needs to be embedded. Following earlier support, MFMR is now largely managing its offshore fisheries policy and negotiations without technical advice. This significant progress is notable and is likely to be sustainable so long as the individuals currently involved remain in post.

## Recommendations

The evaluation recommends that:

1. MFAT moves away from supporting long-term technical advisors but continues to support a grant funding arrangement that allows the MFMR to contract technical assistance through short-term advisors/consultants, and to further embed the corporate restructure programme initiated under MSSIF.
2. MFAT contracts a programme manager (in place of a Team Leader) to work with MFMR in planning, scoping, developing, implementing, and reporting on activities supported under a grant funding arrangement.
3. MFMR continue to ensure that future advisors/consultants are always paired with willing counterparts within the Ministry to build capability and support knowledge transfer.
4. MFAT continues to deliver a grant funding arrangement through SIG systems and consider more fully aligning (and, where feasible, integrating) grant funding planning and reporting with MFMR planning and reporting (e.g. integrating the grant funding arrangement with an MFMR results framework).
5. MFAT targets support towards tangible projects, subject to rigorous decision-making processes that includes assessments of project rationale/objective (e.g. job creation, improving livelihoods, improving food security, resource management, etc), project activity, outcomes, risks, and sustainability (including future funding).
  - a. In relation to the tilapia project, MFAT defines its intended future role and scope of support through any future funding mechanism and identify alternate funding if required.
  - b. In terms of the Bina Harbour project, MFAT minimises investment to only critically needed activities required to maintain progress, until such a time that the land holding, and trade relations matters are resolved. In the long term, it is likely that, the project will require significant funding from multiple donors, at which point MFAT will need to identify specific providable support in relation to a group funding mechanism. At that point, as the project becomes more of an infrastructure project, it may be worthwhile considering providing any further support through a dedicated mechanism, rather than through a fisheries programme.
6. MFAT encourages MPI to formalise a support arrangement with MFMR under the MPI Pacific Fisheries Capacity Development Programme, in order to create longer term institutional relationships between the fisheries administrations and integrate the MPI programme into MFMR work planning.
7. MFAT encourage and support MFMR to lead regular donor coordination processes, to increase understanding and visibility of opportunities and progress, so as to identify opportunities for cross-project leverage.
8. MFMR ensure that MFAT is engaged throughout the upcoming PROP review to ensure lessons learned are shared, and that future planning is coordinated at a funding agency level.

9. MFAT mandates in any future fisheries programme design, that inclusive development be considered explicitly and integrated into management and review processes.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings and recommendations of an evaluation of the Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) programme undertaken over July to November 2018. This section provides background information on the MSSIF programme and the evaluation. It also describes the structure of the report.

### 1.1. The MSSIF programme

The MSSIF programme was developed under the auspices of the *Solomon Islands – New Zealand Partnership Arrangement for Fisheries Sector Development Cooperation*, signed in 2010, and the *New Zealand – Solomon Islands Joint Commitment for Development*, signed in 2011 and reaffirmed in 2014. The partnership arrangement commits New Zealand to assisting Solomon Islands to develop its capability and to implement policy, regulatory, and institutional reforms; fisheries management practices; and investment-led development opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

New Zealand's support for the development of Solomon Islands fisheries stretches back to 2006, through the Solomon Islands Marine Resources Organisational Strengthening (SIMROS) programme (2006–2010). The MSSIF programme extended this support over Phase 1 (2010–2014) and Phase 2 (2015–2019), providing assistance through:

- A Grant Funding Arrangement (GFA) between the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), to fund tasks in the MFMR Corporate and Annual plans.
- Long-term Advisors contracted by MFAT to counterpart, mentor and develop the capacity of MFMR staff.
- Short-term Consultants contracted by MFMR to support the implementation of MFMR priorities and achievement of MFMR outcomes.

Under Phase 2, MSSIF has supported activities in three areas – offshore fisheries development, inshore fisheries development, and institutional capacity development – towards the programme goal of “the sustainable development and management of fisheries resources to ensure long-term benefits for the people of Solomon Islands”<sup>2</sup>. A results diagram for MSSIF is presented in Appendix A.

#### 1.1.1. MSSIF budget and expenditure

Phase 1 of MSSIF ran over 4 years and had a total cost of approximately NZD 6.7 million (SBD 40.27 million), including for advisors. The approved budget over Phase 1, excluding advisor costs, was SBD 30.05 million, of which SBD 16.55 million (55.1%) was actually spent. Advisor inputs over Phase 1 were estimated at SBD 19.23 million, giving a total expenditure of SBD 35.78 million.

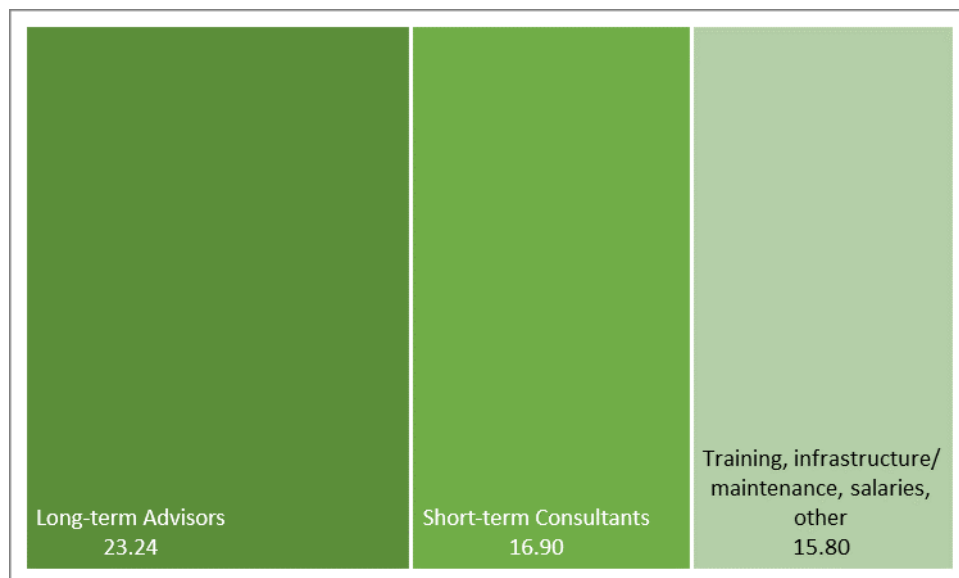
For Phase 2, New Zealand allocated NZD 8.95 million (SBD 55.94 million) over 5 years. Almost 42% of this funding (SBD 23.24 million) was for Long-term Advisors (see Figure 1).

---

<sup>1</sup> Solomon Islands – New Zealand Partnership Arrangement for Fisheries Sector Development, MFAT, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Activity Design Document, MFAT, 2014

Figure 1: Budget allocation by input, MSSIF Phase 2 (SBD million)



The budget profile proposed a reduction in spend over time, from approximately SBD 14 million to SBD 8 million per annum over the 5 years. This was based on assumptions that:

- There would be a move from full-time to part-time advisors as MFMR capability grows.
- The MFMR would pick up administration and reporting of the grant funding.
- There would be a reduction in the use of consultants as MFMR capability and systems improves.

The approved budget over Phase 2, excluding advisor costs, was SBD 32.58 million of which SBD 18.64 million (57.2%) had been spent by December 2017 (3 years into the 5-year programme).

The *Activity Design Document* (ADD) for Phase 2 proposed a complement of five long-term advisors comprising: a full-time Team Leader moving to part-time after 2 years, and a part-time Offshore Fisheries Advisor (OFA), Inshore Fisheries Advisor (IFA), Human Resources Advisor (HRA), and Project Management Unit Technical Advisor (PMU-TA). The programme budgeted for a total of 3.4 FTE advisors for the first 2 years, reducing to 2.05 FTEs over the next 2 years. Other than some delays in recruiting and replacing advisors, the programme has operated with its full complement of advisors over 2015–2018. The TEAM LEADER position moved to part-time (0.7 FTE) in March 2018.

### 1.1.2. Other New Zealand support for fisheries

In addition to the MSSIF programme, New Zealand:

- provides technical assistance (TA) to MFMR through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Resources (MPI)
- funds the Waikato Institute of Technology aquaculture project in Solomon Islands
- funds the New Zealand Institute of Pacific Research to undertake research that will identify ecologically, economically and socially responsible locations for the expansion of seaweed farming in Solomon Islands

- is currently the biggest contributor to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)
- funds the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

## **1.2. The evaluation of MSSIF**

### **1.2.1. Purpose**

The evaluation will be used by MFAT and MFMR to inform decisions on options, delivery modalities and priorities for New Zealand support following the end of Phase 2 of MSSIF in December 2019. It will:

- Identify current activities that would benefit from ongoing support and identify how these could be strengthened.
- Identify new activities that would benefit from support.
- Inform decisions on the modality of ongoing and new support to Solomon Islands fisheries, and what the future direction, design and support should be.

The evaluation is also intended to assess:

- how New Zealand can best support MFMR to embed its restructure
- options for leveraging further policy and technical support under existing regional arrangements (FMDI, FFA and SPC)
- the advantages and need for (or otherwise) of a bilateral programme (TA facility and/or grant funding)
- the validity and rationale for the increased project focus on tangible investments (e.g. Nile Tilapia and Bina Harbour)
- how to assist the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) to add value and unlock the potential of local fisheries value chains.

### **1.2.2. Scope**

The scope of the evaluation is limited to assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of Phase 2 of MSSIF (2015–2019) and recommending the scope and modality of MFAT support to MFMR and the fisheries sector post-2019. A comprehensive assessment of Phase 1 of MSSIF was completed in 2013<sup>3</sup> that informed the design of Phase 2; any activities that pre-date 2015 are therefore excluded from this evaluation. Where relevant, the evaluation will draw from the 2013 assessment report.

### **1.2.3. Key evaluation questions**

The evaluation focuses on answering four high-level key evaluation questions which align with objectives set out by MFAT in an evaluation terms of reference:

---

<sup>3</sup> Assessment of the Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) programme 2010-2013, Sapere Research Group, 2014.

1. To what extent does institutional strengthening of the fisheries sector, through technical assistance and a grant funding agreement to the MFMR, remain a priority for the SIG and the New Zealand Aid Programme?
2. Has the MSSIF programme been managed efficiently, and is the grant funding agreement efficient as a modality to support strengthening of the fisheries sector?
3. What progress has been made in achieving the MSSIF outputs, short and medium-term outcomes? Is progress likely to be sustainable?
4. What key changes would be needed to deliver sustainable outcomes from future support to fisheries development in Solomon Islands?

Sub-questions were developed for each of these questions and are provided in Appendix B.

#### **1.2.4. Methodology**

The evaluation was implemented over two phases. Phase 1 involved initial discussions with key MFAT and MFMR staff, and with the MSSIF Team Leader, and a review of key documents. These were key inputs to the development of an Evaluation Plan.

Phase 2 saw the implementation of the Evaluation Plan, involving further review of relevant documents, interviews with 40 stakeholders in New Zealand and Solomon Islands, an interim results workshop with MFAT Post, MFMR management and the MSSIF Team Leader at the end of the field work in Solomon Islands, and analysis and reporting. While in Solomon Islands, the evaluation team also received a presentation on the proposed Tilapia Aquaculture Centre and visited the project site, and visited SolTuna Limited's tuna processing plant in Noro, Western Province.

The interviews were semi-structured and included:

- MFMR staff and consultants (n=22)
- MFAT staff at Post and in Wellington (n=4)
- the Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources (n=1)
- the MSSIF Team Leader and two programme advisors (n=3)
- fishing industry representatives (n=3)
- FFA staff (n=4)
- Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet staff (n=1)
- a TA at the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (n=1)
- a WorldFish representative (n=1).

The evaluation team included MFAT's Lead Adviser, Fisheries. This enabled the evaluation to frequently draw on internal information, knowledge and perspectives. The Lead Adviser is not involved in MFAT's management of MSSIF or New Zealand's broader Solomon Islands country programme, so has a level of independence from the programme. The Lead Adviser attended most interviews, and his role within MFAT was discussed during the rapport building and consenting process. We do not believe his involvement in the interviews had a significant impact on the quality of information collected.

### 1.2.5. Strengths and limitations

Apart from the long-term advisors, the funding type/modality (funding support to the MFMR) means that it is not always clear what outputs and results have been achieved through New Zealand's contributions, and what has been achieved through SIG support. In addition, the MSSIF programme works alongside other external support, including through FFA and New Zealand's MPI, and some stakeholders did not distinguish between the different support programmes. However, given the MSSIF funding represents a considerable proportion of the MFMR's budget, and has been provided over a long period of time (8 years on top of 4 years of support under SIMROS), and given also that the programme is still current and has a high profile within MFMR, the evaluation is able to make reasonably strong assertions around MSSIF's contribution (or otherwise) to development and management of the fisheries sector. The evaluation also benefited from:

- Strong engagement from people (advisors, consultants and senior managers) in programme and sector management and leadership roles, who regularly consider the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and future of MSSIF.
- A high degree of stakeholder availability during the field work in Solomon Islands.
- Having a sector expert (MFAT's Lead Advisor, Fisheries) on the evaluation team who brought another perspective to interviews and analysis and had existing relationships with several stakeholders.

### 1.3. Structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows.

- Section 2 presents the findings for key evaluation questions 1–3 on relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, organised in thematical order (as many of the themes cut across the questions).
- Section 3 summarises the key findings by the DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability (i.e. aligned to key evaluation questions 1–3) and discusses the evaluation conclusions.
- Section 4 answer key evaluation question 4 about future support.
- Section 5 presents the evaluation recommendations.

Assessments against the DAC criteria of two of the larger MSSIF supported projects (Tilapia aquaculture and Bina Harbour development) are included in Sections 2.9 and 4.1.



## 2. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section details the main evaluation findings relating to the first three key evaluation questions. The findings are arranged thematically.

### 2.1. Alignment to priorities

MSSIF has supported institutional strengthening of the MFMR, particularly through the capacity development workstream, and support to the Corporate Services Division (see section 2.6). Institutional strengthening remains a key priority for both the Solomon Islands Government and the New Zealand Aid Programme.

#### 2.1.1. Institutional strengthening of the fisheries sector is strongly aligned with SIG priorities

Institutional strengthening of the fisheries sectors aligns with priorities outlined in SIG's current *National Development Strategy*.<sup>4</sup> There is strong alignment with Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 12 on *Efficient and effective public service with a sound corporate culture*, which seeks to 'to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of public sector founded on principles of transparency, accountability, trustworthy and honesty'. It includes activities around restructuring public services, strengthening workforce planning and management, improving planning and budget operations to integrate donor financed programmes into budgets, and capacity development. These all feature prominently in MSSIF.

Building a strong MFMR contributes to other Medium-Term Strategies in the *National Development Strategy*, including:

- MTS 1 *Reinvigorate and increase the rate of inclusive economic growth* – identifies a number of fisheries activities, including reviewing laws and regulations to protect marine resources and to regulate commercial fishing.
- MTS 6 *Increase employment and labour mobility opportunities in rural areas and improve the livelihoods of all Solomon Islanders* – identifies the potential of fisheries to increase employment opportunities through private sector growth in rural areas.
- MTS 11 *Manage the environment in a sustainable way and contribute to climate change mitigation* – identifies the need to protect marine resources.

#### 2.1.2. MSSIF is also strongly aligned to the NZ Aid Programme's priorities

MSSIF remains relevant to New Zealand's priorities for the Solomon Islands and for Pacific fisheries.

New Zealand's most recent development priorities for Solomon Islands are set out in the 2016 *Joint Commitment for Development* (JCfD). These include outcomes relating to strengthened economic governance, and economic and food security from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. The JCfD also includes commitments to working through SIG finance and

---

<sup>4</sup> SIG. 2016. National Development Strategy 2016–2035. Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination: Honiara.

procurement systems, and to providing long-term and predictable funding. MSSIF aligns closely to these outcomes and commitments.

MFAT has a more recent four-year country plan for Solomon Islands, but this plan is for internal purposes only and has not been provided to the evaluation team. We understand, however, that it includes outcomes relating to the capacity of government ministries to deliver services (which includes improved governance of the fisheries sector), improved public financial management (PFM) systems, and economic diversification. Again, MSSIF remains strongly aligned to these more recent priorities. Indirectly, improved governance and public financial management at MFMR contributes to confidence in the state, while economic diversification will provide more employment opportunities. These are key results for improved social cohesion, which we understand is also an MFAT priority.

Fisheries is one of 12 *Investment Priorities* for the NZ Aid Programme over 2015–2019. The approach to achieve the stated goal of ‘Increase economic and food security benefits from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific’ focuses on building governance and capacity. More recent MFAT internal guidance re-affirms this focus on strengthening governance and building capacity and recognises the need for coordination with other partners in this area, including FFA, SPC and MPI.<sup>5</sup>

## **2.2. Modality**

The mixed funding modality for MSSIF – GFA, long-term advisors and short-term consultants – has served the programme well over the past 4 years but remains only partially relevant for the future. The Team Leader role played out differently than expected.

### **2.2.1. Grant funding and technical assistance through short-term consultancies remain relevant**

The flexibility of the GFA has enabled MSSIF to build capacity in MFMR through varied and targeted support. In addition to programme administration costs, the GFA has funded MFMR staff, short-term national and international technical assistance, and MFMR development projects. In parallel, long-term technical advisors, contracted by MFAT, have provided overall programme guidance and technical assistance. This approach to institutional strengthening has ensured that long-term technical advisors had counterparts to work with whose capacity could be built, while focusing on concrete investments and projects that were identified as priorities in the MFMR work programme.

In parallel, long-term advisors have contributed to strengthened capacity and capability of the executive, particularly as a result of working with and mentoring counterparts such as under-secretaries or deputy directors. Advisors have also helped to improve systems and partnerships (e.g. with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury [MOFT] and Ministry of Public Service [MPS]). Short-term consultancies have been used effectively to fill specific gaps, such as to support the development of an MFMR business plan and a communications strategy. Again, these have often taken a capacity building approach through mentoring a local counterpart.

This approach to institutional strengthening does present an inherent risk of continued reliance on external funding to maintain capacity that has been built in MFMR. In this case, however, MSSIF

---

<sup>5</sup> Pacific Fisheries – Guidance Note for Country Programme Four Year Plans (MFAT, unpublished).

has helped to create the conditions whereby the SIG has agreed to absorb 34 new positions into the MFMR, including positions previously funded under the GFA. While this does create an increased recurrent liability for MFMR, the substantial increased revenue achieved over the same period, in part through MSSIF support, has ensured that the MFMR recurrent budget as a proportion of offshore revenues remains roughly the same.

Notwithstanding this success, capability and systems are not yet fully embedded, and the MFMR has had a decrease in its development budget. The GFA, therefore, remains relevant to support the ongoing implementation of systems and training, and to support project costs which cannot be met by the MFMR's recurrent budget. Meanwhile, the increase in capacity and improved systems makes long-term advisors of less relevance, and future technical assistance can likely be more appropriately sourced through the use of short-term consultants.

### **2.2.2. Team Leader role continues to involve substantial programme administration**

During Phase 1 of MSSIF, the Team Leader reportedly spent 25% of their time on programme and financial administration of MSSIF, compared with a planned 14%. It was expected that the financial management of MSSIF would transition to MFMR over Phase 2, as individual and organisational capability grew, enabling the Team Leader to spend more time on other activities and, potentially, transition to a part-time role.

While it is clear that MFMR's capacity in financial management and procurement has increased over Phase 2, and the MSSIF programme is well-supported by a very capable Chief Administration Officer, the Team Leader continues to invest considerably more time in administering the programme than anticipated, including in budget management and reporting. This leaves less time available for other functions, such as collaborating with the Permanent Secretary (PS) and working directly with MFMR senior management on technical, management and other issues; and for overseeing and coordinating the work of other TAs supporting MFMR (i.e., as the 'Team Leader').

As the MFMR's technical and management capacity has increased, as with the other long-term advisor positions, there is an opportunity to reconsider the relevance of the Team Leader position, and potentially to reshape the role into more of a programme coordination than advisory position.

## **2.3. Governance, planning and reporting**

Formal governance and management of MSSIF is through an Implementation Steering Committee (ISC), which is chaired by the MFMR PS and includes MFAT staff at the New Zealand High Commission (NZHC), and the MSSIF Team Leader. The ISC has met six times over Phase 2 (approximately every 6 months, while the ADD reported that it would meet at least quarterly) and considers progress on activities and the allocation of resources.

Planning and reporting under MSSIF was designed to align with MFMR planning and reporting, with the MSSIF Annual Plan and budget being developed with clear reference to MFMR's Corporate and Annual Plan. The MSSIF Team Leader provides regular (a mix of monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly) reports to the MFMR PS and MFAT, and 6-month activity progress reports to MFAT. MFAT's Activity Manager also produces an annual Activity Monitoring Assessment (AMA). This equates to substantial programme reporting.

### **2.3.1. Planning, governance and management is driven through strong relationships**

While the ISC appears to be functioning well and is fit-for-purpose, strong relationships outside of the formal committee process, particularly over the last 2 years, have helped MSSIF to remain relevant to SIG and the NZ Aid Programme priorities. This has helped to create a high-trust model, which has enabled MSSIF to respond to emerging needs and priorities with a high degree of flexibility, within the bounds of business case and procurement processes, particularly when compared with other more rigid development programmes. From a different perspective, the operating model places considerable responsibility on the MSSIF Team Leader. Their ability to make decisions and prioritise is limited by access to information, whether that be strategic information on MFAT's priorities for the Solomon Island or regional fisheries, or a long-term view of the MFMR budget.

### **2.3.2. Planning and reporting could be further integrated**

The ability of MSSIF planning and reporting to align with MFMR planning and reporting over Phase 2 was initially restricted by the lack of an MFMR Corporate Plan and a consistently produced Annual Plan. Now that MFMR has a Corporate Plan<sup>6</sup>, as well as a Business Plan<sup>7</sup> developed under a short-term consultancy funded by MSSIF in 2017, there is an opportunity to further align (and potentially integrate some aspects of) planning and reporting, to reduce some of the programme's administrative burden and further get MSSIF 'on plan, on budget, and on report'.

A potential area for greater integration is the programme's results framework, where the benefits from MSSIF having its own framework with specified results, measurement and reporting arrangements, separate from a broader MFMR framework, are not apparent. There is already strong alignment between MSSIF and MFMR's vision, focal areas and strategic objectives as set out in its Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan also includes indicators and states that development partners are requested to use these and has quarterly and annual reporting processes.

In addition to reducing duplication and the burden of multiple planning and reporting frameworks, having an integrated results framework would enable greater alignment of workplans (between MSSIF and MFMR) and, through the annual planning and reporting process, ensure MSSIF adapts to and remains responsive and relevant to MFMR's needs and priorities. While it has been reported above that MSSIF has achieved this, this is due to strong interpersonal relationships as opposed to robust planning and management processes.

## **2.4. Management efficiency**

In terms of the efficiency of programme management, the evaluation considered the use of SIG systems to manage the GFA and the wider MSSIF management arrangements to support implementation.

---

<sup>6</sup> MFMR. 2016. Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Corporate Plan (2016-2018). Solomon Islands Government: Honiara.

<sup>7</sup> MFMR. 2018. Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Business Plan (2018-2022). Solomon Islands Government: Honiara.

#### **2.4.1. There are efficiency benefits from being on system**

The GFA and the procurement of MFMR contracted consultants is managed through SIG systems. There have been some challenges and frustrations with running the programme through these systems, but these have been largely overcome and the evaluation found processes to be working well, supported by capable and committed people. We heard examples of efficient financial processes, for example, for the procurement for construction of an electronic monitoring building (less than 2 months), and the turn-around time for payments (which often achieve their target of 7 days). The evaluation also heard evidence of where the system (again, due to capable and committed people) is asking questions of the programme's financial management, providing assurance that there are appropriate controls in place.

As noted, the system is supported by capable people. The Chief Administration Officer has been with MSSIF since the start of Phase 1 (2010). She receives support and guidance on SIG processes and systems from the MFMR Financial Controller (a MOFT-posted position). Once approved by the MFMR PS, payments are checked for compliance with SIG rules by a donor compliance representative (a DFAT funded position) embedded in MOFT, before going to other MOFT staff for payment. It is, reportedly, uncommon for payments to have to go back from MOFT to the MFMR Financial Controller for querying.

There have been two audits of MSSIF accounts. The first, covering 2010–2014, was well received. The second was undertaken in 2017, covering 2015–2016, but the MFMR has yet to receive the report. Monthly reconciliation on an imprest account and monthly financial acquittal of the grant funding provides further assurances and controls.

Contracting and procurement runs through MOFT's Central Tender Board (if greater than SBD 500,000). MFMR and MSSIF advisors take part in the selection process, which then goes to the Board for approval and awarding of contracts. Smaller contracts, such as those for short-term consultants, go through a Ministerial Tender Board, which is chaired by the MFMR PS. This Board manages a database of previous consultants.

It is clear that the financial processes for the GFA benefit from individuals with high capability and integrity. It would seem that the MFMR and the programme is fortunate in this respect, and it will be important to strengthen others' capability and SIG financial systems so that the efficient processes are not reliant on a few individuals. We understand that SIG's financial management information system will be updated in 2020, and this is expected to bring wide-ranging benefits.

#### **2.4.2. There are some inefficiencies in programme management**

The evaluation identified several factors that have constrained efficient programme management:

- The procurement and deployment of long-term advisors by MFAT has been decisively average, resulting in a number of gaps and delays which have slowed programme implementation and expenditure.
- The contracting structure, whereby MFAT Post manages up to five contracts with advisors at any one time (along with the GFA), is inefficient – it involves multiple contract management processes, contributes to silos (no one articulates the advisors as a 'team' despite there being a 'team leader'), and has led to split and complex reporting lines to/across MFAT, MFMR and the Team Leader.
- In section 2.2.2, the evaluation noted that the MSSIF Team Leader spends a significant amount of time on administration, including financial management and reporting. This

function would be more appropriately, and presumably more efficiently, performed by someone with a different skill set than the current Team Leader, who is an experienced aquatic scientist.

- In section 2.3.1, the evaluation noted that information on MFAT's strategic priorities for the Solomon Islands and its fisheries sector priorities were not routinely shared with the MSSIF Team Leader. This lack of information sharing has the potential to contribute to programme inefficiencies.

The evaluation did not find clear evidence of the inefficiencies identified in the 2016 and 2017 AMAs, indicating that these factors may have been addressed. The 2016 AMA reported a misfit between external advisors' approach and the receptiveness of local counterparts, the temptation for the MFMR to treat advisors like contractors (and offload excessive work onto them), and conversely the temptation for MSSIF advisors 'to do' – rather than to mentor by doing – in partnership with counterparts. As discussed earlier in this report, we evidenced strong relationships and mentoring/counterparting. However, we did hear of areas within the MFMR where there was not a strong and receptive counterpart for an advisor to work with, and advisors were essentially substituting rather than building capability of their counterpart. We also heard that, as MFMR's capability had grown, sometimes the need was for someone to do the work rather than advise on how it should be done.

The 2017 AMA noted that some of the risks identified in 2016 had been mitigated by the appointment of new advisors with strong interpersonal/communication skills. It also noted the greater balance in inputs between advisors and grant funding, enabling the programme to support tangible projects in addition to providing technical assistance.

## 2.5. Value for Money

To assess value for money (VFM), the evaluation looked for evidence of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. We have not undertaken a quantitative analysis of costs against outputs and outcomes but have focused on identifying evidence against each of these dimensions, in addition to the evidence presented elsewhere in this report (see section 2.4 on management efficiency and section 2.6 on results [effectiveness] in particular).

Economy is concerned with the degree to which inputs are being purchased in the right quantity and at the right price. The evaluation found strong evidence that MSSIF has been implemented economically, for example:

- MFAT procurement systems have been used to contract long-term advisors and SIG systems for short-term consultants and other services and equipment. Both MFAT and SIG procurement processes consider VFM.
- MFMR contracted consultants and MSSIF funded in-line positions have been appointed on SIG benefits, so they match the local market. This also ensures equity (often a fourth dimension of VFM).
- The long-term advisor positions have been progressively wound down as MFMR capacity has strengthened. This has helped to ensure that there is not a higher quantity of resources than is required.

- The checks and balances in the payments approvals process has queried a small number of expenses and identified alternative ways of supplying inputs (e.g. transportation) at lower costs.

Efficiency considers the rate at which inputs are converted to outputs (maximising outputs for a given level of inputs = cost-efficient). Several inefficiencies are identified in the previous section (2.4.2). Further examples to add to the mixed evidence on efficiency are:

- The institutional restructure and SIG approval of new line positions in the MFMR has been a significant achievement, supported by the MSSIF HRA. Lessons from this process are being discussed with the Ministry of Public Service and other ministries to maximise the potential benefits from this experience.
- While the relative independence of the long-term advisors (from each other) was not necessarily seen as detrimental, the lack of a coordinated approach (e.g. even so they are in country at the same time) potentially results in missed opportunities to maximise outputs (e.g. some advisors had very little understanding of the GFA and what it could potentially offer).
- The increase in capacity at the MFMR's Noro office has enabled a much improved turn-around time for boats unloading their catch, reducing down-time and improving the industry's efficiency.

Effectiveness assesses the rate at which outputs are converted into outcomes and impacts, and the cost-effectiveness of this conversion. The attention and priority given to addressing the EU yellow card is a clear example of MSSIF outputs being highly cost-effective. The yellow card was issued in December 2014. Addressing this became a top priority for MFMR (and MSSIF) in order to lift the threat of being listed as no-compliant with EU regulations which would affect access to the EU market and seriously affect the ongoing viability of the Solomon Islands tuna industry. The card was lifted in February 2017. MSSIF contributed key outputs to achieving this outcome, including:

- drafting and subsequently gazetting the Offshore Fisheries Regulations (MSSIF funded a Legal Advisor who was supported by the OFA)
- working with the MFMR Noro office to determine staffing requirements<sup>8</sup>, roles and responsibilities; building capacity among 19 new Fisheries Officers; upgrading facilities; and development and implementation of a practical Catch Based Management system over a two-year period
- building capacity of MFMR's Compliance Unit to carry out boardings/inspections and document evidence correctly
- preparing responses to the EU and preparing for an EU visit and video conferences.

It is difficult to estimate the precise impact these outputs had on the Solomon Islands economy. In 2016, revenue from tuna fisheries' licence and access fees contributed USD 41.6 million to the Solomon Islands economy, and the industry provided employment for 2,691 people in the Solomon Islands.<sup>9</sup> Losing access to the EU market would have had a significant impact on these outcomes. The loss of preferential market access of Solomon Islands graduates from Least

---

<sup>8</sup> The funding for the staffing and office at Noro are contributed by PROP.

<sup>9</sup> Terawasi P & Reid C. 2017. Economic and Development Indicators and Statistics: Tuna Fisheries of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. Forum Fisheries Agency Honiara.

Developed Country (LDC) status is again posing a risk of significant economic losses for Solomon Islands. In order to preserve the gains from capacity improvements in fisheries, an Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) should be entered into that provides the market with certainty on trade relations. While this applies to the whole Solomon Islands economy, fisheries are a key contributor and it is essential that its considerations are accurately reflected in any negotiations, which may warrant some targeted technical assistance.

VFM will need to be considered at the design stage for proposed projects that target economic development and food security, including the Bina Harbour Project and the Tilapia Project.

## **2.6. Progress on results**

A high-level assessment of progress against outcomes is provided in Appendix B. Key themes are outlined below.

### **2.6.1. Corporate restructure**

Substantial progress has been made on the corporate restructure of MFMR. In 2016, MSSIF supported a functional analysis of MFMR that informed the restructure programme that was approved by cabinet and the MPS in December 2016. A key pre-requisite for implementing the corporate restructure was alignment between MFMR, MPS, and MoFT to confirm the establishment and funding of new positions. The concerted effort of MFMR with support from the HRA and the MSSIF HR consultants succeeded in getting 20 of 36 new positions approved in the 2018 budget, which is a significant success for the MFMR and the programme.

In order to embed the restructure, however, MFMR will have to work with MPS to establish the remaining positions. It is now also necessary to focus on ensuring the systems and processes are in place to support a larger MFMR, in particular from a performance management and personal development perspective.

### **2.6.2. Inshore Fisheries**

Support for inshore fisheries has evolved over the life of the MSSIF programme. The Hapi Fis project<sup>10</sup> provided a significant early focus on the development of an electronic platform for the collection of inshore fisheries biological and market data, and resulted in substantially increased knowledge on the coastal catch to inform inshore fisheries management. While the dissemination of the information to provincial fisheries offices is positive, it is unclear how the information is currently being used for sustainable exploitation of inshore fisheries. With the capacity of provincial fisheries officers limited as it is, the move by MFMR to establish constituency fisheries centres invites question around resourcing and sustainability. A more concerted and strategic approach to support for inshore fisheries is likely still required and can build on the knowledge that has been generated.

In the aquaculture area, MSSIF has pivoted from supporting the development of the seaweed industry to the development of a Nile Tilapia hatchery to provide the fingerlings for subsistence farming. The justification for ceasing support to the seaweed sector was that the sector had progressed to the point that it could operate commercially without further external assistance. This being the case, this is a success for MSSIF. However, the decision of PROP to pick up funding

---

<sup>10</sup> Also known as the Mobile Inshore Fisheries Data Information Project (MIFDIP).



from 2018 raises questions around the sustainability of the sector without external support. While the Nile Tilapia project (see Box 1 in Section 2.9.2. below) appears a worthy investment, it comes quite late in the MSSIF programme and will require ongoing external support beyond the end of the programme.

### **2.6.3. Offshore fisheries**

A significant focus early on in this phase of MSSIF was support to offshore management towards complying with the conditions necessary for the lifting of the EU yellow card. Had this not been achieved, as discussed in section 2.5, the ability of Solomon Islands to benefit from the revenue of its tuna fisheries would have been severely affected. Through the targeted support provided, substantial capacity has been built within MFMR to manage its offshore fisheries without external support. MFMR is increasingly able and has the confidence to negotiate access to its fishing grounds through the sale of vessel day permits in line with economic analysis. MSSIF has substantially contributed to this, first through an international advisor and now through a MSSIF contracted national staff, and this can therefore be considered a major success. The increased revenues through the period of this phase of MSSIF, rising from SBD 100 million to over SBD 300 million points to the ability of MFMR to maximise its return from the exploitation of its tuna fisheries.

Related to that is the increased capacity in MFMR to undertake economic analysis on its fisheries. For the first years of this phase of MSSIF, a dedicated international long-term advisor provided this support. The advisor was paired with a local consultant whose capacity was built and who has now taken over the role independently. The establishment of the position through the corporate restructure means that this capacity has now been embedded in MFMR. It is understood that the position will move to Professional Services Section or the Corporate Services Division to service the whole MFMR. It is likely that the demands on the economist position will only increase as MFMR develops its capacity across the board and sufficient support must be planned to ensure this capacity is maintained.

Throughout this phase of MSSIF, funding has been allocated to small pieces of exploratory work on the development of Bina Harbour to support the establishment of a new tuna cannery (see Box 2 in Section 4.1 below). This opportunity for further onshore development of the Solomon Islands tuna industry would create substantial employment and significantly increase the contribution of the tuna industry to Solomon Islands. As discussed in Section 2.5 above, the recent moves towards graduation from LDC status poses a significant risk to the onshore tuna industry in the absence of an IEPA with the European Union. While the Bina Harbour project will require substantial further support going forward, it is prudent to defer any further investment until there is clarity on the trade status of Solomon Islands.

## **2.7. Influencing factors**

### **2.7.1. Alignment of MFMR and MSSIF work planning has enhanced effectiveness**

The design and approach to implementation of Phase 2 of MSSIF has benefitted from a number of enhancing factors that have supported progress on results. Of particular note is the alignment of MFMR and MSSIF work planning. Over time, MSSIF has become fully integrated into MFMR's corporate structure in the sense that the advisors, staff, and GFA are considered core to delivery. As part of its annual work planning, MFMR identifies activities for funding and support from MSSIF subject to availability of funding and agreement by the ISC. This ensures that all funded

activities have the full commitment to delivery from MFMR leadership and identified staff responsible for implementation. It avoids the risk of a development project driven programme with “orphan” activities that are complementary, but not central to, MFMR’s work plan.

### **2.7.2. The GFAs flexibility has ensured relevance but requires strong governance**

Close alignment and integrated work planning have only been made possible by the flexibility of the GFA and the governance structure that has been established between MFMR, MSSIF, and MFAT Post. The flexible nature of the GFA has ensured that MSSIF has been able to respond to requests and support opportunities that leverage technical capabilities and the broader context for delivery to ensure a high level of returns from investment. Some notable examples here are the ability of MSSIF to support targeted work on lifting the EU yellow card at the beginning of the project, and to shift resources from supporting seaweed at first to Tilapia later in the programme recognising progress against the former and the opportunity of the latter.

However, flexibility requires adequate governance systems to ensure funding remains in line with priorities for both MFMR and MFAT. While the regular ISC meetings provide a forum for open discussion and agreement on work programmes, the evidence base for decision making on funding priorities is minimal. The concept notes for future opportunities provided to the evaluation team by the MSSIF Team Leader following the field work provide strong supporting evidence justifying future investment and it would have been useful for a similar mechanism to have been in place earlier in the project. This would have enabled a more thorough retrospective review of funding decisions around specific projects that instead relied on recollection of the individuals interviewed as part of the evaluation.

### **2.7.3. Pairing advisors with local consultants ensures continuity of support**

The approach of pairing international part-time technical advisors with locally recruited full-time consultants has been highly effective. In particular, the progress made on the corporate restructure appears to have benefitted greatly from the continuity of support from locally engaged consultants during the absence of the HRA. This “twinned” approach also comes with additional benefits in terms of capacity building and knowledge transfer. The localisation of technical advisors has also contributed to the effectiveness of MSSIF and to capacity building. The IFA brings both a wealth of expertise in fisheries management and development, but also a depth of contextual understanding of Solomon Islands. This has greatly benefitted both the overall delivery of the MSSIF programme, but also the capacity building of the Inshore Fisheries team in MFMR. Similarly, the establishment of the economist position is evidence of capacity building and has freed up resources for a different focus on technical advice in the Offshore Fisheries area.

### **2.7.4. Contracting advisors individually is inefficient and reduces effectiveness**

There are, however, a number of areas that are not conducive to effective delivery and would merit attention in future programmes. For example, the delivery modality of independent technical advisors contracted by MFAT has been an impediment to effective progress. It is highly reliant on individuals’ willingness and desire to work as part of a broader team, and unfortunately, has, at times, led to delivery in silos. It has impeded the ability of the Team Leader to coordinate a complete team with shared objectives working in a coordinated manner. It does appear, however, that this has improved over time largely as a result of the individuals involved.

### **2.7.5. Coordination with other sources of funding could be improved**

The relationship and coordination with other funding mechanisms available to MFMR has also not always been good. In particular, there was a missed opportunity to maximise the potential for coordination with the MFAT-funded Fisheries Management and Development Initiative that is implemented by the New Zealand MPI. Though this has now been addressed and MPI is delivering a highly regarded training programme for offshore fisheries officers, the lack of coordination early on delayed the engagement of MPI with MFMR. There are also opportunities to improve coordination with support available from the FFA and the SPC. While not entirely in MSSIF's control, coordination with the World Bank-funded Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP) could also have been better.

### **2.7.6. MFMR should lead sector donor coordination**

In the same vein, overall donor coordination in the fisheries sector is currently lacking in Solomon Islands. Particularly as this phase of MSSIF draws to a conclusion, it is important that MFMR establish and lead a coordination mechanism that brings potential partners around a common table to share plans and discuss priority areas for support to maximise the potential from engagement with a number of donors.

### **2.7.7. MFMR officials' extensive travel commitments risk delaying decisions**

Finally, the international travel commitments of the MFMR senior leadership team that are an inevitable part of managing Pacific fisheries do risk resulting in delays in decision making and lack of implementation progress. To the extent possible, it would be beneficial to minimise international travel by hosting bilateral negotiations in Solomon Islands. Alternatively, a system of delegated authority should be put in place to ensure that progress can continue during the necessary absence of any individual in the leadership team.

## **2.8. Gender, human rights, and climate change**

### **2.8.1. Gender is identified as a priority in the ADD**

The ADD for this phase of MSSIF notes that gender had not sufficiently been prioritised in capacity development in the previous phase. It recommended that organisation-wide and individual capacity development plans be developed that were suitably tailored to address the gender-specific needs of MFMR at both staff and organisation/policy level. It also proposed that MSSIF could support the development of a gender-equality plan for MFMR, as required for all ministries in Solomon Islands, with targeted support dependent on the plan. Further, it proposed that earlier MSSIF-commissioned research into gender roles and issues in inshore fisheries help guide the selection, design, and implementation of any inshore activities.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.8.2. Implementation has not focused on gender**

While the evaluation team understands that some work on a gender assessment has been completed with support from SPC, there is no evidence of gender guiding implementation decisions in MSSIF. Project reports to MFAT make no mention of gender and the AMAs prepared by MFAT state that gender does not apply to the project. It is unfortunate that insufficient

---

<sup>11</sup> Activity Design Document, MFAT, 2014

attention has been paid to gender in this phase of MSSIF despite the recommendations and guiding principles articulated in the ADD.

### **2.8.3. Gender, human rights, and climate change remain highly relevant**

Gender, human rights, and climate change remain highly relevant in the development and management of Solomon Islands fisheries both in inshore fisheries as described above, but also in off-shore fisheries. As MFMR continues to promote development of its offshore fisheries it will need to define its role with respect to gender, human rights, and climate change. Several agencies and the private sector will need to coordinate as the sector develops to ensure the safe and equitable treatment of all involved.

## **2.9. Sustainability**

### **2.9.1. Embedding the corporate restructure is critical**

The corporate restructuring of MFMR is progressing with 20 new positions established in the 2018 MFMR budget. The ability of MFMR to work with the MPS to secure the remaining 16 positions is critical to embedding the restructure and enabling MFMR to deliver against its mandate and in line with its plans. Significant work remains on systems and processes, in particular performance planning and assessment, and is likely to require further external assistance. The establishment of new positions also requires the recruitment of new staff whose capacity needs to be developed to deliver their role. In some areas this will likely be possible based on existing knowledge in MFMR, but in others it will require ongoing targeted capacity development support. The support available from MPI and FFA should be integrated into a capacity development plan for the restructured Ministry.

### **2.9.2. The sustainability of inshore fisheries work varies**

Support for Hapi Fis has now largely stopped, and though knowledge products are available in provincial fisheries centres, their utilisation is not well known. It would be disappointing if the significant body of knowledge that was developed were not leveraged, and MFMR should consider how future investments in inshore fisheries incorporates and is guided by this.

Support from MSSIF to seaweed farming was ceased in 2017, on the basis that the sector no longer required support, allowing the funding to be diverted to other projects. If this is the case, it would be a clear sign of a sustainable outcome from a MSSIF investment. The evaluation team understands, however, that PROP has now secured agreement to pick up the funding of seaweed farming, which raises the question of whether MSSIF's exit was premature, and whether the sector would have been sustainable without further support.

While the shift to supporting the development of GIFT Tilapia farming makes sense from a food security perspective, it is clear that long-term ongoing donor support is going to be required. With such a significant investment in the final year of MSSIF, it is critical that attention is paid early to identify a stream of ongoing funding. This is further discussed in Box 1 below.

### **2.9.3. Progress in offshore fisheries management needs to be embedded**

Following earlier support, MFMR is now largely managing its offshore fisheries policy and negotiations without technical advice. This significant progress is notable and is likely to be sustainable, so long as the individuals currently involved remain in post. In this context, it is

important that succession planning is undertaken to ensure that new entrants can come quickly up to speed. This includes developing guidance notes and induction packages and identifying resources that would be useful to guide new entrants. It is also likely that sporadic targeted technical support will be required in the future.

The offshore fisheries officer training course being delivered by MPI will provide MFMR with a highly trained cohort of officers capable of delivering their role. As it is unlikely that the course will be run repeatedly, course notes should be developed, and internal trainers identified and trained to enable MFMR to deliver the course internally in the future.

While progress on the Bina Harbour development project has been slow due to ongoing land issues, MSSIF has invested significant resources in the concept to date. It is unlikely that the project will progress without external support and discussions with potential partners should continue to ensure momentum is maintained.

**Box 1: Assessment of the Tilapia Aquaculture project**

Development of a Tilapia Broodstock Facility	
<p><b>Goal:</b> To establish the necessary infrastructure, skills, human resources, seed, feed, distribution and support network to enable small-medium scale Nile tilapia aquaculture for food and local market.</p>	
DAC Criterion	Assessment
<b>Relevance</b>	Solomon Islanders are highly reliant on smallholder agriculture for incomes and food security. However, soil degradation is an increasing problem due to land use intensification, forestry, and pests. <sup>12</sup> The development of alternative sources of livelihoods and food security, un-reliant on soil for production, is therefore highly relevant.
<b>Efficiency</b>	Coastal fisheries and the installation of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) provide an alternative source of subsistence agriculture. Intensification of coastal fisheries is intrinsically linked to conservation concerns. As such, aquaculture is an efficient means of addressing food security and livelihoods.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Mozambique tilapia is currently farmed in Solomon Islands and is also present in freshwater bodies. Nile tilapia grows larger and faster than Mozambique Tilapia with the Genetically Improved Farmed Tilapia (GIFT) specifically developed by WorldFish for aquaculture. The development of a GIFT broodstock facility is therefore an effective means of improving food security through aquaculture.
<b>Impact</b>	A broodstock facility coupled with biosecurity protocols and technical support to establish aquaculture operations has the potential to provide a substantial food source. Once fully developed, this would likely have a large impact on food security and livelihoods across Solomon Islands.
<b>Sustainability</b>	A broodstock facility operating on a non-commercial basis will require ongoing funding to operate and maintain genetic diversity. SIG does not have the resources to finance this and will continue relying on donor assistance. In the absence of an identified long-term funding source, there are concerns around the project's sustainability.
<p><b>Conclusion:</b> This is a highly relevant, efficient, and effective means of addressing food security and livelihoods in Solomon Islands with the potential for a significant impact. However, the sustainability of the investment is questionable, and attention should be paid to identify ongoing funding. The recent evaluation of the Timor-Leste aquaculture programme similarly identified sustainability as a key issue and there may be opportunities to identify lessons learned.<sup>13</sup></p>	

<sup>12</sup> Pacific Multi-Country Programming Framework, *Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)*, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Aquaculture Development Evaluation Report, MFAT, 2018.

### 3. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

Overall, MSSIF has been a highly relevant programme that has achieved some notable results such as the lifting of the EU yellow card, the substantial capacity developed in the offshore unit, the progress made on the corporate restructure, and improved knowledge of the coastal catch. The programme has suffered from some inefficiencies, largely due to the management inherent in the design. However, this has only marginally affected effectiveness, though this is largely due to the dedication of the individuals involved. It is, therefore, highly reliant on personalities. Many of the activities supported by MSSIF are only part-way implemented and risk not being seen through to completion without ongoing support. This raises some concerns around the sustainability of the programme's benefits. The substantial capacity that has been built needs to be propagated throughout the Ministry, to ensure it benefits the institution broadly and is not at risk of being lost as staff move. A summary against the DAC criteria is provided below.

#### 3.1. Assessment against DAC criteria

Criterion	Assessment
<b>Relevance</b>	The support provided through MSSIF remains relevant to the needs of the Solomon Islands and the MFMR, and to NZ's priorities. Flexibility and strong relationships have been key to ensuring relevance. MSSIF has helped to create the conditions to move away from long-term advisors, and to continue the shift in focus to short-term advisors/consultants and grant funding.
<b>Efficiency</b>	MSSIF's performance has been mixed. There is evidence of efficient management of the grant funding through SIG systems; but the administrative input required from the Team Leader and the procurement and deployment of long-term advisors has contributed to programme inefficiencies. There is strong evidence of the programme being implemented economically, and unquestionable value for money from supporting the lifting of the EU yellow card.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	MSSIF has made good progress towards the project outcomes but work remains to embed the gains made. While individual advisors achieved results in their sectors, overall effectiveness would likely have been higher had MSSIF operated more as a team under a single reporting and management framework.
<b>Impact</b>	The significant improvements in MFMR's monitoring, control, and surveillance capacity for offshore fisheries resulted in the lifting of the EU yellow card. The impact of this alone is significant, ensuring exports of tuna to the EU can continue guaranteeing several thousand jobs and substantially contributing to GDP.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Sustainability varies. While capacity to manage offshore fisheries has increased substantially, it is highly reliant on individuals rather than institutionalised. The corporate restructure is partially complete but needs embedding to guarantee its sustainability. It is essential that a source of ongoing funding is secured to guarantee the sustainability of the significant investment in the tilapia project.

## 4. FUTURE DESIGN AND SUPPORT

As noted above, significant progress has been made across all areas of MFMR capacity, but sustainability varies. During the final year of MSSIF, it will therefore be important to confirm the ongoing priorities for MFMR, the support that will be required to deliver these priorities and identify financing sources for that support. While a detailed assessment of specific technical inputs that will be required is beyond the scope of this evaluation, some general guidance is provided below:

- The corporate restructure will require targeted support to ensure it becomes embedded in MFMR. While a significant focus to secure the establishment of the remaining positions remains, it is likely that MFMR has the capacity to deliver this without external support. As the organisation grows, however, the importance of policies and procedures increases. This should be given due attention and any support requirements identified early.
- The Offshores Fisheries Division is largely operating without significant external support. The partnership with MPI provides a good platform for support on compliance matters, while targeted short-term technical advice may be needed for specific gaps.
- The Provincial Fisheries Division has a significant role to play in improving resource management, while the Inshore Fisheries and Aquaculture Divisions are leading on livelihoods, mainly through the Tilapia project. Both will require ongoing support.
- As the Policy and Planning Division is established to service the operational divisions, it will likely require targeted support, both on technical areas and overall management and leadership.

Further considerations around future design are provided below.

### 4.1. Project focus

As capacity begins to build in MFMR, future support is likely to shift increasingly towards a project focus. This will require the governance system for the programme to evolve to incorporate a more rigorous decision-making framework on project funding. Concept notes outlining the rationale, proposed activity, expected outcomes, risks, and need for ongoing funding would provide a useful source of information both to decision makers and future evaluations. The Project Summary notes prepared by the MSSIF Team Leader for the evaluation team provide a good basis for discussion and should be developed further as a tool for future decision-making. The two major projects MSSIF is currently supporting are discussed briefly below.

As discussed in Box 1 above, the project to establish a tilapia broodstock facility and develop small-scale aquaculture enterprises is a highly relevant, efficient, and effective means of addressing food security and livelihoods in Solomon Islands. It has the potential to deliver a significant impact across Solomon Islands. The lack of an identified source of ongoing funding to support operation raises significant concerns around its sustainability, particularly in light of the significant investment from MSSIF. In the absence of certainty of an ongoing role for MFAT in supporting this, a concerted effort is required to identify and confirm long-term support.

In relation to the Bina Harbour project, before a significant investment can be made, the land ownership issues must be satisfactorily resolved with sufficient assurance that this will be an enduring settlement and create the right circumstances for investment. In addition, clarity must



be sought on the LDC graduation, and negotiation of an IEPA as the investment is not likely to be economically or financially viable in the absence of an IEPA should the LDC graduation proceed. Further detail is presented in Box 2 below.

**Box 2: Assessment of onshore development project**

Development of a tuna cannery at Bina Harbour	
<p><b>Goal:</b> To develop an onshore tuna processing plant with associated infrastructure in Bina Harbour, Malaita Harbour.</p>	
DAC Criterion	Assessment
<b>Relevance</b>	An onshore tuna processing plant at Bina Harbour would create significant employment opportunities in Malaita province where there are few livelihoods opportunities. It would also contribute to both the national and local economy, including through associated development. It is therefore relevant and aligns with SIG policy and the MSSIF long-term outcomes, as well as being relevant to MFAT priorities on economic growth and stabilisation.
<b>Efficiency</b>	Given the large investment required to deliver the project, it is essential that value for money is considered early and informs project modalities and forms of support. New Zealand will need to define the objectives it aims to achieve through its support to narrow the areas of support where NZ has a comparative advantage. Focusing on project management to deliver the project documentation that leverages a large multi-donor financing package has the potential to prove a highly efficient investment.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	There are few alternative options for creating large scale employment in Solomon Islands. The improvements in offshore management have already enabled improved revenues from fisheries and moving up the value chain therefore makes sense in terms of capitalising on the opportunities from fisheries in Solomon Islands. The project could therefore prove highly effective at targeting the MSSIF goal and overall MFMR and MFAT objectives.
<b>Impact</b>	The project has the potential for a large impact in a number of areas. The establishment of a new tuna processing facility would create a large number of jobs in an area where few alternative livelihood opportunities exist. A large-scale processor would contribute a significant amount to the national economy in both GDP and tax revenue. There is likely to be substantial associated development to service the processing plant and its employees generating further revenue for individuals and the local and national economy. Finally, development and livelihoods opportunities in Malaita are likely to have a peace dividend supporting national stabilisation.

## Development of a tuna cannery at Bina Harbour

<b>Sustainability</b>	The impacts described above will only be possible and sustainable if the land ownership issues are addressed, and Solomon Islands either delays LDC graduation, or enters into an IEPA with the EU. Sustained funding will also be critical to ensure the financial viability of the project. This will require external support during establishment through to transition to commercial operations. If these issues are addressed, the project is likely to have a sustainable impact on the local and national economy.
-----------------------	--

**Conclusion:** The development of a tuna cannery at Bina Harbour is relevant to SIG, MFAT and MSSIF priorities. Targeted support from MFAT could leverage significant donor support proving a highly efficient investment. The project is an effective means of targeting economic development and would likely have a high impact. However, the impact will only be possible if certain pre-conditions are met and sustainability will be reliant on identifying a source of funding through to commercial operations. In pursuing this investment, MFAT would need to be mindful of gender and human rights aspects of the project to ensure an inclusive outcome.

## 4.2. Technical inputs

### 4.2.1. Vest project reporting in a single person

As noted above, the direct contracting by MFAT of individual advisors has been highly inefficient and reduced effectiveness. Going forward, it is important that all technical inputs have a single reporting line. Recognising the recommended move towards a more project-based approach, a programme manager is likely a more effective model than a technical team leader. This long-term programme manager would work with MFMR on work planning, scoping and developing identified opportunities, and coordinating inputs through the GFA. It is likely that a programme manager would also be a useful resource to MFMR leadership in mentorship for effective coordination of work programmes and could usefully have this role explicitly built in.

### 4.2.2. Move away from long-term advisors

Overall capacity in MFMR has increased substantially over the period of implementation. It is therefore time to move away from contracting long-term advisors to enable MFMR to capitalise on the capacity gains and deliver without embedded support. The long-term advisors mechanism risks becoming a crutch that the organisation relies on and can result in capacity supplementation rather than capacity building. Rather, with MFMR operating without embedded support there will be an opportunity to better identify specific capacity needs that can be addressed through targeted short-term support funded through the GFA. Management noted that there had been benefits from the mentorship provided by long-term advisors and, if deemed beneficial, this could continue through recurrent short-term support to build an executive leadership programme.

### 4.2.3. Pair advisors and consultants with MFMR counterparts

Regardless of whether short-term inputs are purely technical delivery or capacity building in nature, they should have an identified counterpart in MFMR. This has proved highly effective in

the current phase and should be leveraged and replicated in the future. With the increased staffing in MFMR as positions are established, it will become all the more relevant to ensure that capacity is built across the Ministry and that all products delivered through the programme have an institutional owner.

#### **4.2.4. Maintain the GFA on SIG systems**

As reported above, the GFA has benefitted from being managed on SIG systems. It reinforces the integrated work planning of MSSIF and MFMR and ensures that approvals benefit from the same level of scrutiny. The processes that have been put in place are working efficiently largely thanks to the people in place but as their positions have been established as part of the corporate restructure the necessary arrangements for continued efficient management are preserved. In order to ensure sustainability, it would be useful for the policies and procedures to be codified to ensure succession arrangements are in place should they be required. Given this, any future GFA should be maintained on SIG systems and as capacity in MFMR is embedded, the GFA management transfer entirely to MFMR responsibility.

### **4.3. Partnerships**

#### **4.3.1. Formalise partnerships with other funding mechanisms**

The complementary support provided by the MPI capacity development programme has become embedded within the overall package of support provided by New Zealand to MFMR. This is a very positive outcome in terms of enabling MFMR to coordinate multiple sources of funding to deliver against its work plan. While MSSIF's work plan is integrated with MFMR, the MPI support remains an ad-hoc agreement. There is an opportunity to formalise the relationship between MPI and MFMR so that planning can enable an alignment of support required and available. It would also help build institutional linkages between MPI and MFMR more generally for ongoing collaboration.

Similarly, MFMR has access to support from FFA and SPC, and currently makes use of this on a sporadic basis. It may be worth exploring how the support available from the regional organisations can be integrated into the annual work planning. By aligning all funding sources to the MFMR work plan, any remaining gaps are clearly identified where another programme can direct its resources for maximum impact.

#### **4.3.2. Support MFMR to facilitate regular donor coordination**

MFMR currently receives support from New Zealand, Japan, and the World Bank, as well as the regional organisations. With a move towards more of a project-based programme, there will likely be opportunities for other donor partners to engage in the sector. In particular the Bina Harbour project is likely to require a support package combining many funding sources. It would be prudent to establish an ongoing donor coordination mechanism to update potential partners on upcoming opportunities and seek engagement where gaps emerge. Donor coordination typically requires a fair amount of upfront coordination work to put in place procedures and agree on an approach to coordination. This could usefully be supported by short-term technical assistance or led by the programme manager.

#### **4.3.3. Coordinate this evaluation with the PROP review**

The evaluation team understands that PROP is due to be reviewed in the first quarter of 2019. This provides an opportunity to coordinate across the findings of the reviews of MFMR two core support programmes to ensure lessons learned are leveraged from both to inform future design.

#### **4.4. Inclusive development**

##### **4.4.1. Provide targeted support to embed inclusive sector development**

As noted above, there has not been sufficient attention paid to gender, human rights, and climate change by MFMR or MSSIF to date. The previous design explicitly recommended a focus on gender and human rights, but this did not translate into any specific action. In order to ensure this is not repeated, any future programme should devote specific resources upfront to ensure that strategies for gender, human rights, and climate change are developed and used to inform work planning. This will likely require targeted short-term assistance initially but should gradually be built into business-as-usual processes in MFMR.

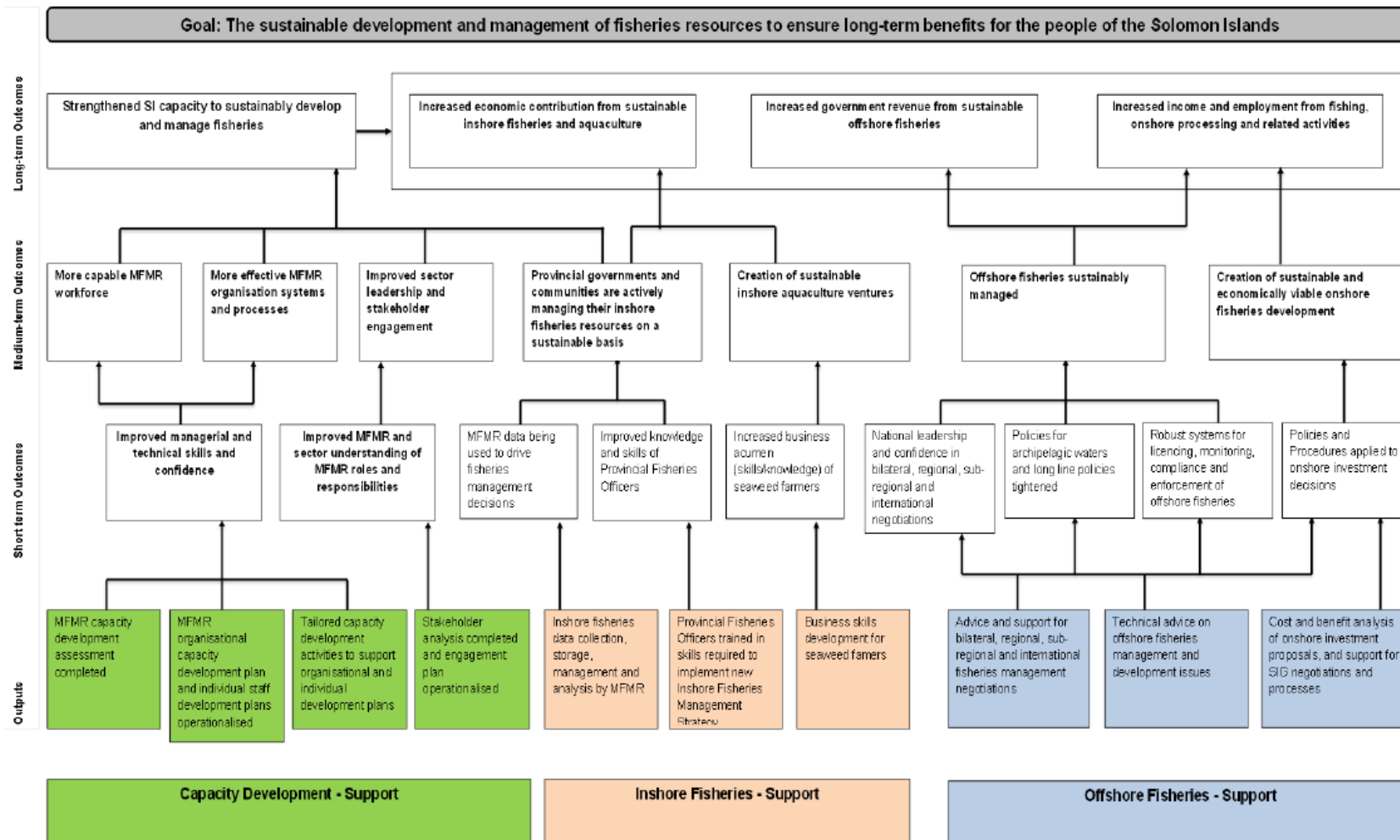
## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation recommends that:

1. MFAT moves away from supporting long-term technical advisors but continues to support a grant funding arrangement that allows the MFMR to contract technical assistance through short-term advisors/consultants, and to further embed the corporate restructure programme initiated under MSSIF.
2. MFAT contracts a programme manager (in place of a Team Leader) to work with MFMR in planning, scoping, developing, implementing and reporting on activities supported under a grant funding arrangement.
3. MFMR continues to ensure that future advisors/consultants are always paired with willing counterparts within the Ministry to build capability and support knowledge transfer.
4. MFAT continues to deliver a grant funding arrangement through SIG systems and considers more fully aligning (and where feasible integrating) grant funding planning and reporting with MFMR planning and reporting (e.g. integrating the grant funding arrangement with an MFMR results framework).
5. MFAT targets support towards tangible projects, subject to rigorous decision-making processes that include assessments of project rationale/objective (e.g. job creation, improving livelihoods, improving food security, resource management, etc), project activity, outcomes, risks, and sustainability (including future funding).
  - a. In relation to the tilapia project, MFAT defines its intended future role and scope of support through any future funding mechanism and identify alternate funding if needed.
  - b. In terms of the Bina Harbour project, MFAT minimises investment to only critically needed activities required to maintain progress until such a time that the land holding, and trade relations matters are resolved. It is likely that, in the long term, the project will require significant funding from multiple donors at which point MFAT will need to identify specific support it can provide in relation to a group funding mechanism. At that point, as the project becomes more of an infrastructure project, it may be worth considering providing any further support through a dedicated mechanism rather than through a fisheries programme. Specifically, multi-donor infrastructure projects typically require significant coordination to satisfy multilateral donor requirements. This may be an area that MFAT could provide targeted support to enable continued momentum.
6. MFAT encourages MPI to formalise a support arrangement with MFMR under the MPI Pacific Fisheries Capacity Development Programme in order to create longer term institutional relationships between the fisheries administrations and integrate the MPI programme into MFMR work planning.
7. MFAT encourages and supports MFMR to lead regular donor coordination processes to increase understanding and visibility of opportunities and progress so as to identify opportunities for cross-project leverage.

8. MFMR ensures that MFAT is engaged throughout the upcoming PROP review to ensure lessons learned are shared and that future planning is coordinated at a funding agency level.
9. MFAT mandates in any future fisheries programme design that inclusive development be considered explicitly and integrated into management and review processes.

## APPENDIX A – RESULTS DIAGRAM FOR MSSIF




## APPENDIX B – REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES




The table below provides a high-level assessment of progress against each of the long-, medium-, and short-term outcomes based on a review of the December 2018 *Activity Results – Outcomes and Outputs* document. It includes brief commentary on the indicators and the reason for the assessment against progress.



Overall, the results measurement table is complex, largely due to the number of indicators in the Results Diagram. In addition, the indicators in the Results Measurement Table have evolved over time with additional indicators added in 2016. This is positive from an adaptive management perspective but has also created a situation of multiple sub-indicators being reported against for many outcomes, including indicators that have been surpassed and are often not reported against. It would have been preferable where indicators become obsolete that they are removed entirely and replaced by well-defined indicators that enable results-based management.





Table 1: Progress against outcomes




Outcome	Indicator	Target	Progress	Commentary
<b>Long-term Outcomes</b>				
Strengthened SI capacity to sustainably develop and manage fisheries	Performance audit report recommendations on sustainable development and management of Solomon Islands tuna fisheries	2018: Eight recommendations in 2012 Office of the Auditor General (OAG) tuna fisheries report addressed.		The majority of the recommendations in the 2012 OAG report have been addressed and the EU Yellow Card has been lifted. The implementation of the corporate plan, the restructure, and the establishment of new positions provides MFMR with strengthened capacity to sustainably manage its fisheries. The ability of MSSIF to contribute to achievement of the final recommendation (Tuna Management Plan) is limited as it requires legislative review.









Outcome	Indicator	Target	Progress	Commentary
Increased economic contribution from sustainable inshore fisheries and aquaculture	Value of marine product exports (SBD/year)	2018: SBD20 million		The original indicator was based on the assumption of linear growth in exports. When the Beche de Mer (BDM) fishery was closed this was not revised accordingly. As a result, estimated exports for 2018 are lower than at the start of this phase of MSSIF.  No indicator was set for the revised indicator proposed in 2017, though it is acknowledged that it will not be possible to measure progress against it during this phase of MSSIF.
	Value of national sales of farmed products (household income SBD/year) – <i>proposed 2017</i>			
Increased government revenue from sustainable offshore fisheries	Government revenue from access fees and administrative fees (including adjustment fees)	2018: Greater than SBD262 million		Revenues in 2018 exceed the target by 16%. However, Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) revenue in 2018 is below 2016 and 2017 levels. This would be useful to explain.
Increased income and employment from fishing, onshore processing and related activities	Value of all fish exports (SBD/year)	2018: SBD675 million		The original indicator (value of all fish exports) is not reported against. An additional indicator (contribution of the tuna industry) was added in 2016 but no target was set so it is difficult to assess progress.  The jobs indicator was almost achieved with good gender disaggregated data provided.
	Contribution to GDP of the tuna industry in Solomon Islands – <i>additional proposed</i>			
	SI nationals employed in tuna industry	2018: 3000 people (male/female information provided)		


Outcome	Indicator	Target	Progress	Commentary
<b>Medium-term Outcomes</b>				
More capable MFMR (organisation and workforce)	Staff performance assessments (aggregated)	(1) 2019: Restructuring plan completed		<p>Good progress has been made on the restructure of MFMR and the increase in capacity will be significant to delivering a more capable organisation. There is still a need to embed a performance management culture in MFMR to ensure that workforce capability can be measured.</p> <p>Progress on staff satisfaction is good and can be expected to increase as the restructure is embedded.</p> <p>Consideration of removal of the original indicator may have been useful when new indicators were proposed in 2016.</p>
	Effectiveness of recruitment and selection program – <i>proposed 2016</i>	(2) 2018: 80% of staff have improved capability to perform the tasks in their job descriptions (male/female information provided)		
	MFMR restructured to deliver on its responsibilities – <i>proposed 2016</i>			
	Staff satisfaction with the MFMR – <i>proposed 2016</i>	2019: >75% of staff feel happy or very happy		
More effective MFMR organisation systems and processes	MFMR Budget, Annual Plan, and Annual Reporting quality	2018: Quality and timeliness rated highly		The institution of business planning and annual planning and budgeting is positive. However, it is concerning that the Leadership Group did not meet in 2018.
	Business plan guides annual planning – <i>proposed 2016</i>	2018: Business plan reviewed annually and recognised by government stakeholders for SIG projections		
	Regular executive meetings – <i>proposed 2016</i>	MFMR Leadership Group meets at least 4 times a year		

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Progress	Commentary
Improved sector leadership and stakeholder engagement	Number of regular NCC, SILMMA, TIASI and FAC meetings  Number of meetings workshops held for stakeholders and hosted by MFMR – <i>revised 2016</i>	2016: At least two meetings of each forum each year		The link between the proposed new indicator and the outcome is unclear. Caution should be exercised when indicators rely on external funding by a third party for measurement.
Provincial governments and communities are actively managing their inshore fisheries resources on a sustainable basis	Percentage of inshore fisheries better managed through tools including: management plans, a gazetted provincial ordinance aligned to the FMA 2015 or improved compliance with national regulations	2018: 50% of inshore fisheries		Progress in inshore fisheries management has been limited, largely due to capacity issues in the Provincial Fisheries Division. The gazetting of regulations and the Community Based Resource Management Standard Operating Procedures is positive but will require a concerted effort by the Provincial Fisheries team to be implemented, likely requiring external support.
Creation of sustainable inshore aquaculture ventures	Seaweed production volume  Farmed fish production – <i>additional 2016</i>	2018: 2100 metric tonnes  2019: >3 tonnes/ha/yr for 50 farmers		The seaweed indicator is largely irrelevant as it is so far from reality. Similarly, the Tilapia indicator was likely unachievable when set in 2016 and should be set more realistically. As it is, these indicators do not support results-based management and are difficult to assess.
Offshore fisheries sustainably managed	Full compliance with both PNA VDS measures	2018: Full compliance with both VDS		Solomon Islands is managing its VDS in line with PNA measures. The precautionary limit set below the maximum limit is encouraging.

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Progress	Commentary
Creation of sustainable and economically viable onshore fisheries development	Inward investment in Solomon Islands harvesting and processing sector	2018: Two investments, provided that these create overall economic benefits to Solomon Islands		While the number of inward investments specified in the indicator has been met, the ability to attribute “overall benefits to Solomon Islands” is difficult. It would have been more useful to have a more concrete indicator and measurement over time showing increased returns from investment (i.e. landing/processing of tuna increasing).
<b>Short-term Outcomes</b>				
Improved managerial and technical skills and confidence	Self-reported skills and confidence of MFMR managerial and technical staff ( <i>suggested sub-indicators</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase knowledge of roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Well managed recruitment and selection process</li> </ul>	2018: All managerial and technical staff reporting ‘3’ or above in all areas of the PADS FORM 1 Part 7 Year End Performance Appraisal (male/female information provided)		Only a third of staff have Performance Management Plans and average ratings are not reported. The additional proposed indicators do not have targets and are not used for reporting.
Improved MFMR and sector understanding of MFMR roles and responsibilities	Establishment of the Fisheries Advisory Council (FAC)  Stakeholder awareness of MFMR guiding documents, website hits, joint data sharing arrangements	2016: FAC operating (quarterly meetings)  2018: Stakeholders using website regularly; website regularly updated and partners sharing data in offshore and inshore databases		Though FAC has been established, it is not operating as expected with no meetings in 2018. Access to information for stakeholders is improving and it can be expected that the appointment of a marketing manager will support continued improvements.

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Progress	Commentary
MFMR data being used to drive fisheries management decisions	Data analysed and management implications communicated to fisheries decision makers (National, Provincial, Local)	2018: Management plans for up to five species in place, including catch and market trends, including analysis and discussion of management implications		Information collected through Hapi Fis has not been used to inform fisheries management decisions in any systematic way. The indicator relies on third party (PROP) funding for achievement and attribution to MSSIF is therefore limited.  The continued opening of the BDM fishery against scientific advice is concerning.
Improved knowledge and skills of Provincial Fisheries Officers	Monitoring of Provincial Fisheries Officers (PFOs) performance and capacity (as set out in individual performance management and development plans, but aggregated reporting)	2018: 80% PFOs are assessed as having improved capacity to do their jobs (male/female information provided)		With only half of the Provincial Fisheries Division staff submitting PMPs, it is not realistic to measure progress against the indicator. However, there is some evidence of increased capacity and staff have received training. Provincial Fisheries remains an area requiring significant focus.
Increased business acumen (skills/knowledge) of seaweed farmers	Seaweed volume of production	2018: Same or higher as when current ongoing seaweed project assistance ceases in 2015		The indicator has not been measured since funding ceased under the pretext that the short-term outcome had been achieved. The indicator notes an expectation of sustained production at levels achieved when funding ceased but it is not possible to assess this.
National leadership and confidence in national, bilateral, regional, sub-regional and international negotiations	Negotiating briefs cleared by Permanent Secretary, Minister and Cabinet (when necessary)	2016: 100% of SI positions cleared and approved in advance of negotiations		The indicator has been met and the evaluation team also heard evidence of continued leadership and confidence of MFMR in negotiations

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Progress	Commentary
Policies for archipelagic waters and long line policies tightened	<p>Archipelagic waters management improved</p> <p>Long line vessel license numbers and compliance with license conditions</p>	<p>2018: Policy introduced to improve management of, and returns from, archipelagic waters</p> <p>2018: License number within upper limit and 100% compliance with conditions by license holders</p>		While no policies are in place for archipelagic waters and long line fisheries, Solomon Islands is managing these in line with PNA requirements and advice.
Robust systems for licensing, monitoring, compliance and enforcement of offshore fisheries	Licensing and compliance information management systems	2018: 100% of tuna license, catch, observer, and other fishing activity information on MFMR computer systems and being automatically and manually verified and analysed		100% of licenses are electronic and observer and enforcement data is collected and logged. The transition to electronic monitoring is positive but will require ongoing staffing and funds.

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Progress	Commentary
Policies and procedures applied to onshore investment decisions	Decisions taken based on best available advice and in accordance with investment approval guidelines	<p>2016: 100% of decisions follow advice tendered</p> <p>2018 (<i>additional proposed target</i>): Project management office implements &gt;85% of development project activities and spend &gt;85% of annual development budget</p> <p>2018 (<i>additional proposed target</i>): Bina land settled and development plan enacted through project office</p>		<p>Investment processes and environmental and social guidelines for investors have been developed and disseminated. Investment decisions are being made in line with these.</p> <p>The additional indicator on development budget execution provides a useful framework for measurement.</p> <p>The Bina specific indicator would merit better definition.</p>

## APPENDIX B – EVALUATION QUESTIONS

### **Objective 1: Relevance – To what extent does institutional strengthening of the fisheries sector through technical assistance and a grant funding agreement to the MFMR remain a priority for SIG and the New Zealand Aid Programme?**

- Is institutional strengthening of the fisheries sector aligned with the priorities of the SIG and the New Zealand Aid Programme?
- To what degree is the modality of MSSIF (TA + Grant Funding Agreement) still relevant? Has it been delivered in line with the design?
- Has MSSIF created the right conditions to step away from TA and maintain/increase the grant funding agreement? Are there other modalities that can pick up TA needed in the future (FFA, SPC, MPI)? Has the budgetary allocation to MFMR changed over time warranting a review of NZ assistance levels?
- Have the governance, planning, and reporting arrangements contributed to maintaining relevance of MSSIF?

### **Objective 2: Efficiency – Has the MSSIF programme been management efficiently and is budget support efficient as a modality?**

- Does SIG have the right systems in place to efficiently procure and manage MFAT GFA funding?
- To what extent is the implementation of the GFA efficiently managed?
- Has the annual budget reconciliation and audit been an efficient management tool to provide assurance on the grant funding agreement?
- Has the MFAT direct procurement of Technical Advisors been efficiently managed?
- To what extent do the management arrangements (MFAT Wellington/MFAT Post/MFMR/MSSIF Team Leader) support efficient implementation?
- To what extent does the second phase of MSSIF represent value for money to MFAT? Has value for money been considered in MSSIF implementation and management decisions?

### **Objective 3: Effectiveness – What progress has been made in achieving the MSSIF outputs and short- and medium-term outcomes?**

- What activities are complete and have achieved their stated outcomes and which activities would benefit from ongoing support?
- What factors have enabled or hindered progress? To what extent is the embedded technical advisor model conducive to results?
- Are the results likely to be sustainable beyond the completion of MSSIF without further support?
- Have the changes in the Results Measurement Framework (2016 & 2017) improved effectiveness of MSSIF?



- How has the design recommendation of ensuring gender-responsiveness in planning and delivery been implemented? How has gender, youth, and climate change featured in planning and delivery?
- How has achievements of MSSIF outputs and outcomes been affected by coordination with other donor programmes (e.g. leveraging MPI)?
- To what extent has the governance system (ISC, strategic discussions, etc) guided delivery to ensure effectiveness?

**Objective 4: Future design and support – What key changes would be needed to deliver sustainable outcomes from a redesigned programme of support to the fisheries sector?**

- What components, if any, of the broad responsibilities the MFMR has within the fisheries sector should MFAT focus on through direct support to SIG and MFMR (in the context of the range of MFAT support)?
- What partnerships is MSSIF employing that could be built upon to improve sustainability and effectiveness of inputs in the medium to long term for MFMR?
- How can MFAT-funded technical inputs be cost-effectively deployed into MFMR so as to truly adopt a capacity building approach?
- How can MFAT support to the fisheries sector support the New Zealand Government’s priorities of youth, gender, and climate change in Solomon Islands?