



Secretariat of the Pacific Community

FIELD REPORT No. 6

**TECHNICAL INPUT
INTO THE
COMMUNITY FISHERIES
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
OF
AMERICAN SAMOA**

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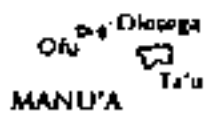
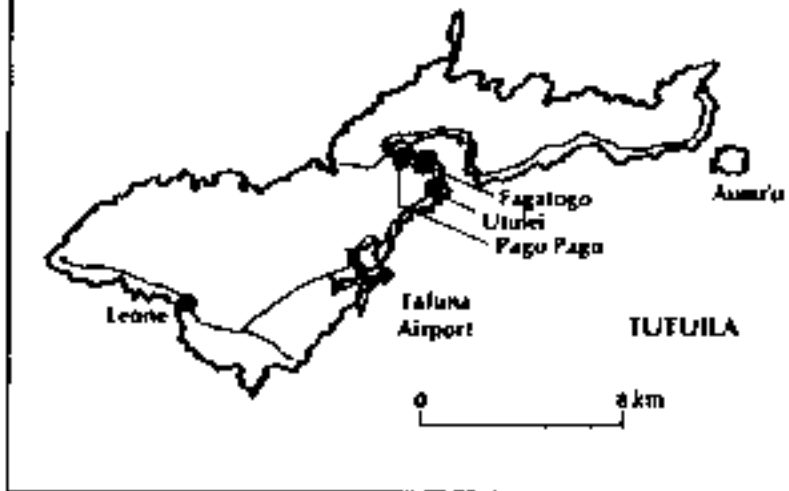
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AMERICAN SAMOA

Swains Island
(Oloaenga)



Rose Atoll

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Fisheries Management Program (CFMP) of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) in American Samoa was instigated through judicious initiatives (two surveys) that revealed a need to conserve and manage the fishery resources of American Samoa's inshore waters. In preparing for the program, staff earmarked to work with village communities paid a field visit to the neighboring Samoa to learn from its community-based fisheries program which has been successful over the last 5 years. To obtain wider publicity for the program, a series of three workshops was also conducted to introduce the concept of "community fisheries management" to mayors, senators and government agencies.

The management of DMWR is seen to place high priority on the development of its CFMP as evident through the securing of funds for the first five years of the program and by the allocation of staff to work for the program. The latter, however, seem to have little skill and experience in carrying out village community exercises. It is therefore very important for the CFMP staff to undergo related training either through participation in group meetings in Samoa, or through training to be conducted in American Samoa by two extension facilitators from Samoa, or better still through a combination of the two above.

The CFMP, being a very new development for the DMWR, has yet to have a properly ordered organizational structure with clear lines of duties and responsibilities assigned to each program staff member. This is quite necessary at the commencement of the program in order to avoid any complications which are likely to surface amongst the staff as a result of unclear responsibilities and assigned duties.

American Samoa and Samoa practice the same tradition and culture. The CFMP of the DMWR should closely follow the strategy and extension process employed by the community-based fisheries program of the Fisheries Division in Samoa, but with essential alterations to better suit the situation in American Samoa.

The legislation (Executive Department of ASG – Section 24.0303 ASCA) covering the management of marine resources in American Samoa is very comprehensive and could be an important management tool for the success of the CFMP. There is however an urgent need for a legal adviser to start working on village rules and how they could be processed in order to acquire legal recognition.

The Office of Samoan Affairs, being an important agency during the instigation of the CFMP, has indicated its full support for the program. The DMWR must organize an agreement with the Office of Samoan Affairs so that custom facilitators are made available to the CFMP at all times when required.

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that a proper organizational structure for the CFMP with clear duties and responsibilities for all program staff should be drawn up at the earliest opportunity.
2. It is recommended that the survey on "the traditional methods of fishing versus the modern types" which was conducted by tape recording interviews should be documented as soon as possible. These sources of traditional knowledge are hard to salvage if they are not properly looked after.

Given the background of the CFMP staff who will act as program facilitators, it is recommended either:

- 3(a). that they be given an opportunity of one week's training to participate in group meeting exercises in Samoa before they are sent to their first village assignment. This is absolutely necessary in order to build their confidence in conducting group meetings. The training exercise will enable the program facilitators to learn about speech making, appropriate behavior in meetings, meeting facilitation, problem tree/solution, map drafting and rapid assessment techniques, or
- 3(b). that two fisheries extension facilitators (a man and a woman) from Samoa conduct training for the CFMP facilitators in American Samoa before they are sent out to commence their first village group meeting. At the same time, the extension team from Samoa can assist the CFMP in its first village exercise, or
- 3(c). that a combination of 3(a) and 3(b) be implemented.

4. A general understanding by program facilitators of areas related to the management of subsistence and inshore fisheries is necessary to enable them to respond to general questions that may be asked during group meetings. Therefore, it is recommended that the DMWR arranges for internal training of fisheries technicians who will become program facilitators to cover basic understanding in biology, ecology, conservation, fishing techniques, aquaculture, seafood handling and management practices.
5. As a matter of priority the DMWR must engage a legal expert to work on how village rules could be addressed in order to acquire legal recognition, so that the breach by outside villagers of village rules relating to the marine environment can provide the basis for a court claim.
6. As the two Samoas practice the same tradition and culture with similar problems associated with the management of their subsistence and inshore fisheries, it is recommended that American Samoa's CFMP emulates the extension process developed as the "Samoa model", but with alterations to better suit American Samoa's situation.
7. The DWMR must put out extensive advertisements on the program through the use of TV, radios, local news papers and information sheets produced by the department to advise the public and village communities of the importance of the CFMP in the management of American Samoa's fisheries resources.
8. It is recommended that proper selection criteria should be established and drawn up to help the management of the DMWR decide the most qualified village communities to be included in the CFMP.
9. As the CFMP will be employing the Samoan customary procedure in dealing with village communities, it is recommended that the DMWR make a permanent arrangement with the Office of Samoan Affairs to delegate a full-time experienced orator to deal with the Samoan tradition formalities, particularly at the start and end of *fonos* and group meetings.

10. It is recommended that the group meetings be conducted in three divisions – the *matai*, *aumaga* and women’s group - and that the conduct of the meetings adopt the approach practiced in the "Samoa model".
11. In a situation where a village community has very few people (unemployed) left in the village to conduct group meetings during normal working hours, the CFMP must work out other alternatives in order to progress the program. This may include the organizing of group meetings on weekends or outside normal working hours.
12. It is recommended that the name of the committee titled "Fisheries Management Committee" under the "Samoa model" be changed for the parallel CFMP of the DMWR to "Monitoring and Enforcement Committee" (*Komiti Faatino ma Faasalaga*), to better reflect its duties and responsibilities. It is also recommended that the members be selected from the *matai* group only in order to better reflect the degree of authority the committee is empowered with.
13. Given the similarities of the two Samoas in respect of customs, traditions and problems, it is recommended that the CFMP of the DMWR adopts the methods and concept discussed in this report under the headings of:
 - i. Village group meetings
 - ii. Fisheries Management Advisory Committee
 - iii. Village Fisheries Management Plan and final council meeting
 - iv. Monitoring and Enforcement Committee
 - v. Community Undertakings
 - vi. DMWR Undertakings
 - vii. Monitoring the CFMP

2. INTRODUCTION

The territory of American Samoa consists of 7 small islands spread over 76 square miles and includes one remote uninhabited atoll. Tuna fishing and canning are the main industries of the territory with two large canneries located on the largest island of Tutuila. The population is approximately 63,000 (Sauafea 2000) of which 95% live on Tutuila where the capital Pago Pago is situated. Its fisheries are categorized into three components: coral reef fisheries, bottom-fisheries and pelagic fisheries. As in many island countries, subsistence fisheries play an important role in the livelihoods of village communities as they provide the main source of protein. As the population increased from approximately 46,700 (1990 census) to about 63,000, this put enormous pressure on the territory's marine environment, prompting fishing communities to employ more effective but destructive fishing methods for the harvest of its inshore fishery resources. As a result, catches of fish and shellfish in lagoons and inshore waters of American Samoa have declined for many years.

The DMWR is tasked through its mission "to undertake marine resources monitoring, research and management activities which will facilitate sustainable use of marine resources and their habitats and also protect the integrity of the marine ecosystems, open ocean, deep slope/sea mount, reef and lagoon, in perpetuity". To support the latter, in February 2000 the DMWR conducted a survey aimed at identifying fishing problems caused as a result of community actions. The survey was conducted over ten selected villages from the island of Tutuila and one from the island of Manua. The survey has helped the DMWR to recognize and understand some of the problems caused by community activities and the need for management strategies to be incorporated in the next 5-year plan of the DMWR.

3. PURPOSE OF VISIT

The visit was to provide technical input from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to the newly established Community Fisheries Management Program (CFMP) of the DMWR. A study of the current arrangement of the program was conducted and future improvements are suggested through a series of recommendations.

4. PLAN OF WORK

The plan of work was scheduled for five working days in order to accomplish the following tasks:

Meeting with the Director - An initial discussion with the Director of DMWR was held in order to obtain a perception on the overall picture of the department and how the department is being programmed to meet its goals, especially those of the CFMP. It was important that the Director advised on how he envisages the way the CFMP will operate and the strategy needed to be adopted in dealing with the Samoan communities. Equally important, the Director had to advise on the available resources in both finance and personnel for the CFMP and on the anticipated level of support for the program in the future.

Meeting with Chief Executive Officer - The Chief Executive Officer of the DMWR regulates the financial flow of the Department. It was important to get his views on how the CFMP would be financed and on the commitment the Department would give in future years in comparison to other ongoing programs of the Department.

Meeting with CFMP staff - The work schedule required individual meetings with every staff member working for the CFMP which includes principal players, program facilitators and technicians. Views of the staff at different levels were important in order to determine the likely strengths and weaknesses of the program, particularly in the area of training needs.

Meeting with the Office of Samoan Affairs - As the management program will be introduced to village communities using the customary procedure ("matai" system), the contribution of the Office of Samoan Affairs was important. The plan of work also required a meeting with representatives of the Office of Samoan Affairs in order for it to present its position.

Meeting with Legal Adviser - The CFMP will require village communities to set their own village rules pertaining to the management of their marine environment. Rules set by a particular village are normally applicable only to residents of that village itself. There is however a need to amalgamate these village rules into existing regulations in order to acquire wider recognition. The role to be played by the Legal Adviser / Office of the Attorney General is important in this area.

Draft Report - It was very important that the visit completed its draft summary report and presented the findings and recommendations to the DMWR before leaving the territory. This was essential so that queries as to the findings and recommendations contained in the report could be addressed on the spot and so that the DMWR could act on the urgent recommendations while the report is being reviewed and finalized.

5 . THE COMMUNITY FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (CFMP)

Part of the mission of the DWMR calls for the sustainable use of marine resources and the protection of the reefs and lagoons. The DMWR undertook two initiatives in order to help accomplish its departmental mission. The first was a survey conducted in 1997 on "Traditional Fishing Methods Versus the Modern Types", where mainly old men were interviewed for their traditional knowledge in fishing. Unfortunately, this important survey which was done through tape recording has not yet been documented. Information contained in this survey could be valuable in the formulation of strategies for the achievement of the department's mission.

The second initiative was the establishment of the Community Fisheries Management Program (CFMP). As preliminary preparations for the CFMP, the DMWR undertook the following actions:

- ◆ A community survey was conducted from February 2000 to April 2000 involving eleven villages, to identify fishing problems resulting from community actions. The results of this survey supported the need for the establishment of the CFMP;
- ◆ A study visit to Samoa in October 2000 was conducted by the CFMP staff to learn from Samoa's Community-based Fisheries Management Program; and
- ◆ A series of three workshops took place introducing the concept of a "community fisheries management program" to village mayors, senators and government agencies, with resource persons from the Fisheries Division in Samoa.

The underlying important task for the CFMP is to implement fisheries co-management programs with villages in American Samoa to help improve fishing practice and the management of the marine resources of the territory. In order to achieve this, target activities within the first five years of the program have been scheduled:

- i. Development and implementation of fisheries management plans and marine protected areas (MPAs) for 5 villages during the first year of the project.
- ii. Development of a further 10 MPAs by the end of the fourth year.
- iii. Development of local monitoring and enforcement capacity in those 15 villages by the end of the fourth year.
- iv. Graduation of the 15 villages to self-sustaining and independent community fisheries management by the end of the fifth year.

There is at present no clear organizational structure for the CFMP, neither is there a list of duties for the staff involved. Nonetheless, the CFMP is manned by various personnel of the Fisheries Division with varying degrees of involvement. The program is co-managed by the Fisheries Biologist (expatriate) and the Assistant Fisheries Biologist (local) with the program facilitators drawn from other staff of the Fisheries Division. The major players of the CFMP spend 60-80% of their time on the program with input from other Fisheries staff when the need arises.

Funds for the program are secured from the Federal Government for five years through the Sport Fishing Division with assistance from SPREP for the first year.

6. STATE OF SUBSISTENCE AND INSHORE FISHERIES

As in many other island countries of the Pacific, catches of fish and shellfish from the lagoons and inshore reefs of American Samoa have declined. The general decline in fish stocks is of particular concern to the DMWR as subsistence catches of seafood provide a traditional and important source of protein for coastal communities. The community perceives the decline as partly due to the introduction of modern materials, which has made fishing effort more effective. Modern developments such as the introduction of scuba diving gear and underwater torches have resulted in a devastating increase in fishing efficiency. Destructive fishing methods include the use of explosives and chemicals such as bleaching agents as well as traditional plant-derived poisons (*ava niukini*). Environmental disturbances have resulted not only from natural events such as cyclones and storms, but also from human activities. These activities include the destruction of nursery areas (including mangrove areas) by road construction and land reclamation. In high islands, poor land management practices have resulted in erosion and the siltation of lagoons.

7. THE SAMOAN CULTURE RELEVANT TO THE CFMP

The tradition in American Samoa is similar to that of Samoa where the highest-ranking authority in any village community is vested in the council of chiefs (*fono a matai*). There are two other main sectors in a village community, the untitled men (*aumaga*) and the women's group. It is a strong tradition that decisions relating to any affair of the village are made by the council of chiefs. The council of chiefs determines village rules, sets village policies and imposes traditional punishments on village residents when they do not abide by the village rules and policies. The *aumaga* (translated as "strength of the village") is responsible for hard labor such as making plantations, offshore fishing, building houses etc. The women on the other hand are responsible for light labor such as domestic work, gardening, lagoon fishing and others. In Samoa, both American Samoa and Samoa, women are generally regarded as more reliable than men.

8. LEGISLATION COVERING THE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES

The American Samoan legislation (Executive Department of ASG-Section 24.0303 ASCA) covering the management of the territory's marine resources is very comprehensive. It was amended to elevate the Office of Marine and Wildlife Resources into an Executive Department. The legislation clearly states among other things the formation of the DMWR, its policies, powers and duties, enforcement and violation and penalties. Under this legislation, the DMWR is tasked with a legal obligation to manage, protect, preserve and perpetuate the marine and wildlife resources of the territory. More relevant to the CRMP, the DMWR is mandated under the legislation to:

- ◆ Formulate comprehensive plans for the management, protection and preservation of marine and wildlife resources.
- ◆ Coordinate and conduct training with regard to management of marine and wildlife resources and
- ◆ Adopt and amend rules and regulations in order to protect, preserve and perpetuate marine and wildlife resources.

The 1995 Fishing and Hunting Regulations specify what is needed for a properly controlled fishery. Of particular relevance to the CFMP are the provisions on the issuing of annual proclamation and enforcement. The proclamation could include any village rules promulgated by the council of chiefs and enforcement could supposedly also be made the responsibility of an appointed community committee should they be so authorized.

9. PARALLEL PROGRAM IN SAMOA

In 1995, Samoa launched a community-based management program that motivated village communities to take charge of the responsible exploitation and management of their subsistence fisheries and marine environment. This community-based program is referred to as the “Fisheries Extension Programme”. Since its inception 5 years ago, 71 village communities have worked under the Fisheries Extension Programme. Four village communities have withdrawn due to village disputes and 67 continue to operate, with varying levels of success. There are 57 village communities that have already put in place Village Fisheries By-laws. The success of the Samoa program has attracted study visits from the region and from as far as Tanzania in Africa. American Samoa has now taken the initiative to establish its own programme, emulating the concept and process practiced in Samoa.

10. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. *Organizational Structure for the CFMP*

The initiative by the DMWR to establish a CFMP to assist in the recovery of the depleted fish stocks in the marine environment of American Samoa is a judicious one. The program, however, does not seem to have a proper organizational structure with a defined list of duties and responsibilities for each program staff member. In order for the program to progress smoothly in the future, it should have a clear organizational structure with clear lines of responsibilities drawn for each staff member involved. This will avoid any likely complication that may occur in the future as a result of misunderstanding amongst the program staff themselves.

Recommendation 1.

It is recommended that a proper organizational structure for the CFMP with clear lines of duties and responsibilities for each program staff should be drawn up at the earliest opportunity.

10.2. Missing data

The DMWR undertook two preliminary surveys in the lead-up to the establishment of the CFMP. One of the surveys was carried out in 1997 and focussed on "the traditional methods of fishing versus the modern types". This survey is extremely important because almost all of the old people who were interviewed during the survey have passed away. The survey was conducted through tape recording interviews with old men in the whole of American Samoa. The wealth of knowledge gathered as a result of this survey would be extremely difficult to retrieve if the tapes were damaged or misplaced. This survey has not yet been documented although it is of notable importance to the CFMP.

Recommendation 2.

It is recommended that the survey on "the traditional methods of fishing versus the modern types" which was conducted by tape recording interviews should be documented as soon as possible. These traditional knowledge are hard to salvage if they are not properly looked after.

10.3. The Principles of Community-based Fisheries Management

While the two Samoas practice the same tradition and culture, the difference in lifestyles and economies may play a notable difference in the manner in which the two parallel programs are implemented. For example, the need for Samoa's Community-based Extension Programme to quickly identify alternative sources of seafood to make up for the loss caused by the establishment of marine sanctuaries may not be as urgent in American Samoa due to the difference in economic level. It should be noted that most of the recommendations mentioned below are those which are practiced under Samoa's Fisheries Extension Programme, but with modifications where needed in order to better suit the situation in American Samoa.

The general approach suggested for American Samoa's CFMP is to seek a fisheries management plan from each village community participating in the program. Each participating village is encouraged to analyze its fishing practices and to develop a community-owned plan with undertakings to introduce appropriate rules and regulations and to pursue other conservation measures. Reciprocally, the DMWR would undertake to support the community by providing scientific advice and other assistance. The strategy is based on four principles:

- i. maximum community participation
- ii. motivation rather than education
- iii. a demand-based community system, and
- iv. the development of alternative sources of seafood.

Maximum community participation - Despite legislation or enforcement mechanisms, the responsible management of marine resources will only be achieved when fishing communities themselves see it as their responsibility. Accordingly, the strategy must be focused on mobilizing each community through direct contact with key village groups, namely, the councils of chiefs, women's groups and untitled men's groups. Direct contact with these key village groups ensures the widest community participation and eventual ownership by the community of the respective village fisheries management plans.

Motivation not education - The knowledge possessed by island and coastal people regarding their marine environment has often been underestimated. Most coastal communities have an awareness of, and concern for, their marine environment. A survey of the community conducted by the DMWR in 2000 on "Fishing Problems in American Samoa" revealed that respondents to the survey had already understood the problems facing the inshore fisheries of the territory. They also understand the importance to their everyday life of the need for the proper management of their subsistence fishery. However, it appears that, even though these people understand the critical status of the subsistence and inshore fisheries in American Samoa, very little has been done about it. Public awareness-raising activities to encourage better fishing practices and proper fisheries management must therefore form an important part of the CFMP. The prime need is not for education, but for motivation and support to the communities. Part of this motivation depends on the availability of economically viable alternatives to the present unsustainable and destructive fishing practices. The key task is to convince communities that, since they are the users of marine resources, **they**, not the government, have the primary responsibility to manage their marine environment.

A community system which is demand-based - For reasons of efficiency and sustainability, the community-based system must focus on village communities which not only have concerns for their marine environment, but are also prepared to participate in, and contribute to, finding solutions to problems. For the CFMP, this means working with selected villages which are eager to participate in the program.

Development of alternative sources of seafood - It is not a good practice to expect communities to adopt conservation measures that will reduce present catches of seafood even further without offering alternatives. Accordingly, the CFMP must include the development of alternative sources of seafood to the present heavy and destructive exploitation of resources from near-shore reefs and lagoons. The three alternative seafood sources which need careful consideration are **1)** the diversion of fishing pressure to areas which are underexploited **2)** the development of aquaculture and, **3)** the judicious introduction of new (exotic) species and/or the replenishment of stocks of depleted species.

10.4. Training requirement for staff of CFMP

Staff involved in community-based fisheries programs do not require in-depth academic training. For CFMP personnel, training must be based on the requirement for a balanced understanding of both basic scientific knowledge and community motivating/mobilizing techniques. Scientific training should only provide a basic understanding of biology, ecology, conservation, fishing techniques, aquaculture, seafood handling, and fisheries management practices. Detailed knowledge in these areas is considered unnecessary for CFMP staff as fisheries scientific personnel can be called upon for advice from the Fisheries Division of the DWMR if the need arises. More importantly, extension staff should be trained to unobtrusively encourage communities to discuss their problems and to propose solutions.

The interviews conducted with the CFMP staff showed that all staff members who will be performing the roles of program facilitators need training in facilitating group meetings except for one who claimed to possess the required skill.

Given the background of some of the staff (ie: never had a chance to deliver before a group of people and some have lived in the United States for years), it may take a while for them to get the durable confidence needed in dealing with communities in the Samoan way. It is absolutely necessary for the CFMP staff to have confidence in what they are doing when dealing with communities. If communities are convinced, things will flow smoothly thereafter, otherwise they will tend to ignore the important message that needed to be delivered. Given this observation, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendation 3a.

Given the background of the CFMP staff who will act as program facilitators, it is recommended that they be given an opportunity of one week's training to participate in group meeting exercises in Samoa before they are sent to their first village assignment. This is absolutely necessary in order to build their confidence in conducting group meetings. The training exercise will enable the program facilitators to learn about speech making, appropriate behavior in meetings, meeting facilitation, problem tree/solution, map drafting and about rapid assessment techniques.

Or

Recommendation 3b.

Request two Fisheries Extension facilitators (man and women) from Samoa to conduct training for the CFMP facilitators in American Samoa before they are sent out to commence their first village group meeting. At the same time, the Extension team from Samoa can assist the CFMP in its first village exercise.

Or

Recommendation 3c.

Combination of 3a and 3b.

Recommendation 4.

A general understanding by program facilitators of areas related to the management of subsistence and inshore fisheries is necessary to enable them to respond to general questions that may be asked during group meetings. Therefore, it is recommended that the DMWR arranges for internal training of Fisheries Technicians who will become program facilitators to cover basic understanding in biology, ecology, conservation, fishing techniques, aquaculture, seafood handling and management practices.

10.5. Village Rules to acquire legal recognition

In any Samoan village community, village rules are established by the council of chiefs (*fono*). These rules are easily enforced and monitored by village communities themselves through appointed committees. While these rules can be important to the management of the marine environment, they are only applicable to members of that community itself. In cases where people from outside villages come into local waters of a specific village community, that community may be powerless to insist that visitors obey their local rules.

The 1995 Fishing and Hunting Regulations provide for the Director of DMWR to issue annual proclamations which could amongst other things include the management measures promoted through village rules. This is the area which needs priority legal work in order for village rules to acquire legal recognition. If this is done, village rules could represent a fisheries management tool that could have great potential for solving many problems relating to the conservation of the inshore and marine environment.

Recommendation 5.

The DMWR as a matter of priority must engage a legal expert to work on how village rules could be addressed in order to acquire legal recognition, so that the breach by outside villagers of village rules relating to the marine environment can provide the basis for a court claim.

10.6. The CFMP Process

American Samoa and Samoa practice the same tradition and culture. As such, the design of a culturally appropriate community-based management process for American Samoa should follow closely that of Samoa or the "Samoa model". The council of chiefs, being the highest source of village authority, should be seen as the prime instigator of change. However, there should still be ample opportunity for other community groups to participate. The proposed CFMP process from its start to the final production of a Village Fisheries Management Plan is discussed below and summarized in Appendix 2.

Recommendation 6.

As the two Samoas practice the same tradition and culture with similar problems associated with the management of their subsistence and inshore fisheries, it is recommended that American Samoa's CFMP emulates the Extension Process developed as the "Samoa model" but with alterations to better suit American Samoa's situation.

1. Advertisements and First Fono Meeting - The approach suggested here departs slightly from that employed by the "Samoa model" in the initial stage of the extension process. It is suggested that instead of the Custom Facilitator contacting villages about the program, the DMWR puts out extensive advertisements about the programme and how it could help village communities in the management of their subsistence and inshore fisheries. Advertisements may be done through the use of TV, local newspapers, posters and information sheets produced by the DMWR. With enough information being disseminated through advertisements, a village community which is keen to participate in the program will send a request to the DMWR for its inclusion. This modification sees the request to be part of the CFMP coming from the village itself rather than from the DMWR. Under this approach, the first meeting with the village council of chiefs will not require an approval for the program to go ahead. Instead, the first meeting will focus on discussions on how the program is to be run and on getting a further understanding of the program by the village community. The CFMP staff must be present at the first *fono* to arrange times for group meetings. There may be a case where a village would want the program to meet again with the village council to further discuss the program before approval is given. In such a case, the program must 'go with the flow'. Initial contact as practiced in Samoa will only be required if no village responds to the advertisements.

Recommendation 7.

The DMWR must put out extensive advertisements on the program through the use of TV, radios, local news papers and information sheets produced by the department to advise the public and village communities of the importance of the CFMP in the management of American Samoa's fisheries resources.

Information collected during the visit revealed that 3 villages out of the 5 targeted for the first year of the program have already been selected. This may be the result of the community survey on fishing problems conducted by the DMWR in 2000. In fact, this survey has given the program wide publication. The concept of "community fisheries management "as it is internationally and widely accepted uses a "bottom-up" approach in dealing with programs of this nature. The program needs to be requested by the village communities before the selection process is made. The criteria to justify the inclusion of villages interested in the program need to be examined carefully in order to minimize any political influence that may dictate against the decisions of the program.

Recommendation 8.

It is recommended that proper selection criteria should be established and drawn up to help the DMWR decide the most qualified village communities to be included in the CFMP.

For reasons of custom recognition and respect it is important that the Director of the DMWR or his Deputy be present at the first *fono*. As the CFMP will follow the concept and approach practiced in the Samoan tradition, it is very important that an experienced Custom Facilitator forms part of the CFMP team. The role required to be played by the Custom Facilitator is particularly important at the start and end of every *fono* and group meeting, as the Samoan tradition typically requires that the Custom Facilitator gives a customary opening and closing address. The Office of Samoan Affairs has indicated its full support for the program and is willing to play the role of Custom Facilitator as part of the CFMP team.

Recommendation 9.

As the CFMP will be employing the Samoan customary procedure in dealing with village communities, it is recommended that the DMWR makes a permanent arrangement with the Office of Samoan Affairs to delegate a full time experienced orator to deal with the Samoan tradition formalities particularly at the start and end of fonos and group meetings.

2. Village Group Meetings - Various sectors of the community quite often employ different ways of exploiting fisheries resources. The women and children are often seen picking shellfish and catching fish trapped in low tide pools. Men are often seen fishing off the reef slope and further out from the lagoon. Chiefs may or may not fish at all. It is therefore very important to include all sectors of the community in group meetings. Following the practice under the "Samoa model", three groups should be formed, namely, *matai*, *aumaga* and women's group. Group meetings should be held separately. They are to analyze the conditions of the marine environment and fish stocks by considering a series of questions. These questions are in the form of a Rapid Historical Appraisal or RHA (McArthur, 1994) to assess the degree of change that fishing, seafood catches and the marine environment have undergone over recent years. After this, each group will identify key problems, determine what cause them, propose solutions and plan remedial actions. These are written (as a problem/solution tree) on a portable white board by a trained facilitator (Appendix 3). At a second meeting, the groups will continue to examine the most practical solutions to the problems in greater detail. Finally, a village Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) is formed, preferably with three people nominated from each group. The smaller the FMAC is, the easier it is to work with and the quicker it is to reach decisions. However some villages may prefer to have a larger membership of the FMAC.

Recommendation 10.

It is recommended that the group meetings be conducted in three divisions – the *matai*, *aumaga* and women's group - and that the conduct of the meetings adopts the approach practiced in the "Samoa model".

While the division into groups is working well in Samoa and would most probably work too in other islands of American Samoa, there may be a problem with this system in the main island of Tutuila, where most of the villages likely to be involved in the program are located. In Samoa, there is always a significant number of unemployed people in villages; significant enough to warrant the calling of separate group meetings (*matai*, *aumaga* and women's group) during working hours. Hence, the arrangement of group meetings is always easy in Samoa. In contrast, most of the residents of Tutuila Island are engaged in paid employment. There may not be a sufficient number of unemployed village people to warrant the conduct of 3 group meetings during working hours. If such a situation arises, the CFMP must be prepared to suggest other alternatives so that the program continues to be carried out with minimum disruption to the achievement of its goal.

Recommendation 11.

In a situation where a village community has very little number of people (unemployed) left in the village to conduct group meetings during normal working hours, the CFMP must work out other alternatives in order to progress the program. This may include the organizing of group meetings on weekends or outside normal working hours.

3. The Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) - This committee may hold a series of meetings (typically 3 meetings) to consider further the problems and solutions identified by each group and to combine these into a single problem/solution tree (Appendix 3). The committee then decides how the solutions could be made to work, which actions are required from the village community, and what type of support is required from the DMWR.

At the first or second FMAC meeting, committee members and staff of the CFMP may conduct a village “*stroll-through environmental assessment*”. This may involve walking through the village to examine and note the environmental features which may have either been discussed in meetings, or which may catch community attention. The purpose of the assessment is to direct and to prompt community discussions on environmentally critical areas and to avoid the wasting of time on unrealistic undertakings - for example, the farming of tilapia fish when there is no permanent (year-round) source of fresh water. The assessment estimates the likely success of a proposed community action and is not meant to be a substitute for a more detailed scientific and/or environmental assessment, which if necessary could be completed by the DMWR fisheries scientific staff.

At the FMAC meetings, members (assisted by CFMP staff) will prepare a draft **Village Fisheries Management Plan** for discussion and approval by the village council or *fono*. The final draft of this plan should be completed by the FMAC at the DMWR, where scientific staff will be available to provide additional, plan-related and technical information on demand.

4. The Village Fisheries Management Plan and Final Council Meeting - The CFMP process culminates in a Village Fisheries Management Plan. This community-owned plan is in the form of an agreement between the village and the government. It lists the resource management and conservation undertakings of the community and the servicing and technical support undertakings required from the DMWR. The plan will be presented to the *fono* by the FMAC in the presence of the Director of the DMWR and his senior Fisheries staff (in order to signify the meeting's importance). If the plan is accepted by the *fono*, both the *fono* and the DMWR will agree to carry out their respective roles and undertakings. The *fono* then appoints a **Monitoring and Enforcement Committee (MEC)** to oversee the working of the plan.

5. The Monitoring and Enforcement Committee (MEC) - It is suggested that the MEC replaces the Fisheries Management Committee (FMC) of the Samoa model. In the Samoa model, the FMC is appointed by the *fono* to administer the undertakings of the village. Its members are selected from the *matai*, the *aumaga* and the women's group. While the concept and function of the MEC is similar to that of the FMC, there are two suggested minor alterations.

Firstly, there is a need to change the name of the committee to better reflect the roles and duties to be performed by the committee. In the Samoan society, there should always be a Samoan translation of the name of an assigned Committee especially in rural areas where English may not be well understood. The Samoan translation for the MEC is ***Komiti Faatino ma Faasalaga***.

Secondly, a change in the appointment of Committee members is suggested. In the Samoa model, the members of the FMC are appointed from any of the FMAC members. This means that they can be titled or untitled persons. It is suggested that, although the members of the MEC are appointed by the council of chiefs, they should be restricted to *matai* only. This change is necessary because a *matai* in the Samoan culture has the natural authority to dictate duties to other members of the community, for example when it comes to fulfilling village obligations under the fisheries management plan. Of particular relevance is the fact that, for enforcement to be properly monitored, only *matai* can dictate actions in connection with the enforcement of village rules.

Recommendation 12.

It is recommended that the name of the committee titled "Fisheries Management Committee" under the Samoa model be changed for the parallel CFMP of the DMWR to "Monitoring and Enforcement Committee" (*Komiti Faatino ma Faasalaga*), to better reflect its duties and responsibilities. It is also recommended that the members be selected from the *matai* group only in order to better reflect the degree of authority the committee is empowered with.

6. Community Undertakings - Community undertakings may include decisions to support and enforce Government laws banning the use of chemicals, dynamite and plant-derived poisons (*ava niukini*) to kill fish. Villages may undertake to ban the use of traditional destructive fishing methods such as the smashing of coral to catch sheltering fish (*fa'amo'a* and *tuiga*), or may develop their own rules to enforce national laws banning the capture of fish smaller than the set minimum size. Some villages may place restrictions on the use of overly efficient methods of fishing, such as the use of nets and the use of underwater torches for spear fishing at night. Further, community conservation measures may include the collecting of crown-of-thorns starfish as well as the banning of the removal of beach sand and the dumping of rubbish in lagoon waters. A number of villages may chose to establish Fish Reserves (in which all fishing is banned) in parts of their traditional fishing areas. Some villages may seek legal recognition of their village rules in order to extend jurisdiction over neighboring villages.

7. DMWR Undertakings - The DMWR undertakings which feature in the Village Fisheries Management Plan may include the reciprocal actions necessary to support the community undertakings. The DMWR undertakings may involve the provision of technical advice on how to care for the marine environment and the provision of advice on the development of alternative sources of seafood to the present heavily exploited lagoons and damaged near-shore reefs. Undertakings may also include the provision of assistance with the translocation and farming of new types of fish and shellfish, as well as facilitating the purchase of appropriate fishing boats to allow villagers to fish other under-exploited fish stocks. In response to community demand, the DMWR needs to run supporting workshops on issues such as how to grow giant clams, fish handling, fish smoking, safety at sea, outboard motor maintenance, and on fishing methods outside the reefs.

8. Monitoring the CFMP - Monthly CFMP meetings of the program staff must be organized to review and assess progress, and to plan extension activities for the coming month. The important function of the meetings is to review the agreements contained in the Village Fisheries Management Plans of all villages participating in the program; this is to ensure that the undertakings of both the village and the DMWR are progressing. These meetings may also address problems arising from the program.

When a certain number of villages (preferably 3) have completed management plans, a National Workshop should be arranged. The purpose of the workshop is to allow committees from different villages to exchange information, and to decide how villages could assist each other. The meeting may also be used to obtain community feedback in order to improve the CFMP process. It is also important to have a general media coverage on the day in order to further promote the program in rural communities.

Recommendation 13.

Given the similarities between the two Samoas in respect of customs, traditions and problems, it is recommended that the CFMP of the DMWR adopts the methods and concept discussed in this report under the headings of:

- i. Village group meetings
- ii. Fisheries Management Advisory Committee
- iii. Village Fisheries Management Plan and Final council meeting
- iv. Monitoring and Enforcement Committee
- v. Community Undertakings
- vi. DMWR Undertakings
- vii. Monitoring the CFMP

11. CONCLUSION

The success of the Community Fisheries Management Program of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources will largely depend on community ownership. Despite legislation and enforcement mechanisms, the responsible management of the marine resources of Samoan village communities can only be achieved when the communities themselves see it as their responsibility. The Samoan village communities who introduce their own fisheries management plans through the *matai* system are more likely to respect and abide by the village rules contained in the plan than those set by a government authority. Village rules can therefore represent a fisheries management tool, which will have great potential for solving many problems under Samoan custom, including problems pertaining to the conservation and management of the inshore marine environment. It is submitted that the newly established Community Fisheries Management Program in American Samoa will be very likely to have a high degree of success if the concept and recommendations discussed in this report are implemented.

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Appendix A: PEOPLE CONSULTED

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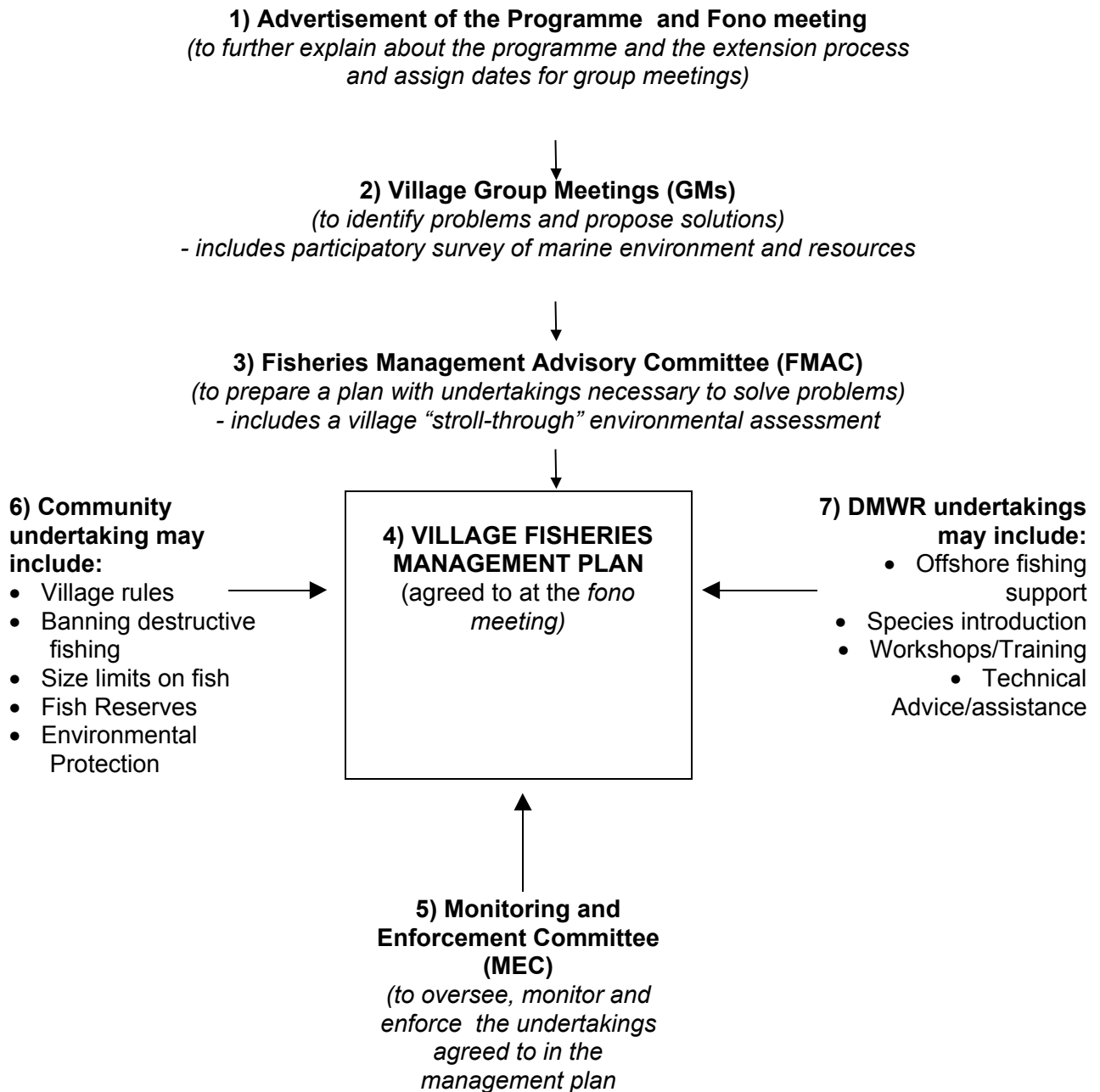
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Appendix B: SUMMARY OF THE CFMP PROCESS PROPOSED FOR THE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN AMERICAN SAMOAN VILLAGES



Appendix C: EXAMPLE OF A PROBLEM/SOLUTION TREE AS CONSTRUCTED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The process begins with step 1 (Key Problem) before proceeding in the numerical order shown.

All information is provided by the community, with the facilitator acting as a recorder.

