FACT SHEET

Photo Credit: WorldFish

WorldFish in Solomon Islands

Healthy People. Healthy Planet. Shared Prosperity.

WorldFish CGIAR

Country profile

Thriving local food systems are the cornerstones of food security, culture and heritage for Indigenous communities and small island states across the Pacific. Solomon Islands are an archipelago made up of almost 1000 islands. Nearly **75 percent** of the population is rural, living in low-lying and vulnerable coastal areas, small islands and atolls. The country is heavily dependent on aquatic foods as an important source of nutrition and income.

Solomon Islands are at high risk from climate change impacts, with rising sea levels threatening land loss and increased water salinity. Combined with rising population pressures and overfishing on inshore reef fisheries, climate change will worsen food insecurity. In addition, increasing access to unhealthy foods is causing growing health problems.

Equipping and empowering fishers and processors to carefully manage the islands' natural resources is critical to ensure the sustainability and climate resilience of fisheries and access to nutrition-sensitive foods.

Where We Work

FAST FACTS

- There are more than **4000** coastal communities.
- Fish accounts for **57 percent** of total animal-source protein intake.
- **30 percent** of women and **21 percent** of men live with obesity.
- Annual per capita aquatic food consumption is **73 kg**.
- Around **30 percent** of the total population depend on fishing for their income.

Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources staff interacting with community participants at the 2nd CBRM Community Facilitators Training workshop in Auki, Malaita.

WorldFish's support

WorldFish has more than three decades of experience in Solomon Islands. Our research here includes improving resource management and governance at community, provincial, regional and national scales, and increasing nutritional awareness of the role of fish in diets, with a particular focus on women's dietary diversity and infant and young child feeding practices. Our work in Solomon Islands is organized around five impact areas: program integration; climate and the environment; society and the economy; nutrition and public health; and the Nusatupe innovation hub.

The **program integration pathway** places a deliberate emphasis on integrated planning and partnerships. WorldFish works with the government, partners and communities to reinvigorate traditional marine management and ensure the sustainability of coastal fish production. Our work aligns with our adopted goal, "a sustainable fisheries sector that contributes to the socioeconomic needs of all Solomon Islanders", from the Solomon Islands National Fisheries Policy 2019–2029 of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR).

In the **climate and environment pathway**, the **Strengthening and Scaling Community-Based Approaches to Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management in Support of the New Song** program works to build a regional coalition for the New Song initiative in the Pacific. The program shows how the Pacific Islands states can support the implementation of the initiative and their aspirations toward sustainable, well-managed inshore fisheries through community-based approaches.

Since 2011, WorldFish has been collaborating with MFMR and the Government of Malaita – the province with the largest population and the third highest rate of poverty in Solomon Islands – to instill community-based resource management (CBRM) through research, training and outreach. Having honed this model over the years, WorldFish helped MFMR launch a nationwide CBRM scaling strategy in 2022, extending technical support to communities throughout the archipelago.

In addition, through the **Building Capacity, Coordination and Communication for Collective Action on Small Scale Fisheries** program, we are using co-management approaches to promote social–ecological resilience for communities that depend on small-scale fisheries.

In the **society and economy pathway**, through the **Enhancing Livelihoods While Governing Marine Resources in Pacific Island Countries** program, we aim to enhance fishers' livelihoods by offering a way out of poverty and increasing food security. A participatory livelihoods enhancement approach is being implemented through community groups in Solomon Islands where the voices of the local community are co-developed into action plans.

Enabling impact

With an increasing and urbanizing population, securing a sustainable supply of fish is a national policy priority for Solomon Islands. As such, CBRM is now the adopted national model for supporting greater sustainability and longer-term economic, social and ecological benefits from coastal fisheries. In support of this model, WorldFish works with MFMR to improve the practice of inclusive CBRM. We are also working with provincial governments to reach more communities with information and awareness about these practices.

WorldFish has provided customized technical support on CBRM to 76 communities in Malaita since 2021. This has included developing 16 information sets on key issues such as mangrove restoration and coral replanting, which contribute to healthy ecosystems and support resilient aquatic food systems. This information was disseminated to communities, schools and health clinics. Dedicated sessions for women and young people enabled them to have a greater role in CBRM decision-making.

To build institutional capacity, training sessions were held for community facilitators, which led to the co-development of 12 management plans. These plans, systematized by WorldFish, set out agreed rules for the management of coastal fisheries to support the sustainability of both the local economy and the environment.

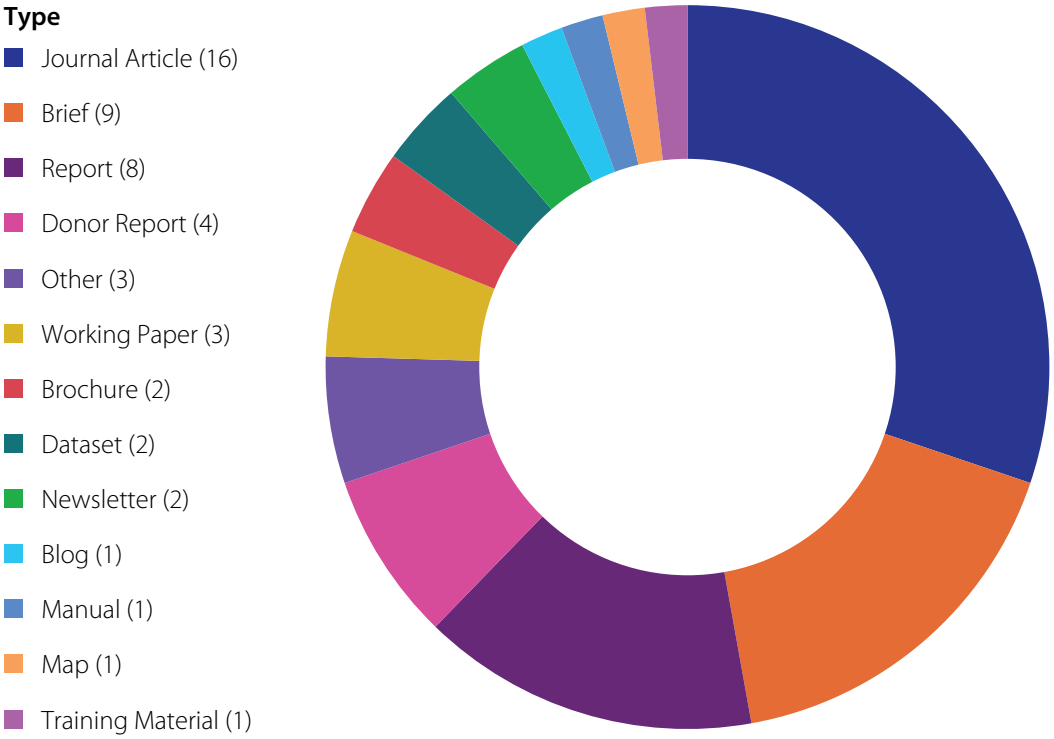
The geography and infrastructure of Solomon Islands means it can be difficult and expensive to transport and distribute highly perishable fresh foods between villages and urban areas. This is a factor behind the increase in refined, processed foods and convenience foods with a long shelf life, which are cheaper and more accessible than domestically grown crops and fish. This shift to nutritionally unrewarding foods has been under way for some time, with severe public health consequences, contributing to high rates of obesity and malnutrition. To counteract current food system trends, in the **nutrition and public health pathway**, WorldFish works with community partners and training providers to strengthen and advocate for traditional practices and Indigenous foods. This work uses forums, training sessions and ongoing advocacy through campaigns, including the production of a cookbook in 2024.

Scientific Excellence in Solomon Islands

53 publications

8 project leaders

13 types of publications



Moving forward

The **WorldFish Nusatupe Research Station**, situated in Western Province of Solomon Islands, is an innovation hub dedicated to showcasing nourishing, sustainable and climate-resilient island food systems – conducting training, demonstrations, co-learning and research.

Since the mid-2000s, CBRM has been a key framework to support coastal communities in managing their marine areas. Given the challenges of limited resources and capacity in most Pacific Island nations and the need to engage with diverse and remote communities, the overarching goal of expanding CBRM is to find cost-effective ways to empower all communities to better manage their marine resources across the region. The National Information Strategy, developed in consultation with MFMR, WorldFish and other partners and published in 2022, is intended to address gaps and needs by developing cost-effective strategies to reach all coastal communities with a basic level of accurate and actionable information on marine resource management.

In Solomon Islands, many fishers, fish vendors and processors live and work in remote locations without access to electricity, roads, clean water or landing-site facilities. As a result, fish is often handled in ways that cause spoilage or contamination, which can reduce income earned and make consumers sick or hesitant to eat fish. While there are many factors that contribute to poor fish handling practices, the provision of training to increase knowledge, develop skills and change attitudes is one step that can be taken to improve the quality of fishery products. WorldFish is working with the MFMR, provincial governments, Solomon Islands National University and training providers to support innovation in these systems of distribution by improving skills in fish handling and demonstrating and evaluating innovative practices.

Donor and Partners

- University of Wollongong Australia
- Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
- Solomon Islands National University
- Kastom Gaden Association
- Communities
- Provincial governments
- Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
- CGIAR Trust Fund
- International Development Research Centre

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About WorldFish

WorldFish is a leading international research organization working to transform aquatic food systems to reduce hunger, malnutrition and poverty. It collaborates with international, regional and national partners to co-develop and deliver scientific innovations, evidence for policy, and knowledge to enable equitable and inclusive impact for millions who depend on fish for their livelihoods. As a member of CGIAR, WorldFish contributes to building a food- and nutrition-secure future and restoring natural resources. Headquartered in Penang, Malaysia, with country offices across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, WorldFish strives to create resilient and inclusive food systems for shared prosperity. Learn more at **www.worldfishcenter.org**

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