



Nourishing island food systems in Solomon Islands

Operational Plan 2025

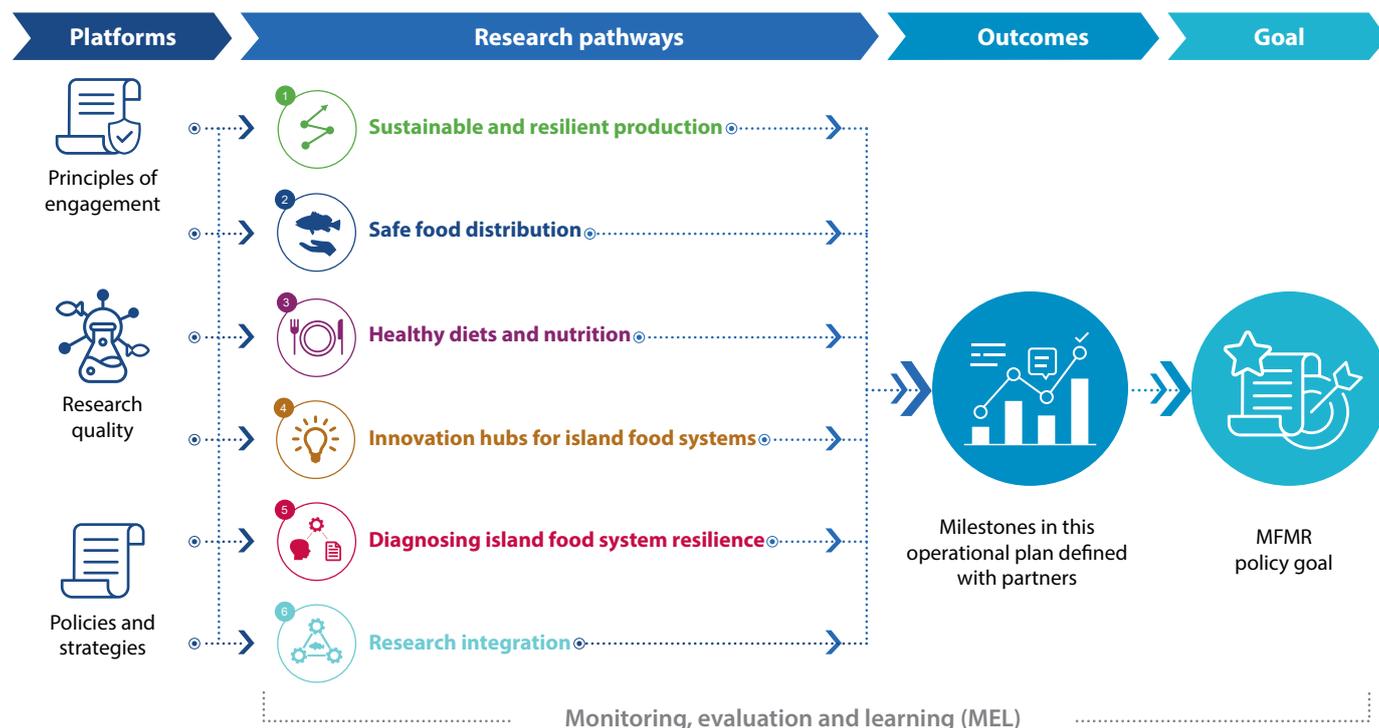
Goal

WorldFish in Solomon Islands adopts the goal of the Solomon Islands National Fisheries Policy 2019–2029 of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR): *A sustainable fisheries sector that contributes to the socioeconomic needs of all Solomon Islanders.*



Our program organization

WorldFish in Solomon Islands is part of the WorldFish Research Program on Island Food Systems. This program is organized around six research pathways (see figure): (1) Sustainable and resilient production; (2) Safe food distribution; (3) Healthy diets and nutrition; (4) Innovation hubs for island food systems; (5) Diagnosing island food system resilience; and (6) Program integration. While WorldFish in Solomon Islands has many partners, we particularly integrate our research with MFMR to support national strategies toward its policy goal.



Review of the 2024 Operational Plan

Milestone evaluation

The 2024 Operational Plan outlined 37 milestones that we sought to complete during the year.¹ Here we provide a brief traffic light review of milestone completion organised by the five research pathways in our 2024 Operational Plan. We also align our milestones with three impact pathways from the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy², which guide how we aim to achieve development impact through research:

- Science-based **innovations (I)**, which include co-development of sets of knowledge products, technologies, services, and other solutions; and
- Targeted **capacity development (C)**, which includes working with individuals, institutions, and organizations to improve the use of technological and institutional solutions, such as training-of-trainers, development of training programs and ongoing institutional support to national partners;
- Advice on **policy (P)**, which includes business strategies, institutional arrangements, and investment programs, together with more formal public policy sector instruments.

In 2024 we completed 21 of the 37 milestones we set out for the program. Ten milestones continue to be in progress and will be completed in 2025. Of these milestones, most activities were relating to capacity development, while there was a balanced effort between innovation and policy advice.

Highlights:

1. We established a demonstration garden at the Nusatupe Research Station and island food system innovation hub in collaboration with Kastom Gaden Association (KGA), and had 16 interns over the year helping with station and garden maintenance, coral restoration and seaweed farming trials.
2. We completed a national assessment of fishery centers and their services with MFMR and prepared a summary brief to inform planning for the new national government in its first 100 days.
3. We hosted two Indigenous food systems forums in Western and Isabel Provinces, in partnership with KGA, extending discussion on countering unhealthy island food system trends to the provincial level.
4. We published a report on the cost of scaling Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) based on experiences working in partnership with Malaita Provincial Fisheries Officers (PFOs); and with MFMR, organised a workshop on disability inclusion in CBRM.
5. We successfully integrated the concept of island food systems into a new CGIAR Food Frontiers and Security Science Program (Area of Work 4), securing funding for a program of work in Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and beyond.

 Climate and the environment	
P	Report published on cost of CBRM scaling based on experiences working in partnership with Malaita PFOs. Completed. Report published: "Strengthening a provincial program for scaling community-based resource management in Solomon Islands".
C	Implementation of new workplan with Provincial Youth Council in Malaita on youth awareness and leadership in CBRM. Completed. Youths in Malaita trained and led awareness on CBRM during Malaita 2nd Appointed Day in Auki.
P	Report published on options for inclusion of people with disability in CBRM via civil society and government. In progress. Workshop held in August 2024 with People with Disabilities Association (PWD), MFMR, Ministry of Health & Medical Services (MHMS), Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECDM), Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) and World Vision. A summary brief is in draft.
I	Interaction of culture and change, gender roles in matrilineal contexts explored in report and workshop with Isabel Provincial Government, PFOs and other stakeholders based at Buala. In progress. Matrilineal study data analysed; validation to be completed by Q2 2025.

¹ Eriksson H, Aloysius A, Batalofo M, Bennett G, Harohau D, Hunnam K, Leinga G, Orirana G, Pua'ara S, Siota F, Sukulu M, Tutuo J, Vaike L and Saeni-Oeta J. 2024. Nourishing island food systems in Solomon Islands: Operational Plan 2024. Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish. Operational Plan: 2024-09. Available from: <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/141483>

² CGIAR System Organization. 2021. CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy: Transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. Montpellier, France: CGIAR System Organization. Available from: <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/110918>



Climate and the environment

C	Lessons from experiences of training provincial fisheries staff in CBRM evaluated and documented. In progress. 1 year follow-up data collected; output to be completed in 2025.
I	CPUE data collection finalized and the Malaita Fisheries Profile report published. In progress. Data collection completed; data analysis and report to be completed in 2025.
I	Existing information about nature-based aquaculture in Solomon Islands compiled in a key report, and project design completed with Solomon Islands National University (SINU), KGA, MFMR and MECDM. In progress. Scoping visits to two sites in Malaita completed in November 2024. Scoping report finalized; layout and publication to be completed in 2025. Partner discussions ongoing, with formal agreements and project research design to be finalised in 2025.
P	Review of the Solomon Islands National CBRM Strategy 2021–2025 conducted with MFMR. Not completed. WorldFish to support MFMR with review in 2025.
C	Stories demonstrating benefits of CBRM produced and disseminated at community level with maps produced for successful management areas. Not completed. To be completed in 2025.



Society and the economy

C	An additional three briefs published in a compendium highlighting positive examples of fish-based livelihood innovations. Completed. Three additional briefs drafted: traditional Malaita fish preservation using bamboo, SINU bottled tuna and SINU smoked fish. To be published with fish handling training package.
I	Evidence of how fishery centres are used, based on logbook records collected in 2023–24, validated through workshop(s) and documented. Completed. Logbooks collected and results presented at 2024 PFO conference. Brief to be completed in 2025.
P	National assessment of fishery centres and their services in Solomon Islands published with MFMR. Completed. Brief and report published.
I	The concept of a youth-focused Fis Bisnis planned and piloted in Auki, Malaita Province. Completed. Six youths trained in fish filleting over 10-week internship. Lessons learned to be documented in 2025.
P	Support provided to MFMR to prepare a national fish handling and processing strategy. Completed. Revised milestone based on project mid-term review: support MFMR to include strategy development in workplan. Objective to prepare national guidelines on fish handling included in MFMR's Provincial Fisheries Development Plan 2025–2030. Support to prepare this document will be part of next project phase (2025–2030).
I	The multidimensional benefits and challenges experienced by participants in livelihood development case studies in Solomon Islands (and Timor-Leste) documented in a scientific publication. In progress. Data collection, analyses and writing workshop completed; to be finalised in 2025.
C	Training module on fish handling and processing, with accompanying materials, completed in partnership with SINU. In progress. Training module review and illustrations completed. Layout in progress; to be completed in 2025.
I	Fish distribution at Auki market mapped and characterized in a scientific publication, including aspects of how trading aquatic foods integrates with livelihoods and nutrition. Not completed. Activity postponed based on project mid-term review advice.



Nutrition and public health

P	Nutrition trade-offs with cold storage in rural communities evaluated in a scientific publication. Completed. Manuscript submitted for publication.
C	Provincial-level Indigenous food systems forums held in Western and Isabel Provinces, in partnership with KGA, with documented proceedings. Completed. Forums held in Gizo and Buala, attended by over 60 participants; documented in a brief.
P	Provincial-level advocacy campaigns promoting Indigenous and aquatic foods held in partnership with KGA. Completed. Carried out as part of provincial-level forums.
C	Training workshops on nutrition, agriculture and fish handling and processing held at Nusatupe innovation hub, in partnership with KGA. Completed. Three trainings conducted, with a total of 57 women, men and youth.
P	A cookbook published featuring indigenous and aquatic food recipes from all provinces. In progress. Draft completed; design and layout to be finalised in 2025.
I	A training package on aquatic foods for nutrition developed for PFOs, women and youths. Not completed. Not completed; no longer a priority.
I	Lessons on partnerships co-published with KGA. Not completed. To be completed in 2025.



Nusatupe innovation hub

C	Western Province PFOs regularly hosted at the research station office and supported to develop a Western Province PFO Strategy, with guidance from Malaita PFOs. Completed. PFOs hosted two days a week at research station. Strategy drafted; to be completed Q1 2025.
C	Demonstrations at the research station established with partners: food gardens, coral restoration, seaweed farming and aquaponics. Completed. Demonstration food garden, coral restoration and seaweed farming trials successfully established.
C	Four training workshops held at the research station. Completed. Four training workshops were hosted: three gardening workshops by KGA and one seaweed training session with participation from students at Vanga Rural Training College.
C	A Youth Internship Program developed and completed by 15 youths. Completed. A total of 16 interns completed 6-week internships at the research station in 2024.
I	A Monitoring Evaluation and Learning program designed and implemented for the Nusatupe Innovation Hub. Completed. A simple Excel spreadsheet was developed to record training and meeting attendance, interns who participated, and signed visitors at Nusatupe.
I	A Nusatupe Innovation Hub Strategy developed in collaboration with key partners. In progress. Draft strategy prepared; to be completed in 2025.
C	Fifty high school students hosted for look and learn sessions. Not completed. Unable to take place due to weather conditions; plan to continue to host students in 2025.



Program integration

C	Seconded provincial networking officer from WorldFish supporting MFMR planning for PFO training and services. Completed. Secondment will discontinue in 2025, as responsibilities have been absorbed by MFMR CBRM Unit.
C	Seconded data officer from WorldFish supporting MFMRs integration of CBRM scaling with socioeconomic and catch data. Completed. Secondment will continue in 2025, with responsibilities gradually absorbed by MFMR CBRM Unit.
C	MFMR making regular updates to and using the CBRM database. Completed. Regular updates provided upon request from MFMR internal (Permanent Secretary, DDI, PFOs, CBRM Unit) and during MFMR workshop and conference.
P	MFMR supported to update its Gender Strategy. Completed. Gender validation workshop held in April 2024 with MFMR, WorldFish, The Pacific Community (SPC) and the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP).
C	Solomon Islander experiences of CBRM shared with representatives from Kiribati and Vanuatu at the 2024 FishSMARD event. Completed. Hosted in Wollongong in February 2024, led by Kiribati Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources staff.
P	Summary report on experiences of WorldFish staff secondment to MFMR published. In progress. Draft paper pending input from MFMR CBRM Unit staff.



Community participants at the Nusatupe food garden getting involved in planting with Kastom Gaden Association trainers.



Interns preparing coral for planting in the water off Nusatupe Research Station.

The 2025 Operational Plan

Platforms

To be a locally impactful and globally relevant organization we stand on platforms that combine national and international structures, place emphasis on multidimensional research quality, and take a deliberate approach to “how” we work. The 2025 Operational Plan stands on the same platforms as the 2024 Operational Plan, which contains further details on the relevant policies and strategies that guide our work, how we define research quality, our principles of engagement, and our key partnerships and impact pathways.

Research pathways



Sustainable and resilient production

Aquatic foods are prevalent in the diets of Solomon Islanders – fish is the most accessible and widely consumed animal-source food. With increasing and urbanizing populations, it is a national priority to secure a sustainable supply that has high resilience to climate-associated risks and uncertainties. Island food systems are places governed with strong community and traditional institutions. As such, community-based resource management is the adopted national model for supporting greater sustainability and benefits from coastal fisheries. In support of this model, WorldFish works with the MFMR to improve the practice of inclusive CBRM by supporting methods for scaling with provincial governments to reach more communities with information and awareness, and evaluating practices for continual improvement.

2025 Milestones	
C	Lessons from experiences of training provincial fisheries staff and community facilitators in CBRM evaluated and documented.
P	Malaita youth engagement in CBRM documented in a published paper.
I	CPUE data analysed, and the Malaita Fisheries Profile report published.
P	Outputs completed on options for inclusion of persons with disabilities in CBRM based on 2024 workshop.
I	Research report completed on gender roles in matrilineal contexts.
C	Stories demonstrating benefits of CBRM collected, produced and disseminated at community and provincial level.
P	Report published on CBRM Network meetings.
I	Research design for nature-based aquaculture research completed with key project partners SINU and KGA.
I	Data collection completed at nature-based aquaculture case study sites.
C	Incentives provided to farmers at nature-based aquaculture case study sites to improve and sustain their activities.



Safe food distribution

In Solomon Islands, almost everyone eats fish regularly – per capita aquatic food consumption is 73 kg – even though most people are not fishers. In island food systems, the system of producing and distributing fish, which connects consumers to their fish supply, often generates important value both in terms of livelihoods for the many people involved and for food and nutrition security for island populations. WorldFish in Solomon Islands works with the MFMR, provincial governments and Solomon Islands National University (SINU) to identify the opportunities and challenges of sustainably increasing the economic benefits from and food safety of these post-harvest distribution systems – through evaluating past fishery development initiatives, piloting innovative post-harvest practices, and co-developing practical fish handling and processing upskilling activities that are accessible to people in rural communities.

2025 Milestones	
I	Fish distribution at Auki market mapped and characterised in a scientific publication, including aspects of how trading aquatic foods integrates with livelihoods and nutrition.
I	Multidimensional benefits and challenges experienced by participants, and governance themes, in livelihood development case studies in Solomon Islands (and Timor-Leste) documented in two scientific publications.
C	Training module on fish handling and processing, with accompanying materials, completed in partnership with SINU, including piloting with PFOs and people in rural communities.
C	Design of fish handling training of trainers program, including monitoring and evaluation protocol, completed with MFMR, SINU and University of Wollongong.
I	Lessons from a youth-focused Fis Bisnis piloted in Auki, Malaita Province documented in a short paper.
P	Findings and lessons from conducting research on post-harvest fish distribution, past fish-based livelihood development activities, and fish handling training development in Solomon Islands (and Timor-Leste) discussed at an end-of-project symposium with partners and synthesized in a report or paper.
P	An agenda for tackling aquatic food safety risks in the Pacific published in a scientific publication.



Healthy diets and nutrition

Transitions in island food systems are leading to changes in the diets and nutrition of island populations. Shifts from domestic production of nutritious crops to imported, nutritionally unrewarding foods reflect a contemporary transition to “modern” and convenient foods that has severe public health consequences. Urbanisation and high costs of distributing perishable fresh foods are driving factors behind the influx and acceptance of refined foods like rice and flour. These, and similar convenience foods with a long shelf-life, paradoxically tend to outcompete domestically grown crops and fish in price, access and availability in urban settings. To counteract current food system trends, WorldFish works with community partners and training providers to strengthen and advocate for traditional practices and indigenous foods. We also carry out research to deepen our understanding of the current nutrition context, and to identify potential mechanisms to promote healthy diets and awareness of the important role of aquatic foods for nutrition.

2025 Milestones	
I	Lessons learnt on partnerships documented in a publication: the benefits and challenges of integrating aquatic foods into rural agriculture training.
P	The current status of School Meal Programs and approaches in the Solomon Islands documented in a summary report or paper.
I	Estimation of micronutrients distributed through Auki fish market completed as part of a comparative paper with Timor-Leste.



Innovation hubs for island food systems

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. WorldFish has recently transformed the station in response to national demand for a facility to convene research, training and services. Now in its second year of operation as an island food system innovation hub, the facility is hosting co-learning and reflection activities, as well as trainings, internships and demonstrations on productive gardens, coral restoration and seaweed farming in partnership with the MFMR, Western Provincial Government, SINU, KGA, rural training colleges and island communities.

2025 Milestones	
C	A new staff member recruited to assist with station operation for 2025.
C	Demonstrations at the research station maintained and expanded with partners, including food gardens, coral restoration, seaweed farming and aquaponics.
C	Five training workshops held at the research station: two on seaweed, two on organic farming and one on CBRM.
C	A Youth Internship Program continued and completed by an additional 18 youths.
P	Achievements of the Nusatupe internship program summarised and documented in an SPC Fisheries bulletin article.



Diagnosing island food system resilience

Islands represent an opportunity to better understand food systems as comparatively simple models of larger systems, thus informing scaling efforts. In addition, islands have unique characteristics that determine food system outcomes and their resilience. For example, access to arable land and reliance on food trade are considerable drivers of diets and nutrition. Diagnosing island food systems by analysing these characteristics can help guide investments in food systems transformations that are informed by local Islanders’ perspectives and are suitable to local island circumstances.

2025 Milestones	
I	Research framework developed for Island Food Systems journal article.
I	Characteristics of Island Food Systems assessed through analysis of existing dietary recall data, aligned with women’s minimum dietary diversity, in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste in a publication.



Research integration

WorldFish in Solomon Islands seeks to make research impactful by working in partnership with national research entities, training providers and government services. Our national host is the MFMR, which has undergone a significant increase in operational capacity over the past 10 years. Together, we have taken steps to integrate research on aquatic food systems within national development trajectories by co-designing and co-implementing our program of work. We integrate by planning all research activities together to support the MFMR's CBRM strategy and the 2015 Fisheries Management Act, and by sharing and promoting our research together. In 2025, one WorldFish staff will continue to be seconded to the MFMR to support data management.

2025 Milestones	
C	Seconded data officer from WorldFish supporting MFMRs integration of CBRM scaling with socioeconomic and catch data.
P	Summary report on experiences of seconded staff documented and published.
P	MFMR supported to review its Solomon Islands National CBRM Strategy 2021–2025 and Fisheries Management (Prohibited Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.
P	Western Province PFOs supported to develop a Western Province PFO Strategy.
I	A Nusatupe Innovation Hub Strategy developed in collaboration with key partners.
I	Next phase of ACIAR projects integrated with key partners through co-design and inception workshops.



Delivering 2025

Our program is made up of three projects and a CGIAR investment. In addition to these contracted projects, we have three high probability projects expected to start during 2025 and early 2026 to support the continued work on CBRM and fish handling, as well as growth of the Nusatupe innovation hub for island food systems.

Project	Duration	Full project name	Donor
Pathways 2	2021–2025	Coalitions for change in sustainable national CBFM programs in the Pacific (FIS/2020/172)	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
Fish Innovations	2021–2025	Innovating fish-based livelihoods in the community economies of Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands (FIS/2019/124)	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
CAINA	2023–2027	Climate-Adaptive, Inclusive, Nature-based Aquaculture in Malaysia and Solomon Islands	International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Government of Canada
CGIAR Frontiers Program AoW 4	2025–2030	CGIAR Program on Food Frontiers and Security – Island Food Systems	CGIAR Trust Fund Contributors

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

For the Operational Plan to be effective, it must be monitored and tracked against milestones to learn and adjust critical issues in a timely manner. WorldFish uses a CGIAR-developed web-based knowledge sharing and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) platform. The platform is used as a tool to ensure responsible and adaptive program operations and includes the tracking of indicators to assess overall progress toward objectives and targets in the program. In monitoring outcomes, methods are employed to capture distributional effects of activities on different groups, including disaggregation by age and gender.

The WorldFish Solomon Islands team

The WorldFish program in Solomon Islands is led by the country director and a principal scientist, who have the overall responsibility for delivering this Operational Plan. The program of work is implemented from three offices: a national headquarters in Honiara at Ace Complex in Kukum; the Nusatupe Research Station and island food system innovation hub at Gizo in Western Province; and a field office in Auki, Malaita. Our team is made up of 12 national research staff trained and skilled in community facilitation and research methods attuned to the research pathways in the Operational Plan, and international-based staff. In total, we have five PhD-level staff and two MSc-level staff in the program, and also work with other PhD-level scientists through our international program on island food systems. The research team is supported by program administration support staff in Solomon Islands and the Project Management Unit at WorldFish Headquarters in Penang, Malaysia.



2024 Outputs from WorldFish Solomon Islands Program

Title	Type	Link
Strengthening a provincial program for scaling community-based resource management in Solomon Islands	Report	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12348/6085
Scaling-up community-based resource management in Solomon Islands	Journal article	https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.13264
Fisheries centers in Solomon Islands	Brief	https://hdl.handle.net/10568/169702
Research roundup and review of fisheries centers in Solomon Islands	Report	https://hdl.handle.net/10568/169703
Smoking fish in Shortland Islands	Brief	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12348/6372
What can the experiences of rural women in Solomon Islands teach us about innovation in aquatic food systems?	Journal article	https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12383
Fish-based products in diverse aquatic systems: Innovating with product development to tackle malnutrition and improve livelihoods.	Brief	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12348/6115
Imagining island food system futures with Indigenous foods: A tok stori on the experiences and potential of traditional food systems in provinces of Solomon Islands	Brief	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12348/6429
Robust data needed for island food systems research	Brief	https://hdl.handle.net/10568/168945
Island food systems and unhealthy food imports	Brief	https://hdl.handle.net/10568/169193
Introducing the Nusatupe innovation hub – showcasing the best of the sustainable island food systems	Video	https://hdl.handle.net/10568/172656

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