



Women in Fisheries
Network-Fiji

**WOMEN
IN
FISHERIES
NETWORK
FIJI**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2016 - 2020**

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1. BACKGROUND

The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is the overarching document providing strategic direction for the Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji (WiFN-Fiji) over the next five years. It is built on the organisation's Vision, Mission and Operating Principles which were refined during the strategic planning process involving interviews and a workshop with key stakeholders, and planning sessions with the Executive Board and Board of Trustees in September 2016.

The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 was reviewed in 2019 following the Strategic Planning Training held on 8, 24 and 29 April.

Operating Environment of the Network

The Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji was first established in 1993 and had 52 members in the Pacific region and internationally by 1995.

There was a full-time Coordinator who reported to the Executive Board at that time. The founding members comprised of researchers and activists from regional institutions, national development groups and women's organisations and the goals were to:

- Achieve recognition of the importance of Pacific women's activities in subsistence, artisan and commercial fisheries;
- Acquire access for Pacific women to fisheries development resources and training;
- Seek representation for women in fisheries decision making;
- Promote sustainable forms of development in the Pacific; and
- Engage in research and analysis on issues concerning fisheries and women.

Initial funding for the Network was provided by Canadian University Students Organisation (CUSO) and International Centre for Ocean Development (ICOD). Links were developed with the then Fiji Fisheries Department and women's groups in Fiji, Tonga and the Solomon Islands.

During the years when the Network was active from 1993-2001, activities included community workshops on public health issues involving fisheries dominated by women, marine awareness and post-harvest fisheries

skills, marine conservation and the publication of numerous training materials.

An important knowledge product was the publication *Fishing for Answers - Women and Fisheries in the Pacific Islands* (Matthews, 1995). The book comprised papers by leading Pacific women researchers and activists. The Network then slid into inactivity when the core members went abroad on training leave for professional development.

It was not until 2012 when a group of women, who were early founders, decided to reactivate the Network. The Network revived with the reappointment of members to the Board of Trustees and the Executive Board.

In 2015, the Network received grants from the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. These grants allowed in early 2016, the employment of a Coordinator and Finance Administration Officer. A volunteer with Australian Volunteers International was also contracted to assist in the development of the service.

The WiFN-Fiji has re-opened a bank account. In 2014, with support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the WiFN-Fiji completed a scoping study to review women engaged in the fisheries sector in Fiji.

The study helped identify gaps and opportunities that the Network could strengthen or support and the current plan has been guided by its recommendations. Much of the activities in 2016, focused on capacity building in financial literacy and business, gender and fisheries. In addition, a partnership was forged with the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) network conducted mud crab education and awareness workshops.

WiFN-Fiji also partnered with the Women Entrepreneurs and Business Council (WEBC) to conduct two trainings to help women improve their personal and household finances.

A total of 133 participants joined the training which was conducted in Tavua village in Ba Province and Sawakasa village in Tailevu Province. Consequently, Westpac Bank helped the women open bank accounts to enable them to better save, budget and manage their personal and/or household finances.

The WiFN-Fiji provided guidance to the Ministry of Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) on the gathering of sex-disaggregated data on the impact of Tropical Cyclone Winston on local fisheries-dependent communities to help guide rehabilitation and recovery efforts.

Membership

Membership can be expressed as a group, individual, organisation, institute, business, company or as a corporate body. Membership shall be open to all involved in or interested in supporting women engaged in subsistence and small-scale commercial fisheries, in related research, in advocacy, in policy-making and planning at local, national and regional levels, and to any other interested persons who subscribe to the purposes of the Network and fulfill the conditions of membership.

Membership application forms must be filled and submitted to the Network administrators; a subscription Fee is charged on an annual basis for every new membership received.

Depending on the membership category selected, the Network members have the opportunity to:

- share information that will contribute to the Network's objectives;
- represent WiFN-Fiji and attend and participate in meetings held locally;
- support the Network at project site level where appropriate;
- elect members of the Executive Board
- attend Annual General Meetings.

The WiFN-Fiji works alongside and in partnership with other Non Government Organisation (NGO), government ministries, national and regional agencies in deciding, designing and delivering its activities, with a focus on helping build an environmentally-sustainable, socially-appropriate and economically-viable fisheries sector in Fiji, in which the contribution and role of women in this sector is recognised and valued.

The organisation also has an interest in ensuring the sector is supported by an appropriate policy environment that takes the role of women into account.

The WiFN-Fiji office is located in 15 Ma'afu Street, Suva and is operated by the Secretariat consisting of the Network Coordinator, Project Officer and Finance and Administration Officer.

Current Status Of Women In Fisheries Engagement In Fiji

Women fishing activities continue to support subsistence and economic livelihoods (Veitayaki 2005, Tuara 2006, Fay-Sauni 2008, Verebalavu 2009). Women involved in coastal fisheries fall into three categories; full-time (producers - sellers, producers - buyers and sellers and buyers - sellers), seasonal and casual (on a need to basis) (Vereivalu, 2009).

Some of the findings from the research on The Role and Engagement of Women In Fisheries in Fiji carried out by Aliti Vunisea in 2014 includes;

- Women fishers predominantly fish in the coastal areas of Fiji. Fishing participation of women although still dominantly in the inshore areas has undergone significant changes with increased emphasis on marketing and distribution of products with selling and buying networks becoming more organized and women increasingly engaging not only as fishers but as middle sellers, buyers and increasingly involved in the development of value added products.
- Women are also engaging in areas previously only fished by men and with technological introduction men have started to take over some areas of fishing women previously dominated. Women's participation in the offshore fisheries sector have not changed much and contributing to the slow progress of women's involvement in the different fisheries sectors is the lack of data to assist women to be part of fisheries development and management initiatives.
- Women's participation in the Tuna Industry continue to dominantly be in the processing sector in PAFCO and the long line tuna shore based activities, Although women have contributed substantially to fisheries development and management in coastal communities, there has been little consistent data collected on women participation in fisheries and how their engagement have empowered and changed their social status.
- There has not been much documentation of women's involvement in export species from the inshore areas however women participate in the collection and in post-harvest activities relating to beche-de-mer, trochus and ornamental species.
- Sex disaggregated data is needed in these fishing sectors so small scale commercial activities that women are engaged in can be accurately enumerated and areas of their participation strengthened.

- Gaps and challenges faced by women fishers are primarily related to cultural and social norms and practices, which in often many cases limit women's progress in the fisheries sectors and places fisherwomen at a disadvantage where they have to depend on their menfolk when trying to access financial support and to be their voices in decision making relating to fisheries development and management. Another major gap is the lack of systematic research and collection of data to inform policy development on fisheries development especially as it relates to women participation in the sector.
 - To bridge the gender gap in fisheries participation in the offshore and inshore fisheries there is need for training and capacity building targeted especially for women fishers. Identification of key outlets, buyers and markets will ensure that women fishers have equal access to distribution and export opportunities. Opportunities to build the capacity of women fishers, to provide networking and communication prospects and to provide the avenue where women's concerns and needs can be raised need to be pursued. Entry points for expanding women in fisheries work need to be built into already existing networks and institutions.
 - A lot of the work described in this report fall under the informal sector and some under the unemployed and household unpaid categories (Narsey, 2007). Steps to accurately define women fishers work, to include women fishers in the enumerated sector and to classify unpaid household work under various classifications including self-employment, will help progress women fishers status. This will also assist in monitoring the shift in emphasis and changing participation of women in the different fisheries sectors. The shift in women's participation from the informal to the formal sector can then start to be addressed by the inclusion of women fishers in all aspects of fisheries training and capacity building. Because women already have established networks for buying and selling of marine products, effort should be made to maximize the use of these networks and formalize such mechanisms to enhance entrepreneurial activities.
- One of the key findings of the institutional mapping study is the lack of baseline data of women in the fisheries sector (Lagi, 2018).
- The baseline data will help to identify gaps and opportunities to assist women who have been marginalised in this sector and will also be critical in the advocacy for evidence-based policy reforms.
- The fundamental dependence of community-based management work on traditional systems, institutions and customary practices and norms mean that the institutional barriers that women face in decision making and other areas of public life in communities will continue to exist into the future unless steps are taken to identify entry points for women participation in decision making. (Aliti 2014).
- Advocacy must come from customary resource owners ownership of their marine resources and collaboration with stakeholders in intergrating traditional knowledge and modern conservation methods for better food security and enhance traditional ecological knowledge. (Waqainabete et al 2018).
- Legal and technical enabling mechanisms can be developed to further progress women's engagement in the different fisheries sector.
- This is achievable through policy intervention which requires collaboration between NGO's, CSO's, the Ministry of Fisheries and other relevant stakeholders.

2. ORGANISATIONAL DIRECTION

VISION

Women empowered, recognised, valued and participating in all aspects of sustainable fisheries

MISSION

We work through our membership to facilitate networks and partnerships to enable opportunities for women to be informed about all aspects of sustainable fisheries in Fiji and increase the meaningful participation of women in decision-making and management to improve livelihoods.

Operating Principles

The operating principles below underpin our organisation and our work in collaboration with our partners:

Empowerment of women to achieve economic and social justice;

Inclusivity of women, men and their families in fisheries and the WiFN-Fiji ;

Trustworthiness we are trusted by our members and partners;

Non-political we are not aligned with any political party or group;

Environmental sustainability is core in everything we do;

Integrity We expect high levels of integrity from our members, staff and those who work with us;

Accountability to our members, communities and donors;

Commitment to women in fisheries, our members, our work, our stakeholders and the environment and

Transparency we operate and conduct our activities in an open manner.

3. POLICY ENVIRONMENT

The plan is aligned with a number of key national, regional and international policies and programmes including:

- Key policy documents of the Ministry of Fisheries.
- The 2014 National Gender Policy, which focuses on Fiji's commitment to gender equality, social justice and sustainable development. The mission to "promote gender equity, equality, social justice and sustainable development through the promotion of 'active and visible gender mainstreaming in all sectors". The policy focuses on the women's human rights and gender mainstreaming across development planning and decision making processes within government. There is also a focus on addressing structural and social barriers that impede gender equality including review of relevant legislation and access to social justice systems.
- The 2015 Green Growth Framework for Fiji.
- Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals particularly Goal 1. No Poverty, Goal 2. Zero Hunger, Goal 3. Good Health and Well-Being, Goal 5. Gender Equality, Goal 6. Clean Water and Sanitation, Goal 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 10. Reduced Inequalities, Goal 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 12. Responsible Consumption and Production, Goal 13. Climate Action, Goal 14. Life below water.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality.
- The 2015 SPC A New Song for Coastal Fisheries: Pathways to change.
- Outcomes of the Regional workshop on the "Future of coastal/inshore fisheries management", 3–6 March 2015, Noumea, New Caledonia.

To avoid confusion, the word "fisheries" in this document shall be interpreted in the broadest sense and will include "aquaculture" and "mariculture", as well as coastal, offshore, and inland freshwater fisheries.

4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To achieve WiFN-Fiji's Vision and Mission, the following strategic priorities shall guide our work:

- **Priority Area 1:** Improve livelihoods and food security opportunities for women in fisheries.
- **Priority Area 2:** WiFN-Fiji recognised as a research hub, clearing-house of information, and repository for issues related to women in fisheries.
- **Priority Area 3:** Advocate for improved policy and policy implementation for greater gender equality in all aspects of fisheries; and
- **Priority Area 4:** Build a strong network and responsive organisational base that utilises the diverse knowledge, skills and experiences of its members.

Priority Area 1: Improve Livelihoods, Food Security and Opportunities for Women in Fisheries

Activities	Expected Outcomes	Outcome Indicators
Activity 1.1: Develop and deliver a mix of diversified projects that is responsive to and meets the changing needs of women in sustainable fisheries.	Women in the fisheries sector are have projects, funding and resources they need to achieve sustainable fisheries.	Existing women's fishery networks maximised and formalized in project areas
Activity 1.2: Facilitate connections between communities and supporting business enterprise women's groups, and markets.	Women connected to the market and receiving fair remuneration.	Number of effective partnerships and agreements made.
Activity 1.3: Facilitate capacity development and mentoring for women so that they can take part in decision-making forums.	Increased participation of women in leadership, management and decision-making at all levels in the fisheries sector.	Number of women attending training and implementing knowledge and skills gained. Number of women in decision-making roles at all levels in the fisheries sector.

Priority Area 2: Recognised as a Research Hub, Clearing-House of Information, and Repository for Issues Related to Women in Fisheries

Activities	Expected Outcomes	Outcome Indicators
Activity 2.1: Provide an evidence and information base for management, policy development and advocacy efforts.	Research contributes to sustainable fisheries, livelihoods and food security, and effective national policy and its implementation.	All research aligned with WiFN-Fiji's Mission and Strategic Priorities and Objectives. Number and range of sustainable fisheries related studies. Recognised as a credible source of advice, information and research on women in fisheries issues. Research results disseminated widely to influence management, policy and increased knowledge across the fisheries

Priority Area 3: Advocate for improved Policy Implementation for Greater Gender Equality in all Aspects of Fisheries

Activities	Expected Outcomes	Outcome Indicators
Activity 3.1: Develop and progressively implement an advocacy plan to ensure the mainstreaming of gender in policy and implementation at all levels of fisheries.	Advocacy stronger with more powerful relationships and alliances formed through increased levels of collaboration resulting changes in policy and policy implementation.	Plan developed that defines advocacy goals and priorities Stronger, more powerful mutually beneficial relationships, collaboration and alliances with other organisations and individuals who support or participate in WiFN-Fiji's work (including strengthen linkages with women's groups in areas of operation) as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequency of meeting; • the number of active relationships; • meetings and relationships mapped and tracked; and • increase in the number of individuals who can be counted on for sustained advocacy or action on an issue.
Activity 3.2: Respond to fishery related issues raised by women at a local level and support their advocacy efforts.		Strengthened linkages with women's groups in areas of operation. Number of issues raised and interventions identified to address them.

Priority Area 4: Build a Strong Network and Responsive Organisational Base

Activities	Expected Outcomes	Outcome Indicators
Activity 4.1: Increase membership and support to members.	WiFN-Fiji as a strong, recognised, well-connected organisation	Number of scientists and analysts as members, producing research relevant to women in fisheries.
Activity 4.2: Maintain ongoing engagement with marine scientists and analysts.	Marine scientists and analysts supportive and informed of WiFN-Fiji's goals.	Number of scientists and analysts as members, producing research relevant to women in fisheries.

Priority Area 4: Build a Strong Network and Responsive Organisational Base

Activities	Expected Outcomes	Outcome Indicators
Activity 4.3: Increase awareness of WiFN-Fiji among key constituencies.	WiFN-Fiji trusted, recognised and consulted regularly by key government agencies, NGOs and the private sector. Improved capacity to communicate and promote advocacy messages.	Communication strategy developed and various forms of media used to disseminate information about the WiFN-Fiji's work and the women it supports in the fisheries sector. Quantity and/or quality of coverage generated in print Mutually-beneficial relationships built with other organizations or individuals who support or participate in WiFN-Fiji's goals. Increase in the number of individuals who can be counted on for sustained advocacy or action on women in fisheries.
Activity 4.4: Develop a stable, growing and diversified funding base	WiFN-Fiji is financially sustainable in order to allow the continuity of the organisation and programmes.	Increased revenue generated from membership fees. Management systems developed and followed. Funds secured from at least two donors who have a long- term interest in supporting the Network.
Activity 4.5: Recruit and retain committed, knowledgeable, skilled and competent personnel (Trustees, Executive Committee, staff, and volunteers)	Staff have the knowledge, skills and networks to do their jobs effectively and efficiently	Knowledgeable, skilled and experienced staff recruited and retained Effective team at Executive Committee and Trustees level providing governance and oversight Reliable consultants willing to continue to work with the organisation A range of older and younger local volunteers involved.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

The planning process has identified risks to WiFN-Fiji and its work at three levels externally and internally.

i	Level 1: Macro-environment
ii	Level 2: Micro-environment
iii	Level 3: Internal to the organisation

MACRO - ENVIRONMENT RISKS		
Potential Risks	Risk Management	Risk Rating
Changing nature of fisheries due to changing legislation, pollution, overfishing, climate change impacts, natural disasters, coastal development, consumer demands and market trends.	Research conducted on trends relating to women in fisheries over time, and shared with decision-makers.	High
Potential political changes resulting in refocused fisheries policies.	Executive Committee, Coordinator and staff have the knowledge, skills and experience to monitor changes and respond accordingly.	Medium
Conflicting policies and regulations among different agencies.	WiFN-Fiji has a strong advocacy role to highlight and assist to resolve issues affecting women in fisheries.	High

MICRO - ENVIRONMENT RISKS		
Potential Risks	Risk Management	Risk Rating
Lack of partnership support towards the network's activities	A collaborative and consultative approach with partners will help forge and cement strong partnerships.	Low
Lack of resources (capacity and funds) to maintain the sustainability of the organisation over time.	Organisation maintains a diverse funding base, and actively recruits skilled, knowledgeable and competent staff and volunteers. Actively cultivating donors who have a long-term interest in supporting the Network.	Low
Changing donor priorities.	Increased revenue generated from membership fees.	Medium
	Funds secured from at least two donors who have a long-term interest in supporting the network	
	WiFN-Fiji develops strong partnerships with donors, who are willing to listen and be guided by the organisation's advice on funding priorities.	
	Conflicts of interest avoided in securing funds.	
Women in communities not interested in WiFN-Fiji, its programmes and activities	Maintain relationships with government agencies and other organisations working with communities.	High
	Maintain focus on strengthening linkages developed with women's groups in areas where WiFN-Fiji carries out activities.	
	Women in communities actively involved in WiFN-Fiji at all levels with relevant information translated into local vernacular.	

MICRO - ENVIRONMENT RISKS		
Potential Risks	Risk Management	Risk Rating
Women in communities not interested in WiFN-Fiji , its programmes and activities	Organise relevant, diverse activities in communities to meet specific needs.	High
	Work with women in local areas where WiFN-Fiji is active to support their advocacy on particular issues affecting them.	
Duplication from other NGOs or government	Strategic alliances formed and maintained with partner organisations.	Low

INTERNAL RISKS		
Potential Risks	Risk Management	Risk Rating
Inability to recruit and retain committed, skilled and experienced Staff	Executive Committee available and skilled to fill gaps on a temporary basis.	Medium
	Recruit individuals and organizations with specialized skills, such as media strategy, web strategy, research, or grassroots organising.	
	A range of volunteers and consultants involved in the organisation.	
	Remuneration to attract appropriate staff	
Coordinator does not follow agreed organisational strategy and priorities.	Coordinator provides regular reports to Executive Committee, which meet regularly to review organisational progress.	Low
Membership drops away and/ or members are disinterested in supporting the organisation	Regular activities scheduled for members and supporters.	Medium
	Members actively involved in the organisation.	
A staff member does not follow internal organisational policies or does not comply with regulation	Human resource policies developed and followed.	Low
	Build a strong management system for accountability, including a strong management system for accountability.	
Lack of internal staff control.	Develop a communication strategy and progressively implement it to include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website, • Facebook, • Twitter, • e-Newsletter, • mainstream media 	Low
WiFN-Fiji not known to relevant agencies and decision makers.	Links built and maintained with key government agencies especially, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and Ministry of iTaukei Affairs (at all levels).	Medium

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