



Pacific handbook for human rights, gender equity and social inclusion in tuna industries



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MODULE 5
HR and GESI in
onshore processing



Pacific handbook for

human rights, gender equity and social inclusion

in tuna industries

Module 5: HR and GESI
in onshore processing

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Noumea, New Caledonia, 2023

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Original text: English

Reference Note

This handbook has been adapted from the Pacific Handbook for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture, with several of the authors involved in both pieces of work. Some of the text and graphics from the Coastal Handbook have been adapted for use in the Tuna Handbook.

Disclaimer

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the Government of Sweden. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Pacific Community (SPC) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the Government of Sweden.

This publication should be cited as:

Barclay K., Mauli S. 2023. Module 5: HR and GESI in onshore processing. In: Barclay K., Vunisea A., Streeter M., Mauli S. and Makhoul N. (eds). Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in tuna industries. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 18 p.

Prepared for publication at SPC's Noumea headquarters, B.P. D5, 98848 Noumea Cedex, New Caledonia, 2023

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Key points

Onshore processing offers a valuable source of work in Pacific Island countries and territories, much of it for women and some of it in rural areas. Nevertheless, there are some areas for improvement in terms of HR and GESI for people working in seafood value chains.¹ In Pacific tuna processing some of the main areas to improve include the following.

■ Equal opportunity and social inclusion:

- Onshore processing is female-intensive, in that women make up the bulk of the workforce, but most leadership and higher paid roles are held by men.
- The juggle of paid work and family responsibilities can place unrealistically heavy expectations on women. This can be addressed by companies, families and communities.
- In some countries and companies the divide between expatriate managers and local employees is still discriminatory. For example, there may be few locals in management roles.

■ Housing: Work is needed to ensure workers' housing is safe and affordable.

■ Transport: Work is needed to ensure there is safe, affordable and timely transport to and from work.

■ Pay: Work is needed to ensure workers are able to live with dignity on their wages, which is about the amounts paid and workers' financial literacy.

■ Unions: Organisations representing labour, such as trade unions, face obstacles from governments and from companies.

Tuna processing factories in Fiji, American Samoa, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Kiribati have long provided jobs and career opportunities for women. Some of these are in and outside the major cities where cash work for women is scarce, so these employment opportunities are important. Having jobs helps with social inclusion because women can better integrate themselves and their families into society with access to financial services from banks, they become eligible for loans, and they gain access to social and other support networks and formal and informal training through their workplaces. Women doing paid work are better able to support family needs such as children's education and fulfil other social obligations that require financial contributions, such as for funerals and church fundraising. Pacific Island countries and territories are undergoing a transition, relying less on traditional forms of in-kind goods and service exchanges and heavily subsistence oriented lifestyles towards more cash-based lifestyles, so there is a growing need for cash-earning jobs to pay for goods and services. Many women around the region, and their families, have benefited from work in fish processing, accounting, administrative services, quality control and management.

Several studies over the years have identified a range of issues in the tuna processing sector in the Pacific Islands region relating to gender equality and human rights.² A key point to note is that for Pacific Island people, working for cash on an offshore fishing vessel or in a processing facility is a huge social and cultural shift for most of the workforce. Many will be the first generation in their family to have waged employment. The social rules are very different from the village where they have lived previously. Adjusting to modern life gives rise to a range of social problems. When women take up waged work there are adjustments in their family responsibilities. Women may end up working a 'double shift' or 'double burden' of paid work plus family work, leading to exhaustion. Men may take up some of women's family work to share the load, but men rarely share family work equally anywhere in the world. With this shift in women's responsibilities, and with men taking on roles conventionally taken by women, awareness work and support projects should also target husbands and other family members.

Some of the health problems identified for tuna factory workers in early studies from the 1980s included very hot working conditions on the processing lines and circulatory problems or joint pain from standing for long periods.³ These have improved over time, in part because of HACCP⁴ food safety standards. For key markets such as Europe, companies must ensure the workers touching the fish don't sweat on the fish, so air conditioning is now the norm on the processing lines. Workers touching the fish must also be free of disease, so many companies have programmes for health testing, vaccinations and other treatments. Other workplace health aspects have also improved over time. PAFCO at Levuka in Fiji now has three regulated breaks per shift, and workers who work standing at processing lines are provided with benches

1 Finkbeiner, E. M., Fitzpatrick, J., & Yadao-Evans, W. (2021). A call for protection of women's rights and economic, social, cultural (ESC) rights in seafood value chains. *Marine Policy*, 128(March), 104482. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104482>

2 Tuara Demmke, P. (2006). Gender issues in the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry (DEVFISH Project). Honiara, Solomon Islands: Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Retrieved from [https://www.ffa.int/system/files/Gender issues in P. I. Tuna Industries 1_0.pdf](https://www.ffa.int/system/files/Gender%20issues%20in%20P.I.%20Tuna%20Industries%201_0.pdf); Sullivan, N., Ram-Bidesi, V., Diffey, S., & Gillett, R. (2008). Gender Issues in Tuna Fisheries: Case Studies in Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Kiribati. Honiara, Solomon Islands: Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Pacific Community (SPC); Emberson-Bain, A. (1994). Sustainable development or malignant growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island women. Suva, Fiji: Marama Publications.

3 Emberson-Bain, A. (1994). Sustainable development or malignant growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island women. Suva, Fiji: Marama Publications; Meltzoff, S. K., & Lipuma, E. S. (1983). A Japanese fishing joint venture: worker experience and national development in the Solomon Islands. Manila: International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM).

4 HACCP – Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point – is a quality control system for food safety in food production and processing facilities.

for taking additional five-minute breaks to sit down. SolTuna at Noro in Solomon Islands has also made similar changes that make working conditions more comfortable in the factory. At SolTuna the meals provided for employees mid-shift are more nutritious than they were in earlier decades. Transport for workers had previously been in the back of open trucks, now they have buses, meaning workers are protected from the weather during their commute.

Turnover and absenteeism

One of the issues with the tuna processing sector in the Pacific Islands region is that of high rates of staff turnover and absenteeism, which reduces productivity.⁵ Using gender equity and human rights (GESI and HR) 'lenses' we can understand more about the social impacts of tuna factory work to the benefit of companies and employees. For example, high rates of absenteeism have been an issue for tuna processing factories throughout the Pacific, but no one had taken an in-depth look at the causes of the problem in terms of gender relations. Efforts with full attendance bonuses or flexible rosters had limited success in improving absenteeism. The case study below of a gender lens human resources study into absenteeism at SolTuna by gender specialists from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) resulted in benefits for employees, their families, and the company in terms of less absenteeism and happier, more loyal workers.

The important thing to note about this case study is that changes to improve working conditions do not always mean an additional cost to companies. Companies with happier workforces can be more profitable than companies with unhappy workforces!

Case study – improving productivity through improving working conditions at SolTuna



The conventional wisdom has been that tuna processing companies in the Pacific cannot significantly improve wages or working conditions because the margins in the industry are very low⁶. However, since 2015, managers at SolTuna in Solomon Islands, working with gender specialists from International Finance Corporation (IFC), have found that improving conditions has not been a cost – but an investment that improved productivity.

IFC's gender diagnostic found employees were running out of money before the end of the pay cycle and were taking time off work for market activities to raise money for food. Many of these employees were the first generation in their family living on a cash income rather than from gardening and fishing and so did not have experience in managing a household cash budget. Some wage earners also face demands from relatives to share their income. Financial literacy training (FLT) improved their capacity to live on cash wages, and even to save for housing and other improvements in their lives. The programme took a culturally embedded approach.

In Solomon Islands, families and communities have 'demand sharing', where relatives might appropriate cash income, making it difficult to use cash strategically. The FLT was therefore based on household planning of all income and discussing with family members the intended uses for income, reaching agreement on how much should go to school costs, food, items for the house, and recreation. In this way it is still sharing but with willing consent and planning. One worker said at first her husband resisted the budget and ripped it up, but after time he appreciated the benefits of saving and started helping.

Overall absenteeism dropped by 4%, and by 6% for the training cohort after implementing the FLT. Once the SolTuna management saw these benefits they looked for other changes they could make, using the IFC gender advisory. This resulted in many programmes, including grievance policies and training for managers in handling grievances, discipline procedures for harassment and bullying, and anonymous suggestion boxes. The Human Resources department reviews the boxes monthly, and publishes responses to all the suggestions in a newsletter. In the past, problems could only be reported through supervisors, which was hierarchical and possibly discouraged reporting.

5 Tuara Demmke, P. (2006). Gender issues in the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry (DEVFISH Project). Honiara, Solomon Islands: Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Retrieved from [https://www.ffa.int/system/files/Gender issues in P.I. Tuna Industries 1_0.pdf](https://www.ffa.int/system/files/Gender%20issues%20in%20P.I.%20Tuna%20Industries%200.pdf); Barclay, K., Mauli, S., & Payne, A. M. (2015). Gleaner, Fisher, Processor, Trader: Toward Gender-Equitable Fisheries Management in Solomon Islands. Sydney. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/467721468187800125/pdf/98279-WP-P146728-Box385353B-PUBLIC-ACS.pdf>; Barclay, K., & Cartwright, I. (2007). Capturing wealth from tuna: case studies from the Pacific (pp. xiv, 268 p.). Canberra, Australia: ANU Press. There are reports that some companies create high turnover by dismissing staff and rehiring them so as to avoid having to pay benefits, such as long service leave, that accrue to staff who work long term.

6 Barclay, Kate, & Cartwright, I. (2008). Capturing wealth from tuna: case studies from the Pacific. In *Capturing the Wealth From Tuna: case studies from the Pacific*. https://doi.org/10.26530/oaopen_458838.



IFC specialists worked with SolTuna managers on creating safe workplaces, and leadership training for women. According to management, the Respectful Workplaces programme was rolled out to all their employees and took measures against violators, both male and female, which made employees feel safer and more confident in the workplace. The benefits were visible in both predominantly male environments like Engineering, and predominantly female environments like Production. Employees were able to concentrate on their work rather than worrying about who will harass them. Managers say the women in the leadership programme led them to realise that men needed training as well, so they engaged a consultant to do leadership training for all the superintendents and supervisors across departments. The outcome was more respectful behaviour towards one another and towards women in leadership positions. Management and employees talk of a 'SolTuna wantok' culture in which everyone should be treated as important, and be included and respected. The benefits of the initiatives, therefore, go beyond women to all employees. Managers say there have been clear improvements to productivity over the period since the initiatives started, but it is hard to clearly say which initiatives have had most impact, since there have been many different initiatives taking place at the same time.

Salaries/wages are an important factor. In recent years SolTuna has seen three major changes to pay with corresponding increases in productivity: (1) a salary restructure in 2021 which brought responsibility in line with pay, with an overall positive effect especially on the mid-level plant workers; (2) one year the top third of earners in the company gave up their annual salary increase so that the line workers could have a bigger increase; and (3) the national minimum wage was increased. Management thought the minimum wage increase was too much and the company would have a hard time absorbing the cost, but the increase in productivity more than covered the added payroll costs.

There is no longer a formal engagement with IFC but SolTuna managers remain in contact with the gender specialists, calling them to brainstorm ideas for new schemes. SolTuna managers as well as external stakeholders have noticed that these initiatives have improved the attitude or 'mood' of staff. Reduced absenteeism is one indicator of the benefits of a more inclusive work culture, in which employees feel valued. In the words of a long-term Noro resident government employee – 'now they [SolTuna] are looking more into satisfying their workers.'

The SolTuna results have been so positive that the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) is supporting similar work with a 'gender lens' on labour issues for other tuna processing companies in the Pacific. This approach involves seeing where there are high rates of absenteeism, looking at whether it is higher among some groups than others, and why. In groups with lower absenteeism, what makes them turn up to work? Is it a sense of being in a team, or a sense of responsibility? Is it to do with timing or costs of transport to and from work, or fines for turning up late? Do childcare problems contribute? Those insights could form the basis of solutions for groups with high absenteeism.

Culture and gender norms in tuna processing work

The reasons behind high rates of turnover and absenteeism among women processing workers are heavily influenced by gender norms, such as expectations that women are responsible for domestic duties and child care even if they also work outside the home. Women who work in canneries are often expected within their families to also do all cooking, cleaning and caring jobs for the family. The prevalent norm of living in extended families means the expectations of women as caregivers may extend not only to children but also to ageing parents, grandparents, in-laws and terminally ill relatives. The social norm that women continue to do all this when they are working full time outside the home means women have a 'double burden' or 'double shift' of paid work plus family work. The norm that men do not care for children or disabled people or do housework is relevant here – because when women are working outside the home it is important for families that fathers and husbands share the caring work, cleaning and preparation of food. The tools at the end of this module – a time-use survey, and a gender division of labour tool – can help identify how gender norms and roles influence the work women and men do.

What are gender norms, or social norms about gender?

Social norms are shared ideals about how people should behave. Gender norms are the accepted attributes and characteristics of being a woman or a man (ideas of how men and women should be and act). They change over time (think of the 1960s compared to today), and they also vary across cultural groups (think of Fiji compared to Palau). These norms are taught to children from early in life as they grow up, so they become part of our accepted behaviours.

Gender role expectations can sometimes lead to violence if men believe that their wives are neglecting their domestic duties, or are undermining men's roles. As women shift from conventional gender roles to new ones in tuna factories it is important to seek expertise from gender and development specialists and community elders who can help navigate change in a culturally acceptable way, to build an enabling environment, and avoid conflict turning into violence.

Cultural context also affects the choices people make in relation to tuna processing work. For example, in PNG, tuna processing companies say they have a problem with employees not wanting to work more than a few weeks or months at a time. The companies believe this is because people have other community priorities, and are committed to multiple income sources including agriculture, so they prefer not to work long term in tuna processing. Some stakeholders therefore see local culture as an obstacle to business, and that culture must change for business to succeed. However, we can take a different perspective. It should be possible to accommodate cultural obligations without those obligations draining productivity, or as being seen as a 'bad thing' by management, and being treated in a way that causes unrest with staff. For example, there is flexibility in some companies' rostering, so that families or villagers supply a certain number of people each day, rather than each individual having to turn up to work, so that people can manage cultural obligations and companies still have sufficient staff to run a shift. However, there may be cases when an important person dies and whole communities may have to stay home. If companies try to oppose this, they are unlikely to succeed, with managers being frustrated and employees feeling resentful. Instead, companies could call a holiday, since the staff won't come anyway, this way they can avoid unrest with staff and build loyalty. Another example, SolTuna made a virtue of the cultural diversity that exists in Solomon Islands by inventing 'SolTuna wantok' culture. Could other Pacific tuna companies build on local culture instead of seeing culture as an obstacle to business?

The choices people make about working in tuna factories are also affected by economic considerations, rather than only gender or culture. For low income Papua New Guineans having multiple income streams including agriculture and cash work is an economically rational strategy, in case any one of those income sources collapses. Marshallese people have residency and work rights in the USA. Experienced tuna factory employees in RMI often move to places such as Arkansas to use skills learned in tuna factories in higher paid work in chicken factories.

Childcare

Since women are often the primary caregivers for children, childcare is very important for women who work outside the home and have young children. Most childcare in the Pacific is informal, it can be unpaid and provided by family members such as grandparents or aunts, who may live in with the family, sharing their home and food, or children may be sent to live with relatives in the village. Childcare can also be from a domestic worker 'house girl/boy', or it can be in a formal childcare centre. For women living away from family networks and earning a low income it can be difficult to afford even informal family-based childcare, because they can't afford to feed and house another person. A lack of affordable childcare is a key factor causing women to leave work in tuna processing.⁷

⁷ Barclay K., Mauli S. & Payne A. M. (2015). Gleaner, fisher, processor, trader: Toward gender-equitable fisheries management in Solomon Islands. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/467721468187800125/pdf/98279-WP-P146728-Box385353B-PUBLIC-ACS.pdf>



Lack of childcare convenient to workplaces makes breastfeeding difficult. There is a role for governments to use taxation revenue to support the 'social good' of enabling working mothers to continue breastfeeding by developing suitable childcare facilities near tuna processing facilities. The Marshall Islands loining plant has no childcare services. PAFCO in Fiji has a day care centre with teachers for full-day sessions, but is for three- to five-year-olds, not breastfeeding infants. In March 2022 a new childcare centre for babies up to three years old is due to open near the SolTuna factory.

'Backlash' against women in paid work – PAFCO childcare example

Something that often happens when there is a change in women's roles is that people opposed to change find something wrong with the new situation to complain about. This is called 'backlash'. Often there is no factual basis to the complaints, but people spread them anyway, like 'fake news', as a way to oppose change in women's roles. Women PAFCO workers using the childcare centre in the 1990s experienced an example of backlash. A rumour spread that women using the childcare centre during their work shift, could then ask women relatives to look after their children in the evening, so the women workers could go out to bars. Childcare was described as a bad thing because it led to women going out drinking.⁸ According to stakeholder interviews for this handbook, women working at the factory have always mostly used their income for family expenses and did not have enough spare cash for entertainment such as drinking in bars. So it seems that the rumour was not based on good evidence. Also, this rumour shows a sexist 'double standard'. Men, who are usually not expected to be the main caregiver for children, could always rely on women relatives to look after children in the evenings if men wanted to go out for entertainment. The rumour implies it is OK for men to do this, but not OK for women.

Housing and transport to work

Many tuna processing facilities in the Pacific Islands region are affected by a wider problem of poor housing. Overcrowding and a lack of clean water and adequate showers and toilets can cause health problems that increase absenteeism. Noro in Solomon Islands has long struggled with housing problems⁹ and stakeholders say housing is still poor quality and overcrowded. As of 2021 there were plans to develop a SolTuna Village to improve housing.

Lack of frequent public transport can lengthen the working day by hours. Public transport may be expensive relative to wages. Public transport can also be unsafe for women because of sexual harassment or violence, especially for women whose shifts mean they travel during the dark. PAFCO in Fiji provides transport for its workers between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. as there is no regular public transport during these hours, and shift workers need to travel then. SolTuna runs buses between the residential area of Noro and the factory.

Household divisions of labour and gender-based violence

Women experience high levels of violence in much of the Pacific Islands region, and managers of tuna processing facilities note it is one of many factors that contribute to absenteeism and low productivity. We tend to think of domestic violence as private, and not something to be raised to do with work, but managers in tuna companies are concerned about the impact of domestic violence on their employees. Interviewees from SolTuna (Solomon Islands) and PAFCO (Fiji) both raised domestic violence as something the companies are working on as a human resources issue.

In many Pacific cultures it is common for men to make decisions on how money is spent because it is considered (by women and men) a man's role or right as head of household. In some cases, men may take women family members' pay to spend it on alcohol, kava or other items for their own amusement. Women who try to keep their pay may be beaten or punished in other ways, for example, emotional violence through shaming or bullying, or financial violence by depriving the family of money to meet their needs. Families and communities need to work on sharing family work among men and women, on mutual consensual decision-making around household income, as well as the unequal power relations that can lead to violence in gender relations. These matters could also be addressed in schooling. For example, Fiji has material about traditional gender roles in the school curriculum, and could expand this to cover what happens as more women take up full-time paid work outside the home. The SolTuna example above shows how culturally sensitive financial literacy training with families of factory workers can be an effective tool in helping families adjust positively to the social change of women working for cash.

⁸ Emberson-Bain A. (1994). Sustainable development or malignant growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island women. Suva, Fiji: Marama Publications.

⁹ Barclay K. (2008). A Japanese Joint Venture in the Pacific: Foreign Bodies in Tinned Tuna. London: Routledge; Barclay, Kate, Mauli, S., & Payne, A. M. (2015). Gleaner, fisher, processor, trader: Toward gender-equitable fisheries management in Solomon Islands. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/467721468187800125/pdf/98279-WP-P146728-Box385353B-PUBLIC-ACS.pdf>.

Gender roles and norms about male dominance and the social acceptance of violence as part of family life is part of the problem. It is common for both women and men to feel it is appropriate for men to use violence against their wives in some circumstances, especially in rural areas where many cannery workers come from. Norms about the roles of men and women and violence as part of gender relations are not something one group can address alone. This is something for families, communities, churches, elders and government to deal with, as well as tuna companies.

Many PAFCO (Fiji) workers have husbands who do not have paid work, but who still demand their wives do all the housework before they go to work. Women were coming to work late. PAFCO shifted the starting time and the HR Manager went to Provincial Council meetings to talk about the issue. She felt that initially her presentations were merely tolerated but over time she felt the message of husbands needing to do their part to contribute to family chores started to be heard. The company believes that instances of domestic abuse and violence in the homes of female workers who work overtime are decreasing. The HR Manager has continued to be invited to present at community Tikina meetings. This local platform for presenting concerns and allowing women's voices to be heard seems to be one fruitful method for Levuka and the PAFCO workforce.

Services for gender-based violence in Noro, Solomon Islands

In Noro there are two services for women experiencing violence, the Family Support Centre and SAFENet. SolTuna and the tuna fishing company NFD are stakeholders for both organisations. People visit every day, from Noro and surrounding communities. Some are badly hurt. It is run on a voluntary basis and the work is risky because perpetrators may be angry and violent. Clients may be given shelter housing for at most one week. Resources are tight, it is expensive to provide housing and food for women and children. The gender-based violence (GBV) services work with lawyers. One perpetrator from a tuna company was imprisoned in 2021. In addition to working with the tuna companies, the GBV services liaise with the town council, churches, civil society organisations, the Western Council of Women, police, and health services.

SolTuna managers have been working since 2019 to support employees experiencing domestic violence. This has involved a policy on domestic violence and a safe work place. It has taken much effort over several years for the Human Resources Department to make much progress on this issue because people are not comfortable to admit when violence is affecting them, nor to seek support. If a manager sees an employee with a black eye, they ask what happened, but people are reluctant to say. Managers might call the husband to talk about it. They refer staff to the Family Support Centre.

Government services to help improve HR and GESI in tuna processing

Matters such as housing, sanitation, childcare, transport and services for GBV are not solely the responsibility of tuna companies. These are also government responsibilities. Tuna fishing access fees bring in a significant amount of revenue to governments, and quite a lot of tax is paid by tuna processing operations, through payroll tax even if corporate taxes are low. Some of this could be used to invest in government services that help improve HR and GESI for processing workers. Donor assistance to Pacific Island countries and territories can also be useful. Australian Government assistance is being used to help fund the childcare centre for SolTuna staff in Noro, Solomon Islands. Governments can also encourage services to improve HR and GESI for tuna factory workers through regulatory frameworks and incentives.

Wages

Tuna processing work, like entry-level crew work on fishing vessels, pays very low wages. In human rights terms the minimum amount workers should be paid is a 'living wage'. In many countries there is a 'minimum wage' set by government; this is not the same as a living wage. The minimum wage is often lower than a living wage. The low wages paid to tuna processing workers also cause high turnover and absenteeism.



Definition: living wage

A living wage is the amount of money received by a worker to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and their family. Elements of a decent standard of living include access to food, water, housing, education, health care, transportation, clothing, and other essential needs, including provision for unexpected events.¹⁰

The wages paid by tuna processing companies vary across Pacific Island countries and territories, set by norms and minimum pay regulations in each state. According to stakeholders in Cook Islands, the processing plant workers are paid NZD 8.50 (USD 5.90) per hour. In Solomon Islands the minimum wage was set in 2019 at SBD 8 (USD 1) per hour, which is around the same as the minimum wage in PNG. There are various benefits that can increase this, such as bonuses for full attendance for a month (paid by SolTuna), or meal or transport allowances. However, some companies take the costs of company-provided meals and transport out of wages.

In future it will be easier to see GESI trends in salaries and wages due to a new annual pay audit being conducted by FFA. The Pay Audits will reveal gender pay inequities. The first pay audit covered only the industrial tuna companies. The second pay audit also included FFA and the Pacific Community. In future years it is hoped to include also the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). National fisheries agencies in member countries have also been invited to be included. The reports will cover the tuna sector as a whole, and subsectors and each participating organisation will get their own private detailed report showing the findings regarding gender gaps and what can be done to address these.

Case study: tuna factory work and a living wage¹¹



The low wages paid to tuna processing workers are in many cases not a 'living wage', in that employees cannot cover costs of housing, food, education, transport, clothing and so on. The case of financial literacy training at SolTuna shows that careful family budgeting can help turn tuna processing wages into a living wage. Most companies offer some benefits to employees that supplement wages. For example, SolTuna offers free transport to and from work, one free nutritionally balanced meal per work day, a school fee subsidy for up to four children from kindergarten to the end of high school, opportunities for training, company credit schemes, superannuation, free medical services via the company clinic, subsidised accommodation and health insurance for senior staff; meanwhile a childcare facility is being built. The low wages paid to tuna processing workers give rise to interesting patterns of employment among women working at tuna processing facilities in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. In both places women who have access to land for gardening or access to fish can make more money selling food at markets than by working at the factories. Many women start working at the tuna processing facility when they are young and want to try something different from village life, then leave when they have children and want more flexibility in income opportunities. Women who stay working on the processing lines may prefer working for the company to village life. Other women may stay working in tuna because they are not able to do market work – they may not have access to land for growing food, or not have family members catching fish they can cook and sell.

¹⁰ Global Living Wage Coalition (<https://www.globallivingwage.org/about/what-is-a-living-wage/>)

¹¹ Barclay, K. (2012). Social impacts. In Blomeyer & Sanz (Ed.), Application of the system of derogation to the rules of origin of fisheries products in Papua New Guinea and Fiji (p. 254). Brussels: European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies; Havice, E., & Reed, K. (2012). Fishing for Development? Tuna Resource Access and Industrial Change in Papua New Guinea. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 12(2–3), 413–435. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2011.00351.x>; Campbell, H. F. (2008). The shadow-price of labour and employment benefits in a developing economy. *Australian Economic Papers*, 47(4), 311–319. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8454.2008.00351.x>; Barclay, K., Mauli, S., & Payne, A. M. (2015). Gleaner, Fisher, Processor, Trader: Toward Gender-Equitable Fisheries Management in Solomon Islands. Sydney. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/467721468187800125/pdf/98279-WP-P146728-Box385353B-PUBLIC-ACS.pdf>; Pacific Women. (2019). Facing gender inequality head-on helps SolTuna succeed - Pacific women shaping Pacific development. Suva, Fiji: Pacific Women. Retrieved from <https://pacificwomen.org/news/facing-gender-inequality-head-on-helps-SolTuna-succeed>

Sex-segregation in processing work

Mainly women are employed at tuna processing plants on the lines 'cleaning' cooked fish ready for it to be canned. In the early decades of Solomon Taiyo (now SolTuna), only men worked on the cannery lines, but when the company opened the Noro factory in 1990 they shifted to a female workforce.¹² For gender equity these roles should also be open to men, but the authors are not aware of a push to increase numbers of men working on fish cleaning lines. Women have also long been employed in office administrator roles. Other kinds of roles, such as driving vehicles, operating machinery, and the roles of mechanics, electricians, carpenters and plumbers have conventionally been done by men.

In recent years many of the tuna processing companies have opened up opportunities for women to do conventionally male roles. In 2012 RD Tuna in Madang (PNG) was employing women as forklift drivers, finding that they had fewer accidents than men drivers.¹³ From 2015 SolTuna opened up equal opportunities in roles such as forklift drivers, plumbers, mechanics, carpenters and drivers.¹⁴ SolTuna also experimented in having women operate the machines in the cannery. Previously women worked mainly on the cleaning lines, while the machines used to cook the fish, move the fish along the lines and handle the cans were run by men. SolTuna found that having women also involved in running the machines 'helped the atmosphere in the work space'. The Noro-based tuna fishing company NFD employs women in their offloading crews and in the cold storage spaces. In the PAFCO tuna processing plant in Fiji, women have also been encouraged to join male-dominated technical spaces as electricians, welders, refrigeration and air conditioning technicians, forklift operators, and so on. Most of these are the younger generation of workers. PAFCO management says they prefer women in these positions as they take better care of company equipment, causing less damage.

Case study: Golden Ocean Company Ltd., Fiji



Golden Ocean operates in Suva with factories that are HACCP certified and have passed the strict food safety requirements for export to the EU. They process yellowfin and albacore tuna, swordfish, mahimahi, wahoo, marlin and sailfish and have exported to many parts of the world, as well as selling to local markets for high-end fish, such as for restaurants and hotels. During COVID their operations reduced in scale, because containment areas and port restrictions put in place by the government meant workers could not get to workplaces. Also hotels and restaurants closed, so demand was reduced. Golden Ocean was less hard hit than the Fijian fishing companies that relied on airfreight for fresh tuna exports, since the air freight flights disappeared when the borders closed. For example, Solander, which has 12 vessels, had only one of these operating during the worst period of COVID restriction. Golden Ocean, along with Hangton and others, has vessels with freezing capacity, so could continue exporting via freezer containers on ships. Golden Ocean also turned to new outlets, including local supermarkets, and remained open throughout the pandemic period.

Golden Ocean's processing factory workers are 90% women, around 40 to 50 in total. Administration staff are 50% women (30 to 40), doing finances and other administration. Women working in the plant are provided with cold-weather gear to work in the freezer storage (socks, overalls, jackets, boots). The company has monthly training sessions on handling the machines and on food quality.

12 Barclay, Kate, & Cartwright, I. (2008). Capturing wealth from tuna: case studies from the Pacific. https://doi.org/10.26530/oapen_458838

13 Barclay, Kate. (2012). Social impacts. In Blomeyer & Sanz (Ed.), Application of the system of derogation to the rules of origin of fisheries products in Papua New Guinea and Fiji (p. 254). European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies.

14 International Finance Corporation. (2019). Investing in Fisheries and People in Solomon Islands. In International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group (pp. 1–2). International Finance Corporation (IFC), World Bank Group. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/news_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/news+and+events/news/investing+in+fisheries+and+people+in+solomon+islands; International Finance Corporation. (2016). Case study: SolTuna – tuna processing, Solomon Islands. International Finance Corporation (IFC), World Bank Group. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/3432dc32-806a-4830-81c4-e231eaebeba8c/SolTuna_updated_May2017.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=IMod8jG



Table 5.1 Gender disaggregated employment in Fiji Fishing Industry Association member companies (63 vessels, 18 companies)

Fishing		Processing		Cold storage		Engineering workshop		Management/ Administration /Finance		TOTAL	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1,032	5	212	69	22	2	64	0	99	50	1,429	126

Source: Fiji Fishing Industry Association (FFIA), 2020

Women in lower paid, less senior roles

There is not only a visible division between women and men in some areas of work in the tuna industry, there are also divisions within areas of work in terms of seniority. Women tend to be clustered around lower paid, less senior roles.¹⁵ This is not specific to the tuna industry in the Pacific Islands region, but occurs broadly across most societies internationally.

Differences between levels of schooling between boys and girls influence the gender balance in senior roles in the tuna industry. Low levels of schooling among 'unskilled' female and male workers in tuna processing reduces productivity.¹⁶ One study from 2005 found that just one additional year of schooling for a tuna cannery worker improved productivity by 5%.¹⁷

Case study: success story of a woman manager in a tuna processing factory¹⁸



Deborah Telek is a senior manager in the South Seas Tuna Corporation (SSTC) processing company in Wewak, Papua New Guinea. Deborah got her start in the industry because her father worked in tuna. Deborah left the tuna industry to try other opportunities for a few years but came back to fisheries. One of the things she likes best about working in the fishing industry is the wide range of different things she has to do and the variety of people that she interacts with, including different government agencies, companies that provide services to SSTC and staff. She also enjoys the opportunity to contribute to the future of the industry through international meetings such as WCPFC meetings. The fact that Deborah has succeeded as a manager in a tuna company shows that it is possible for women to work well in these companies. But the small number of women in senior management means there is still a lot of work to do in making the opportunities equal.

In PAFCO there is only one woman among seven senior managers. Women make up more than half of the administration staff, and 65% of the factory workers at PAFCO.¹⁹ SolTuna has been working to increase the numbers of women in more senior roles, supported by a national scheme to increase women in leadership called Waka Mere. The Waka Mere programme enabled SolTuna to promote several women to superintendent and manager level. Of 11 senior managers in 2021, five were women – the Operations Manager, the Human Resources Manager, the Quality Control Manager and two managers in Production.

15 Barclay, K., Mauli, S., & Payne, A. M. (2015). Gleaner, Fisher, Processor, Trader: Toward Gender-Equitable Fisheries Management in Solomon Islands. Sydney. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/467721468187800125/pdf/98279-WP-P146728-Box385353B-PUBLIC-ACS.pdf>

16 Campbell, H. F. (2008). The shadow-price of labour and employment benefits in a developing economy. Australian Economic Papers, 47(4), 311–319. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8454.2008.00351.x>

17 Campbell, Harry F. (2009). Measuring the contribution of education to labour productivity in a developing economy. International Journal of Education Economics and Development, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJED.2009.029306>. As far as the authors are aware there are no more recent studies that examine this question regarding the connection between education level and productivity.

18 Forum Fisheries Agency. (2019). Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen leading the Pacific way. Moana Voices, (2), 1–32. Retrieved from <https://www.ffa.int/moanavoices>

19 Vunisea, A. (2021). Gender Mainstreaming in Fiji's Offshore Tuna Industry. https://wwfasia.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/gender_mainstreaming_in_fiji_s_offshore_tuna_industry_report.pdf

Expatriates and nationals in processing plants

Ever since the early days of tuna processing in the Pacific in the 1970s, the aim has been to localise the industry as much as possible, so that Pacific Islanders can gain the human resources development of senior and technical roles, and so wages and salaries can go into local communities.²⁰ Large scale tuna processing as a business, however, requires global trading connections, ‘deep pockets’ for finance for expensive investments in equipment and infrastructure, and specialist technical knowledge of food technology and manufacturing. Ownership and/or management of these companies has therefore remained wholly or partly in the hands of overseas companies. Management roles in the companies have correspondingly often been held by expatriates.

According to stakeholders, there are very few Papua New Guinean managers in any of the tuna processing companies. In other sectors in PNG, Papua New Guineans are production managers and information technology managers, but are rarely so in the tuna processing sector. Possibly this is because the pay in the tuna sector is less attractive than other sectors. Once managers have some experience they can move into other industries and get better conditions and opportunities to progress to senior management.²¹ The processing plant in Marshall Islands also employs many expatriates in management. When COVID hit, the expatriate managers were stuck outside the country, so the loining plant had to cut back production due to lack of supervisors.²² In the SolTuna workforce of over 2,200 people there are only 5–10 expatriates in senior positions. SolTuna shows that it is possible to localise management in tuna processing.

Unions

The right of workers to organise so as to be able to bargain collectively with management is an important labour right.²³ The industrial tuna processing plants in the Pacific generally have some form of organised labour, usually in the form of an in-house union. It is difficult for in-house unions to be independent of management, so workers may get better results if they are able to join national unions. Companies, however, usually prefer in-house unions. In several Pacific island countries mistakes or wrongdoing by national unions in the past have been used to exclude the national unions from tuna processing company workforces.²⁴ Both in-house and national unions struggle with resources due to employees being reluctant to pay union fees, which is a problem faced by unions all over the world.

Private sector social responsibility initiatives

There are several social auditing frameworks that are intended to reduce the risk of labour abuse in tuna processing. One is Social Accountability 8000 (SA8000). Several tuna firms in the Pacific undertook training and initial assessment for SA8000 in the early 2010s, but full certification with SA8000 is very difficult to achieve. Only a couple of tuna processing firms worldwide have SA8000 certification, such as Princes Tuna in Mauritius. Other relevant frameworks include: Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI); ISO 26000 Social Responsibility (part of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) management system standards); Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI); and Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit (SMETA).

It is important to note that private sector social responsibility auditing in seafood industries is not perfect. Companies found by auditors to have acceptable working conditions have had deaths and injuries caused by negligence in the workplace.²⁵ Certification under one or more of these schemes is not adequate as due diligence for human rights.²⁶ Nevertheless, private sector auditing is one possible tool and is worth exploring, as long as governments also undertake their regulatory role in ensuring safe workplaces, and enabling unions to effectively advocate for workers.

Bolton Food, which since 2019 owns Tri Marine International and therefore owns NFD tuna fishing company and a controlling shareholding of SolTuna processing factory in Solomon Islands, has announced a partnership with Oxfam to improve social responsibility throughout its supply chains. The objective is to “build an increasingly equitable supply chain, where inclusion, elimination of inequality, gender equality, respect for human rights and safe and decent working

20 Barclay, Kate, & Cartwright, I. (2008). Capturing wealth from tuna: case studies from the Pacific. https://doi.org/10.26530/oapen_458838

21 Barclay, Kate, & Cartwright, I. (2008). Capturing wealth from tuna: case studies from the Pacific. https://doi.org/10.26530/oapen_458838; Barclay, Kate. (2012). Social impacts. In Blomeyer & Sanz (Ed.), Application of the system of derogation to the rules of origin of fisheries products in Papua New Guinea and Fiji (p. 254). European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies.

22 Johnson, G. (2021). Majuro loining plant desperate for supervisors. *Marianas Business Journal*, 3 May. <https://www.mbjguam.com/2021/05/03/majuro-loining-plant-desperate-for-supervisors>

23 The right to organise labour is one of the fundamental rights under the International Labour Organization (ILO), enshrined in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87).

24 Barclay, Kate. (2012). Social impacts. In Blomeyer & Sanz (Ed.), Application of the system of derogation to the rules of origin of fisheries products in Papua New Guinea and Fiji (p. 254). European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies; Barclay, Kate. (2008). A Japanese Joint Venture in the Pacific: Foreign Bodies in Tinned Tuna. Routledge.

25 Nakamura, K., Ota, Y., & Blaha, F. (2022). A practical take on the duty to uphold human rights in seafood workplaces. *Marine Policy*, 135, 104844. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104844>

26 MSI Integrity. (2020). Not Fit-for-Purpose - The Grand Experiment of Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives in Corporate Accountability, Human Rights and Global Governance. (Issue July). <http://www.msi-integrity.org/beyond-corporations/>

conditions are guaranteed for all people in the supply chain.”²⁷ All PNG tuna processors have BSCI or SMETA social compliance auditing.

The MSC has some minimal labour reporting mechanisms for processing companies certified under Chain of Custody (CoC) established 2019. This is not specifically for gender equity or social inclusion, but for child labour, bonded labour, inhumane treatment, and occupational health and safety. All the companies in the Pacific that purchase and/or process MSC certified fish need CoC certification, so that means all the main processing companies such as PAFCO, SolTuna, and also the Fiji longline companies that process certified product. It is therefore already in place in many relevant locations, and could be built on rather than ‘reinventing the wheel’.

The MSC CoC labour conditions cover more than the fishing crew labour statements (see Module 3), and CoC certified companies are subject to labour audits, but the audit reports are not publicly available due to commercial in confidence issues. There are some generic checklists used, because many European and North American buyers require labour audits in any case, regardless of whether a processor is certified by the MSC. Widely accepted third-party audits can be used, such as the SMETA audits by Sedex, or Social Accountability International (SAI). For more information see: <https://www.msc.org/standards-and-certification/chain-of-custody-standard>.

Action points: what can fisheries management agencies do to encourage gender equity and social inclusion in tuna processing factories?

Monitoring

A first step is to understand the social and economic benefits coming from tuna fishing and processing. Ideally the changes suggested in this module should be measurable, and then key performance indicators (KPIs) can be developed and applied to make people accountable for implementing changes. The first step in being able to measure change is to collect relevant data, and then to monitor change. For HR and GESI dimensions of tuna processing we do not yet have such monitoring frameworks or data.

We often assume that having onshore processing is a good thing for employment, especially for women. In countries with onshore processing (PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands) fisheries access agreements are usually tied to fishing companies investing in onshore tuna processing facilities. If we know more about the gender and human rights aspects of working in tuna processing, fisheries management agencies could adjust access agreements to obtain better social and economic benefits from tuna resources and increase decent employment opportunities for both women and men.

Cross-agency collaboration

It is important to note that fisheries managers alone do not have full control over the factors affecting gender equality in tuna processing facilities. For example, fisheries agencies do not set the minimum wage, but through liaising with other government agencies, fisheries managers can influence the level of the minimum wage for fisheries sector workers.

Fisheries managers can also collaborate with organisations looking after gender relations or women’s affairs to review and improve protections for gender equity and social safeguards in onshore processing. Housing, transport, childcare and health services are also important for HR and GESI peri-urban areas where tuna processing workers live, and fisheries managers can liaise with other organisations on these topics.

Gender lens human resources investigation, and training

The SolTuna case shows the benefits for both employees and companies of improving GESI in tuna processing workplaces. Each country with tuna processing factories could have gender lens human resources consultants investigate what kinds of measures will be appropriate for their context, and then implement training. For SolTuna the training included financial literacy training for factory workers, respectful workplace training for all supervisors and managers, and leadership training for women managers. The training could be provided through post-harvest training offered by fisheries colleges and the University of the South Pacific (USP). Funding for the gender lens consulting and training could be organised by the FFA and funded from processing companies, government (from tuna fishing access fees), and/or donor organisations. Following the success of SolTuna, FFA has arranged gender lens human resources consulting for PAFCO in Fiji. Fisheries managers can bring this up with their heads of department and ministers to express interest with the FFA and development partners, and to bring the programme to their country.

²⁷ White, C. (2020, December 16). Bolton Food partners with Oxfam to formulate human rights standards for its seafood supply chain. Seafood Source. <https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/bolton-food-partners-with-oxfam-to-formulate-human-rights-standards-for-its-seafood-supply-chain>

Tool: Time Use Survey

One of the main gender equity problems with the tuna processing work done by women is the unfair sharing of family work between husbands and wives when wives take up paid work outside the home. The Time Use Survey is one way to measure the balance of work between family members. It can help with family and community discussions about household duties. It could also highlight for companies and local government where delays with transport are adding hours to employees' work day.

Objective: To identify the daily tasks carried out by men and women and identify the differences or similarities in activities, workloads and roles.

WHY DO IT?

This tool facilitates the capturing of daily activities by men and women. Information obtained from this tool may be useful for identifying target groups for specific project activities and also for planning project activities to ensure that they do not add too much extra burden to men's and women's workloads. It is also a useful method of making everyone more aware of the different workloads borne by men and women.

WHEN TO DO IT?

This tool provides useful insights into the following questions: Who does what (roles)? When are different activities carried out? How much time is consumed by activities (household, community, individual)? It should be used as part of the situation and problem analysis to inform solution and design options.

STEPS

Step 1: Together with relevant stakeholders, distribute the time matrix to each participant or group.

Step 2: Ask participants to think of a typical family they are familiar with, or think of their own families.

Step 3: Ask them to think about the typical activities that men and women in the family would do in a typical day. Using the time matrix, indicate activities that each would carry out for each of the hours of a 24-hour day (such as getting children ready for school, washing, leisure time, sleeping etc.).

Step 4: Following this, ask participants to compare the two timetables and discuss the following questions:

- Are there commonalities and differences between the two timetables?
- Are activities the same or different?
- Is the same amount of time spent on activities that are common to both?
- Is there a distinct division of labour between men and women? Why do you think so?
- Are the activities of the man and the woman interchangeable?
- How can men and women assist each other with their respective workloads?

TIME USE SURVEY RESULTS

Different methods can be used to show the results of a time use survey; for example, you can use a table to list activities, or you can draw them.

Table 5.2 Time use survey table

Complete the survey table for a whole day (24 hours)

Time	Older women (60 years old +)	Women (26-59 years old)	Daughters (15-25 years old)	Older men (60 years old +)	Men (26-59 years old)	Sons (15-25 years old)
5.00 am	Prepare breakfast	Wake up and prepare children's school lunches and breakfast				
6.00 am		Wake children up and get them dressed for school	Help younger children to get dressed			
7.00 am		Family breakfast			Family breakfast	
8.00 am			Go to school		Leave for work in the nearby town	Go to school
				Go to the market		

Alternatively, you can illustrate activities done during the time use survey period, as in Figure 15.

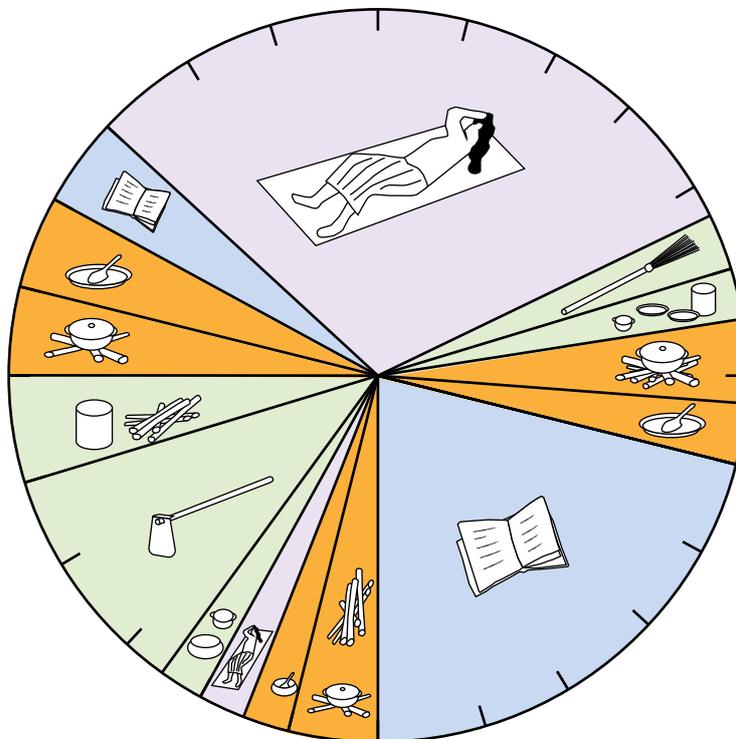


Figure 5.1. Time use survey clock diagram



Tool: gendered division of labour analysis²⁸

One of the main GESI problems with the tuna processing work is the stereotyping of people as suitable for some jobs and not suitable for other jobs based on their identity (gender, age, ethnicity, etc.), rather than their individual skills and interests. A gender division of analysis provides information about who is being given what roles. Divisions of work are often based on stereotyping of women and men and the roles and positions they can or cannot hold in a given society (it is context specific). That means that employers look for men or women for particular roles, and expect wages to be at certain levels for women and men; when it is more for men, this is called the gender wage gap.

What are the areas of interest in the division of labour analysis?

- The division of labour is always human made. Its forms are socially shaped, and thus shaped by gender roles.
- Division of labour concepts are mostly used in an economic context. This includes paid work (called ‘productive’) and unpaid family work (called ‘reproductive’).
- Division of labour concepts can also be used to understand constituency-based roles (political + advocacy, decision-making + voice).

Table 5.3 Tool 1 for gender division of labour analysis

Roles	Reproductive		Productive		Decision-making and voice	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
What roles/jobs do people have?						
What are the existing tasks and contributions of women and men in each role?						
What benefits, status do women and men get from each role?						

Interlinked with roles are the use and control of resources. Resources are things you can use to help you in a role. For example: money, equipment, education and training, and social networks with influential people.

Table 5.4 Tool 2 for gender division of labour analysis

Resources	Reproductive		Productive		Decision-making and voice	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
What resources do women and men have access to? have control over?						

The aim of this tool is to identify gender-based inequalities and different needs for each role/task.

These are some guiding questions for this exercise:

- What gender inequalities and needs are expressed in each role, by women/men?
- What gender inequalities and needs are not easily expressed by women/men?
- What inequalities/needs are directly linked to the programme/project (e.g. accessibility criteria)?
- What inequalities/needs are context-specific (e.g. cultural values, traditions)?

²⁸ The gender division of labour analysis tool has been adapted from a slideshow supplied by Natalie Makhoul, FAME, the Pacific Community.

Acronyms

CoC	chain of custody
ETI	Ethical Trading Initiative
EU	European Union
FAME	Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division of the Pacific Community
FFA	Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
FLT	financial literacy training
GBV	gender-based violence
GESI	gender equity and social inclusion (outside this Handbook the word 'equality' is usually used, rather than 'equity', in GESI)
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (a system for food safety)
HR	human rights
IFC	International Finance Corporation (part of the World Bank Group)
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NFD	National Fisheries Development (tuna fishing company in Solomon Islands)
NZD	New Zealand dollars
PAFCO	Pacific Fishery Company, a tuna processing company in Fiji
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RD Tuna	a Philippines-based tuna company operating in PNG. The R and D refer to personal names of family members of the company owner, and the company is always simply referred to as RD.
SA	Social Accountability, an auditing system
SBD	Solomon Islands dollars
SMETA	SEDEX Members Ethical Trade Audit
USD	United States dollars
USP	University of the South Pacific
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

