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Gender-integrated research for development in Pacific coastal fisheries

A gender agenda for the project Strengthening and Scaling Community-based Approaches to Pacific Coastal Fisheries in Management Support of the New Song

Gender-integrated research for development in Pacific coastal fisheries

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Citation

This publication should be cited as: Kleiber D, Cohen P, Gomes C and McDougall C. 2019. Gender-integrated research for development in Pacific coastal fisheries. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program Brief: FISH-2019-02.

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Front cover, van der Ploeg/WorldFish; page 9, Quentin Hanich/WorldFish; page 11 and 13 Dirk Steenbergen/UOW; page 15, Filip Milovac/WorldFish.

Acknowledgments

This work was undertaken as part of the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (FISH) led by WorldFish. The program is supported by contributors to the CGIAR Trust Fund. Funding support for this work was provided by the Australian Government through the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) project FIS/2016/300 and Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, James Cook University. This brief was developed by the project partners: WorldFish, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, James Cook University, Pacific Community (SPC) and University of Wollongong (ANCORS), using the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (FISH): Gender Strategy as a guiding document.

Research supported by



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The Pathways project gender plan

A gender agenda for the project Strengthening and Scaling Community-based Approaches to Pacific Coastal Fisheries in Management Support of the New Song.

Goals



Quality research



Empowered women



Equitable outcomes

Objectives

1

Increase recognition of women's contribution to coastal fisheries

2

Enable women's engagement across scales of governance

3

Fairly support livelihood opportunities and benefits for women and men

4

Enable women and men to improve nutrition in the first 1000 days

Gender in the Pathways project¹

The project Strengthening and Scaling Community-based Approaches to Pacific Coastal Fisheries in Management Support of the New Song (henceforth the Pathways project) aims to improve the well-being of Pacific coastal communities through more productive and resilient fisheries and better food and nutrition security. The project began in September 2017 and will end in June 2021.

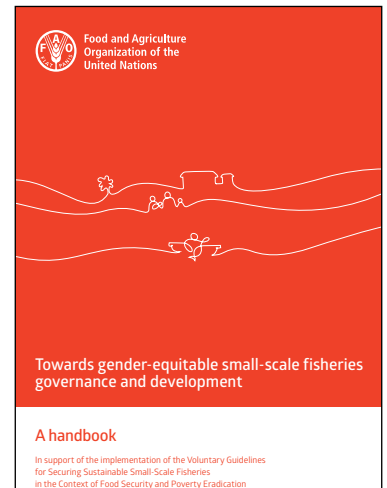
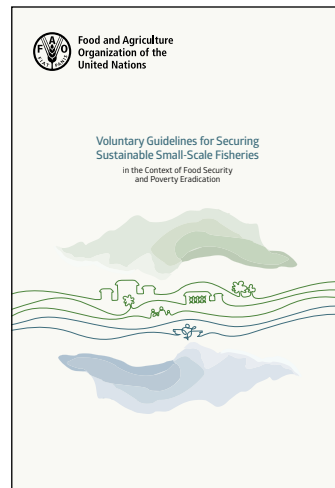
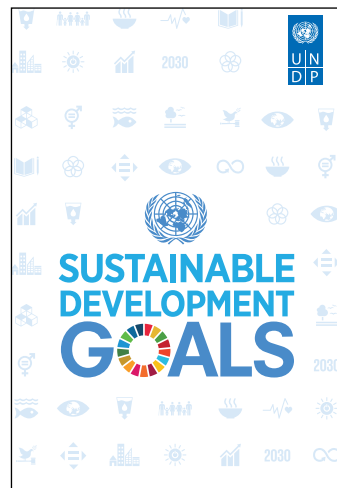
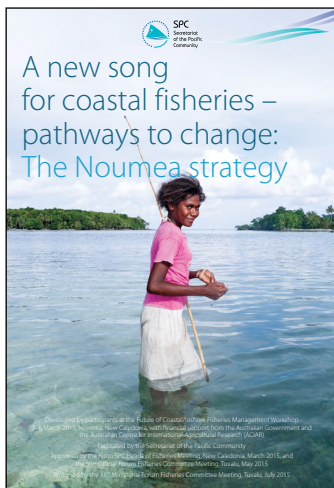
Gender considerations are included in the Pathways project to address both internal and external mandates for equity and equality. Gender is integrated through all five of the project's objectives as outlined most fully under project Objective 4: 'Increase social and gender equity in coastal fisheries governance, utilization and benefit distribution'. The project is funded by the Australian Government through [ACIAR](#) and [DFAT](#). As such, it will be implemented in accordance with DFAT principles and policies to 'promote opportunities for all' (AusAID 2011; Commonwealth of Australia DFAT 2015).

In addition to project and individual partner commitments to equity and gender (e.g. including the WorldFish commitment to the [FISH Gender Strategy](#) (CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems 2017), we integrate gender throughout this project because a range of Pacific Island country policies make

commitments to gender equality, equity and women's empowerment (Box 1). The Pathways project explicitly seeks to support the New Song (SPC 2015), which recognizes that:

gender relations have a significant effect on the course of development and so the voice of women and youth must be heard and acted upon effectively in all future [community-based resource management] strategies. In addition to playing a greater role in decision-making, women and youth must have more equitable access to the benefits flowing from coastal fisheries.

Furthermore, Outcome 7 of the New Song seeks to support 'more equitable access to benefits and decision-making within communities, including women, youth and marginalized groups'. The Pathways project also responds to other international fisheries, gender and development commitments such as the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines (FAO 2015), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN 1979) and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.



Integrating gender in coastal fisheries research and development

Pacific Island communities rely on coastal fisheries² for their food and livelihoods. In the Pacific region, women and men engage in all aspects of coastal fisheries—often in distinct ways, with distinct opportunities, benefits and challenges (Chapman 1987; Weeratunge et al. 2010). To understand coastal fisheries accurately (ibid; Kleiber et al. 2014; Kleiber et al. 2015), to manage them effectively (Seniloli et al. 2002; Hilly et al. 2012; Schwarz et al. 2014; Vuki 2014) and to improve livelihood and development outcomes by ensuring opportunities and benefits are shared fairly, research and development activities must engage with gender-related expectations, barriers and dynamics (Lawless et al. 2017).

Gender in the Pacific

The Pathways project includes teams working within Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and teams working at the Pacific regional scale. While the three focal countries share similarities in terms of gender in coastal fisheries, they also hold distinct opportunities and challenges when it comes to the integration of gender into research and development.

There have been recent commitments and attention to gender in regional and national policies. However, these have not yet translated into widespread change in research and development practices and outcomes. For example, one priority of this project is ensuring high-quality, sex-disaggregated fisheries data is collected, analyzed and reported by researchers, national ministries and regional agencies.

There are many barriers to gender equality that persist and are reflected in all aspects of society, including coastal fisheries. They result in poor representation of women in the formal economy and a lack of women's voices at multiple scales of governance (Pacific Community 2016). At the community scale, women are less likely to attend meetings or to share views and concerns when they do attend (Schwarz et al. 2014). This can be due to cultural expectations that meeting places are for men, or inattention to the particular labor burden of women. However, community-based management decisions that do not include women's input can still have an impact on them. For example, in Vanuatu, male chiefs created a no-take marine reserve in a gleaning area, meaning some women were no longer able to fish (Tarisesei and Novaczek 2006).

The challenge is then to overcome the lack of capacity to integrate gender into all aspects of Pacific Island research, governance and development (Piau-Lynch 2007; SPC 2015; Government of Solomon Islands 2016; Leduc 2016). This has begun to be addressed by partners such as the Pacific Community (SPC) through gender stocktakes, and will benefit further from ongoing support and a focus on gender throughout the coastal fisheries sector. The objective of this brief is to illustrate the applied and diverse ways the Pathways project is integrating gender. We hope these approaches stimulate further discussions and refinements among those committed to improving coastal fisheries, food security and Pacific Island community well-being.

Box 1. Equality, equity and empowerment

Development and gender goals often include concepts of equality, equity and empowerment. These concepts are closely related, but achieving each will require different approaches.

Gender equality means equal opportunities or outcomes that can be achieved when formal barriers are removed (Reeves and Baden 2000). In other words, everyone gets the same thing and there are no legal or social barriers that prevent women and men from having the same opportunities. Equality is achieved when women and men are free and able to pursue the same livelihoods and would experience the same conditions and benefits.

Gender equity means women and men are treated fairly and their sometimes different needs considered (Pavlic et al. 2000). This is an important step toward achieving equality. This can include capacity development or gender transformation.

Women's empowerment means women are able to make meaningful choices about their own life (e.g. marriage, livelihood, children, living conditions etc.). A meaningful choice means having things to choose between, as well as having the power to make that choice (Kabeer 2002).

Approaches to gender research and development

1. Integrating gender in fisheries systems research

Gender integration means that all coastal fisheries research and development activities that include people will take gender into consideration (Figure 1 and 2). This aligns with Principle 1 of the FISH Gender Strategy to take gender-aware approaches

that are either gender accommodating or gender transformative (Figure 2). As one aspect of this, we will collect, analyze and report sex-disaggregated data on all aspects of the project. We will also include women and men in decision-making and activities

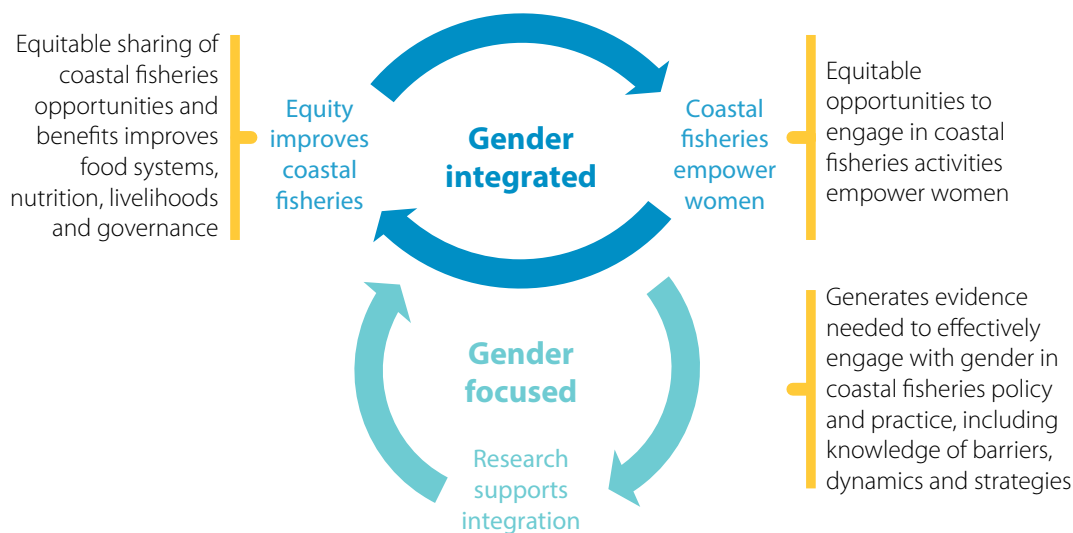


Figure 1. Two approaches working together to progress gender equality, equity and women’s empowerment (Box 1). Adapted from the FISH Gender Strategy.

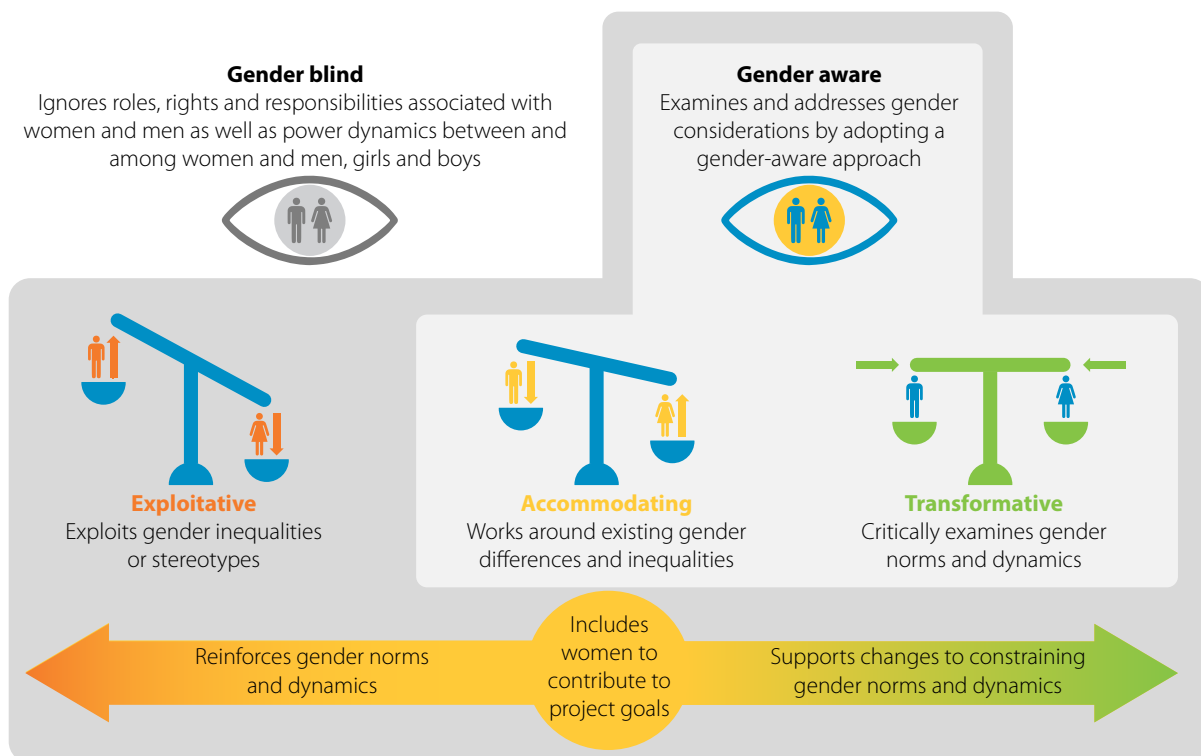


Figure 2. Adapted from the FISH Gender Strategy, which states that any program involving humans must be gender aware, and at least gender accommodating, while moving toward gender transformative.

by designing processes and creating opportunities that are responsive to their needs and viewpoints. Gender integration will be tracked and improved by continuous monitoring, linked to ongoing reflection and adjustment of practice. The outcomes of gender integration will be better understood with evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) will not assume 'reach' equates to 'benefit' (Figure 3); this will be monitored through suitable indicators and evaluations (indicators described below).

2. Focusing on gender in fisheries systems

The Pathways project will also conduct gender-focused³ research in coastal fisheries contexts (Table 1). This will involve, in a small subset of engagements,

identifying and addressing gender barriers deeply embedded in societies, economies, cultures and governance structures, and then testing strategies, such as gender-transformative approaches (Cole et al. 2014), to shift gender barriers and optimize opportunities toward gender equality, equity and women's empowerment (Box 1). This will be undertaken in order to inform and refine the quality of gender integration in the Pathways project (Figure 1). Gender-focused research questions will address issues of women's empowerment and gender transformation (Figure 3).

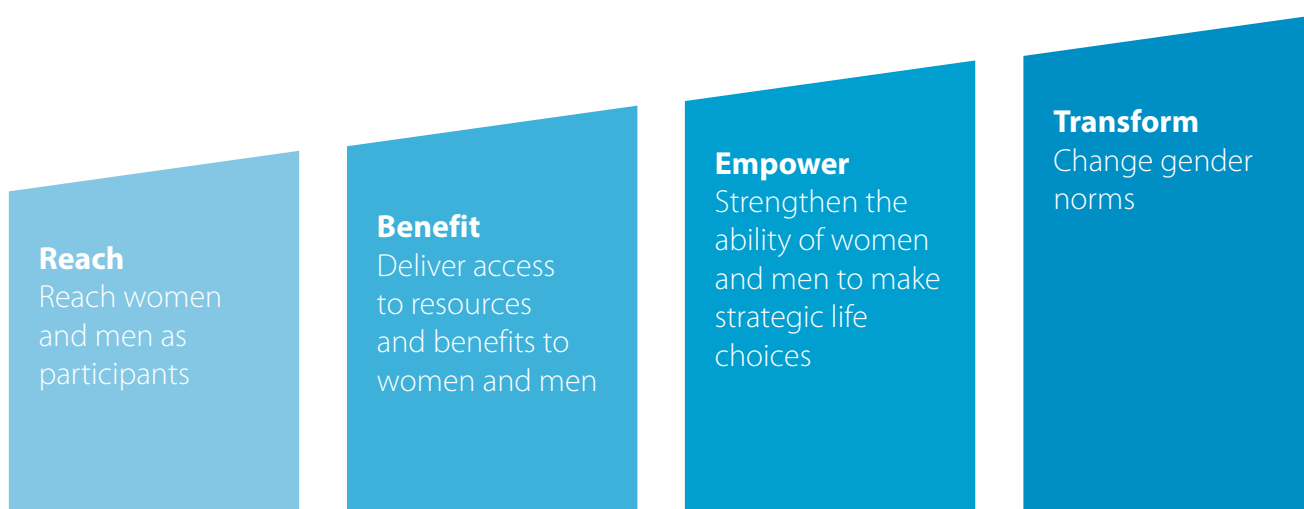


Figure 3. Development engagements and research questions are categorized into four stages. This grouping makes these approaches distinct and clarifies that one approach will not automatically lead to the other (e.g. sharing information with women and men will not necessarily lead to equal benefits or empowerment). Each element also requires different tools, methods and indicators. Gender-integrated research commonly monitors and examines reach and benefit, while gender-focused research is better suited to examine outcomes of empowerment and transformation. Adapted from Theis and Meinzen-Dick (2016).



Gender integration



Gender focus

What is it?	Fisheries research that integrates gender	Gender research done in a fisheries context
Who does it?	Everyone	Gender researchers*
Why do it?	Improves outcomes	Improves gender integration

* Includes in-country and collaborating gender researchers.

Table 1. Summary of gender approaches in the Pathways project.

Research and development activities

Integrating gender into the Pathways project serves the interacting project goals of quality research, empowered women and equitable outcomes. The research-in-development objectives that address the goals sit within four broad categories:

- 1 Increase recognition of women's contribution to coastal fisheries
- 2 Enable women's engagement across scales of governance
- 3 Fairly support livelihood opportunities and benefits for women and men
- 4 Enable women and men to improve nutrition in the first 1000 days

We detail below the activities and outputs related to each of these four objectives. We briefly describe monitoring and evaluation that relates to each area of gender integration in the project. We link these directly back to the project by listing the Pathways Results Framework (PRF) indicator and the data source used to assess the indicator. We also include gender-focused research questions that may be addressed within the project.

1 Increase recognition of women's contribution to coastal fisheries

Problem statement

Women's contribution to coastal fisheries in the Pacific is often not counted or recognized in official statistics and governing processes (Kronen et al. 2007; Kronen and Vunisea 2009). This hinders a full understanding and effective governance and management of coastal fisheries in Pacific coastal communities. There are two interacting barriers to the recognition of women's contribution to coastal fisheries:

1. **Biased sampling in coastal fisheries data collection.** Coastal fisheries research is often gender blind. It tends to focus on men's fishing activities, such as boat and offshore fishing (Weeratunge et al. 2010), while overlooking other critical fishing and value chain activities, such as gleaning and processing, that tend to be carried out by women in the Pacific. Findings from this overly narrow framing perpetuate the idea that fishing is about what men do and reinforces the assumption that there is no need to include women in fisheries decisions. This ultimately leads to ineffective management decisions that are detrimental to women, fishing communities and the efficacy of fisheries management.



2. **Lack of public recognition of women’s contribution to coastal fisheries.** In Pacific coastal fisheries contexts, women’s labor is often valued less than men’s labor, leading women’s contribution to be given less social value than men’s (Chapman 1987). A biased perception of women’s contribution can lead to women’s voices, concerns and solutions being left out of fisheries management and decision-making. This feeds back directly to justifications for biased sampling.

To address these barriers, the Pathways project will work at two scales: firstly, collecting sex-disaggregated data to assess community-based management performance; and secondly, with national fisheries agencies, the SPC and others to examine and improve data collection programs. A first step is to work with the SPC to conduct a stocktake of gender and fisheries. We will use this stocktake to refine integration of gender into

all of the project’s coastal fisheries assessments. Primary data collected and findings from gender stocktakes will be used to raise the profile of women’s contribution to fisheries through strategic communications targeted at the general public, donor agencies and national fisheries agencies (see Activities and outputs).

Gender-focused research

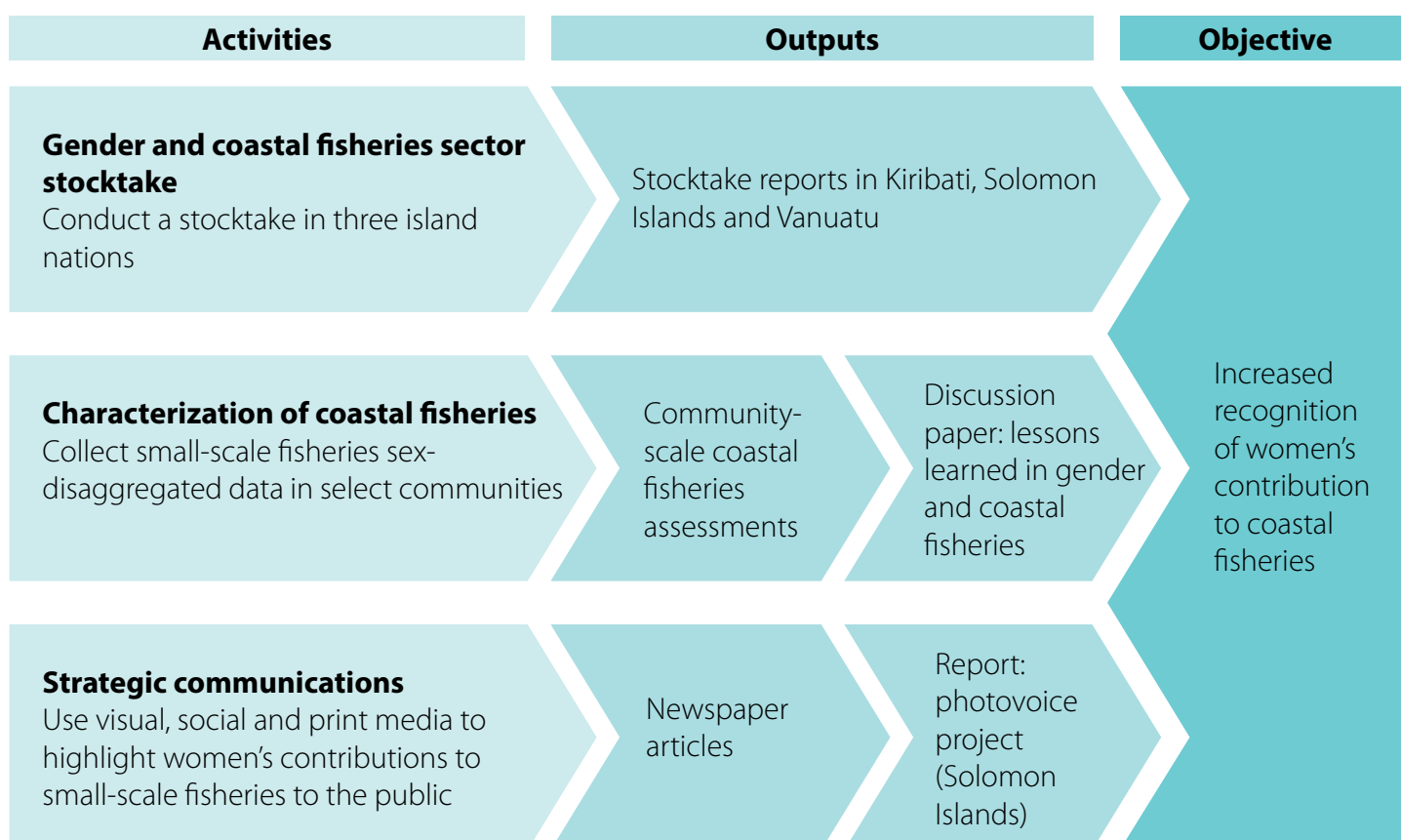
1. Examine and improve (e.g. national statistics programs and regional ‘report cards’) the ways in which gender statistics in fisheries are framed and used.
2. Examine whether and to what degree the (national, regional and donor-country) public and media discourse of women in fisheries is changing. Impact assessments near or at project completion could help determine to what degree strategic communications delivered by the project have contributed.

Gender-integrated M&E

M&E	Data source
100% of community-level assessments of coastal fisheries’ harvesting patterns and roles employ gender-integrated research design ⁴	Sex-disaggregated landings data and value chain assessments (PRF* 5.1)
The number and proportion of articles and media moments produced by the project that draw attention to women’s contribution to coastal fisheries ⁵	Media articles (PRF 7.2)

*PRF refers to the Project Results Framework and the indicator therein.

Activities and outputs



2

Enable women's engagement across scales of governance

Problem statement

Women's voices, opinions and priorities are at risk of being left out of coastal fisheries governance (Lambeth 1999). There are three challenges the Pathways project has identified at the community, provincial and national scale that will be examined and addressed to minimize this risk and empower women as prominent coastal fisheries governors.

1. **Lack of gender equality, equity and women's empowerment in community-based fisheries management (CBFM).** Engagement with existing local governance structures may inadvertently reinforce, sustain or take advantage of inequitable gender norms and power imbalances unless explicit and reflexive strategies are used.
2. **Missing gender commitments in national fisheries policy.** When gender is not an explicit consideration in policy, it is less likely to be addressed by those in formal governing positions. Many fisheries policies remain gender blind and without clear strategies or goals to address gender.
3. **Lack of capacity for national and provincial fisheries agencies to meaningfully consider gender (including meeting existing or emerging policy commitments).** In cases where gender is included in national fisheries policy, there is often a lack of institutional, fiscal and technical capacity to meaningfully implement it, assess progress and adjust actions for greater impact.

To address these challenges, we will test, refine and share strategies toward gender-inclusive community-based management. We will examine national fisheries policy for gender commitments and work



Preparing skipjack for home consumption in Wiawi community, Vanuatu.

Gender-integrated M&E

M&E	Data source
40% of attendees at project-facilitated events are women	Project trip reports (PRF* 7.1)
40% of partner agency staff attending short courses are women	Project trip reports (PRF 7.4)
50% of attendee contributions are from women ⁶	Project trip reports (PRF 7.5)
60% of project-facilitated events (meetings, activities, trainings etc.) use gender-sensitive facilitation techniques ⁷	Project trip reports (PRF 7.3)
75% of CBFM committees have women representatives	One-off assessment (PRF 7.6)

*PRF refers to the Project Results Framework and the indicator therein.

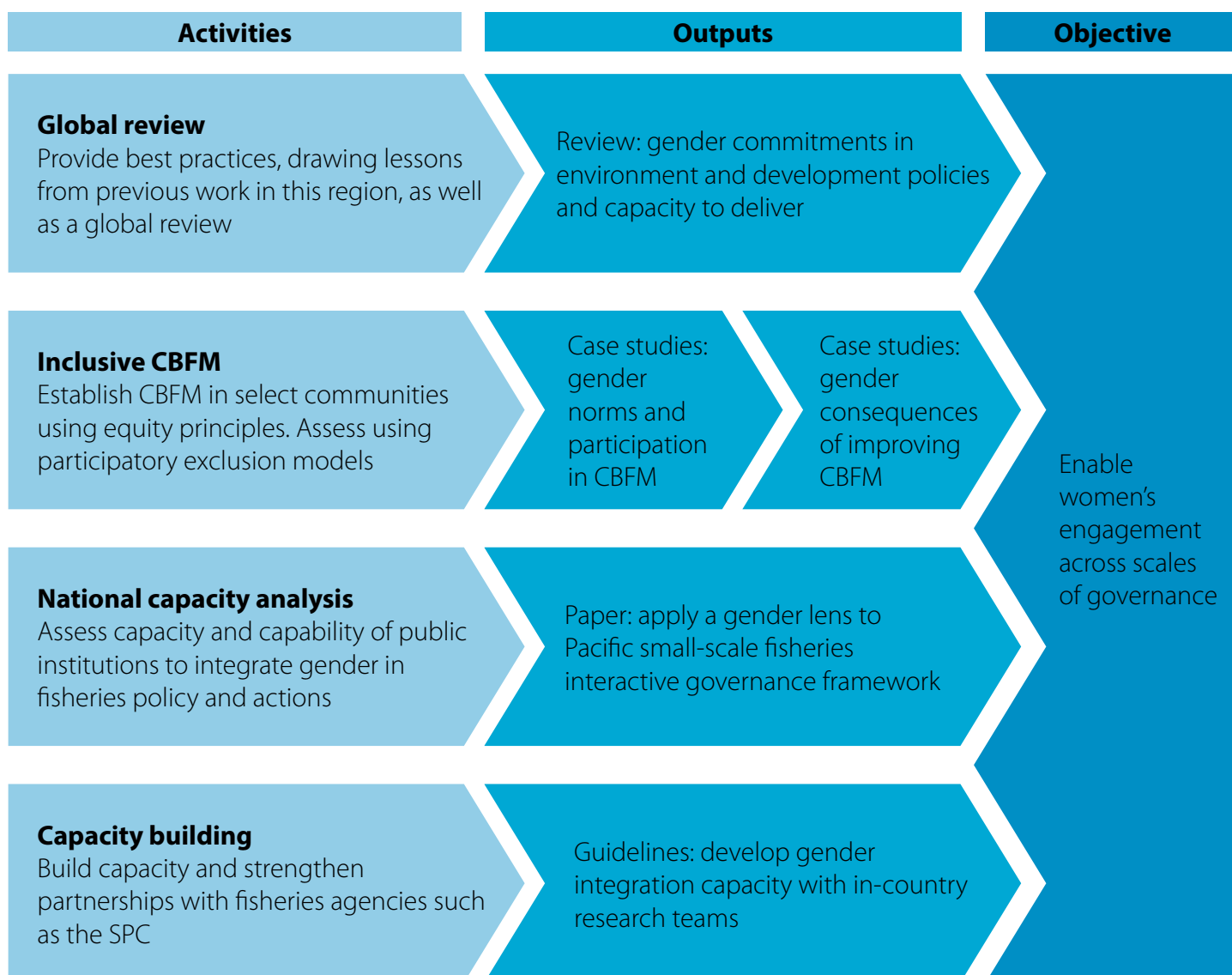
alongside government partners to strengthen gender considerations where there are existing policy change processes. In gender stocktakes conducted with project partners and national governments, we will examine the capacity of all fisheries institutions to implement gender and design and refine capacity-building activities and outputs that respond to these needs (see Activities and outputs).

Gender-focused research

1. How do local, provincial and national processes, structures and norms enable or limit equitable involvement in decision-making? Apply a 'participatory exclusion' framework to assess participation (Agarwal 2001).
2. Are fisheries and related policies shifting toward 'gender inclusivity'? What drivers and factors have contributed to these shifts?

3. What do gender-accommodating and gender-transformative approaches look like in coastal fisheries governance? And in what ways have they helped enable equitable involvement in resource decision-making? What are the common and context-specific determinants of the success of these approaches?
4. Which strategies overcome the barriers (i.e. limitation of fiscal and human resources, supporting data and female fisheries officers,⁸ as well as sector silos and engrained beliefs and norms) to realize improvements in capacity in governance agencies (to enable and drive gender equity)?

Activities and outputs



3

Fairly support livelihood opportunities and benefits for women and men

Problem statement

Improving coastal fisheries management alone may not be sufficient to meet the livelihood aspirations and needs of women and men in coastal communities. The Pathways project aims to improve fish-based livelihoods through activities and initiatives that complement community-based management. Gender is a key consideration to ensure the equitable distribution of opportunities, benefits and risks related to shifts in livelihoods.

- Livelihood initiatives focused on only men's work or only women's work** (without additional attention to equity, gender relations or unintended consequences, for example) can lead to an unfair

distribution of benefits or burdens from new livelihood opportunities, and in some cases have led to resistance and backlash in household or community contexts.

The Pathways project will integrate gender into an existing 'livelihood diagnosis' tool.⁹ This will ensure that livelihood assessments and activities include the needs and priorities of women and men. We have a particular focus on working with and further supporting established women's groups and being mindful, deliberate and continually reflective in the way in which men are engaged in and view these initiatives. After the initial livelihood diagnosis, we may use gender-transformative approaches if appropriate. We will also assess the outcomes for women and for men, and be sensitive to unintended consequences. We will adjust activities and share lessons as needed (see [Activities and outputs](#)).

Gender-integrated M&E

M&E	Data source
Coastal livelihood improvement activities are targeted at both women and men	Project trip reports (PRF* 6.1)
Change in income among women and men participating in livelihood interventions	Household Surveys (PRF 6.4)

*PRF refers to the Project Results Framework and the indicator therein.



Photo credit: Dirk Steenbergen (UOW)

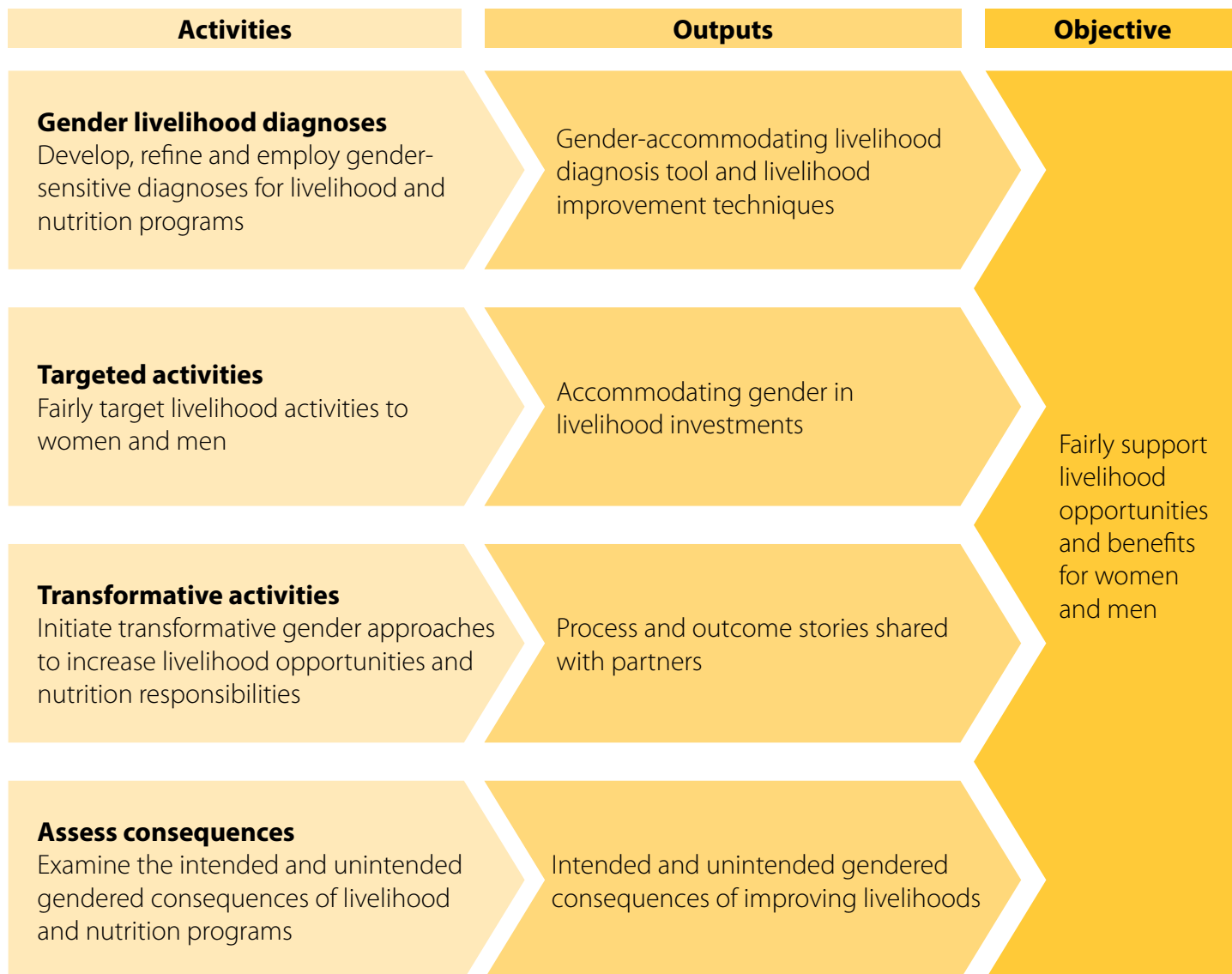
Packing the morning catch of various snapper species and skipjack in Northwest Malekula, Vanuatu.

Gender-focused research

1. How do livelihood-related activities affect women and men and their relationships?
2. In what ways do gender-accommodating and gender-transformative approaches enable the

equitable distribution of livelihood opportunities and benefits? What determines the longer term success of these approaches?

Activities and outputs



4

Enable women and men to improve nutrition in the first 1000 days

Problem statement

Poor diets have been identified as a key concern in the Pacific and are a contributing factor to malnutrition and the societal and individual costs that this entails. Improving coastal fisheries or livelihood outcomes alone will not address the nutritional needs of women and children in the first 1000 days¹⁰ (CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems 2017). The Pathways project has identified three areas for gender integration to improve nutrition.

1. **Women and children’s diets are often insufficient in micronutrients.** This can have consequences for the health and (cognitive) development of women and children, as well as have public health and societal well-being consequences.

2. **Women and men are involved in the provision of food for household consumption.** When this is not recognized, adverse nutrition outcomes may be inadvertently reinforced.
3. **Nutrition initiatives often focus only on women and children.** Embedded gender norms and roles can mean that daily household food and nutrition security tasks fall mainly to women. Initiatives that do not acknowledge this may reinforce these roles and burden women with additional responsibilities that could otherwise be shared.

To address these issues, nutrition diagnosis and activities will include providing behavior change and awareness materials to women and men. After the initial diagnosis, interventions may also engage in gender-transformative approaches as appropriate. In this setting, these may examine and actively question the equitable distribution of productive roles (e.g. choice of food, preparation of food, feeding infants and children) within the household (see [Activities and outputs](#)).

Gender-integrated M&E

M&E	Data source
Men and women in communities receive nutrition information	Project trip reports (PRF* 4.2)
Nutrition is improved (as indicated by dietary diversity) in the first 1000 days	Project trip reports (PRF 4.2)

*PRF refers to the Project Results Framework and the indicator therein.



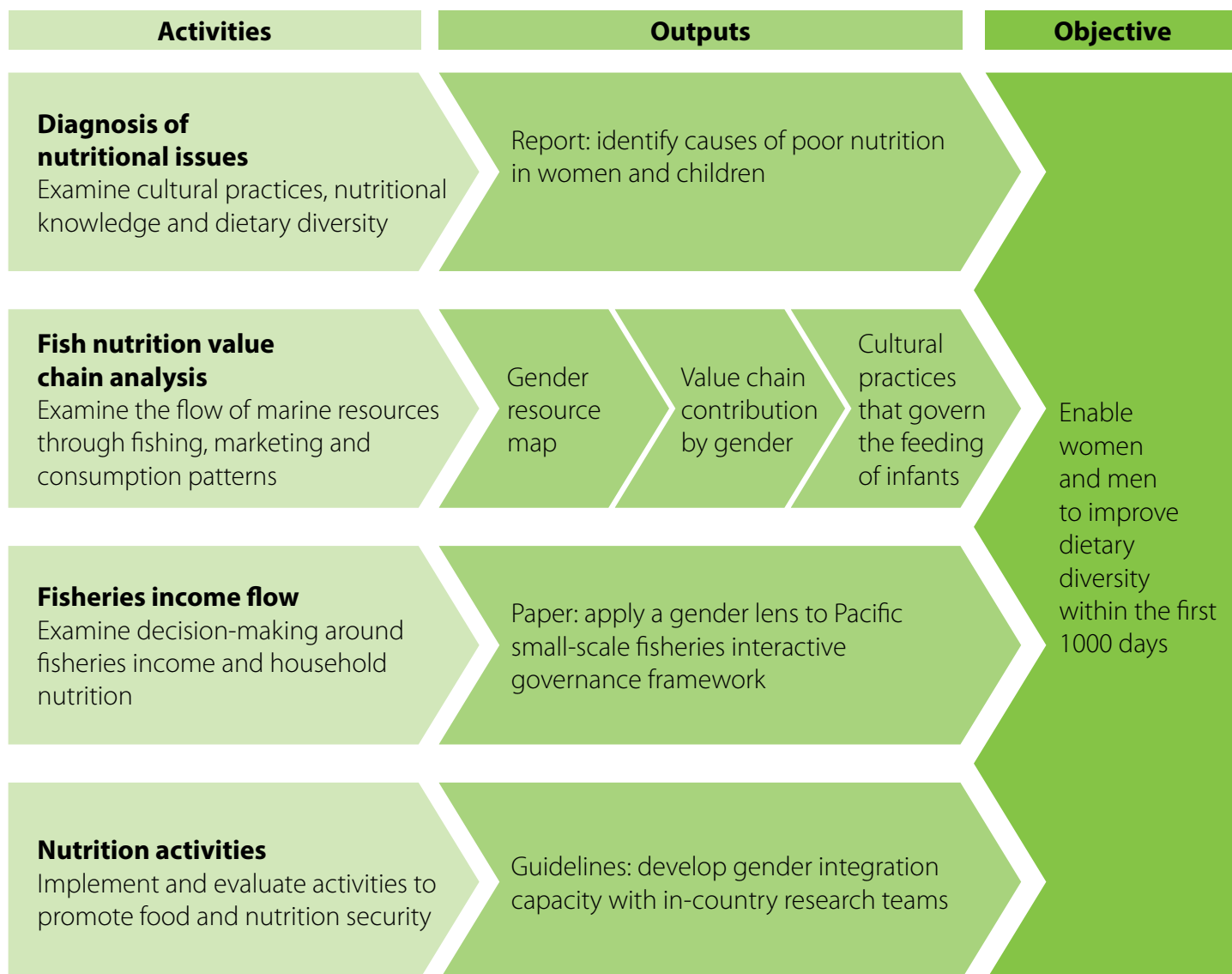
A family shares a meal of fish, cabbage, potato and rice, Taflankwasa village, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands.

Gender-focused research

1. What are the gender roles and norms around coastal fisheries collection, preparation and consumption?

2. Which approaches are effective at transforming gender norms and sustaining shifts in gender roles that amplify and sustain improvements to nutrition and more equitable outcomes?

Activities and outputs



Notes

- ¹ Our gender approach sits within a larger framework of social inclusion. Social exclusion—which relates to norms, beliefs and practices that value certain people more than others and exclude certain people from decision-making as well as fair access to resources—is not limited to gender. However, gender is a key social category in all human societies and often can be an important place to start when examining social exclusion. Gender can also be left out if it is not made central to the social analysis. We focus on gender here, but we also draw lessons from intersectional feminism to recognize that the multiple and interacting categories of social exclusion should be considered.
- ² In this brief, ‘coastal fisheries’ refers to all activities in the fisheries value chain, including preharvest, harvest and postharvest activities such as gear prep, fishing and gleaning, marketing, processing and cooking.
- ³ In this case, ‘gender-focused’ is synonymous with ‘gender-strategic’ research identified in the FISH Gender Strategy (CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems 2017).
- ⁴ (a) Gleaning or other fishing methods predominantly done by women or other marginalized groups; (b) subsistence and sold catch; (c) fish and invertebrate (including shells) or other catch; (d) pre- and postharvest activities such as gear making/mending, processing, marketing, food preparation and full-time and part-time engagement; (e) avoid relying solely on commercial center sampling or at the ‘major’ landing site; and (f) prioritization of community-wide random sampling, or if there is a need for focus on a minority group, stratified sampling.
- ⁵ Gender-strategic research in select cases may analyze media content from select sources over the course of one or more years to examine trends in independent reporting to answer the questions: Is the discourse on gender and fisheries, women and fisheries changing? In what ways?
- ⁶ This is a simple count of how often women and men speak in mixed-sex meetings. This does not preclude the value of or necessity for single-sex meetings.
- ⁷ Some ideas are single-sex meetings, joint reflection, active contribution-balancing by facilitator, timing of meetings, child-care and catering plans that do not impede attendance. The use of these tools should be noted and self-assessed in trip reports.
- ⁸ Include an early and late assessment of the gender ratio of fisheries staff employed by national governments (2018:2020) collected via a survey that should be part of the national gender stocktake.
- ⁹ www.sprep.org/att/IRC/eCOPIES/Pacific_Region/225.pdf
- ¹⁰ The first 1000 days refers to the period of time between conception and a child’s second birthday. Good nutrition during this period is particularly influential on health, growth and brain development for life.

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Citation

This publication should be cited as: Kleiber D, Cohen P, Gomese C and McDougall C. 2019. Gender-integrated research for development in Pacific coastal fisheries. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program Brief: FISH-2019-02.

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