

## SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY LIBRARY: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

### Rachele Oriente

Library, Secretariat of the Pacific Community  
BP D5 98848 Cedex  
Noumea, New Caledonia  
RacheleO@spc.int

**ABSTRACT:** This article describes the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Library. It gives an overview of the organization and explains the libraries role within the organization and gives a cursory glance at regional participation.

**KEYWORDS:** Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) is an intergovernmental agency, which provides technical information and development support to its 26 member Pacific Island countries and territories. SPC library system is a private corporate library that exists to enhance and service SPC's professional and technical staff, its projects and programmes, and to provide information resources, including research, current awareness, acquisitions and information management to the SPC. One of SPC's largest programmes is Marine Resources, which includes Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries, and the Regional Maritime Programme. The Coastal Fisheries programmes has six sections: coastal fisheries management, fisheries development, fisheries training, reef fishery assessment and research, aquaculture and fisheries information, all of which are located in the Noumea headquarters. The Oceanic Fisheries programme, also in Noumea, works in tuna stock assessment and modelling, statistics and monitoring, tuna biology and ecology-- for example the link between climate change and tuna-- and observer and port sampling. The SPC/Worldfish Center for Research on Coastal Fisheries is also in Noumea. The Regional Maritime Programme is located in Suva. Its mission is safe and secure shipping, cleaner seas, improved social and economic well being of seafaring communities within the Pacific region; and, it is the secretariat to the Association of Pacific Island Maritime Training Institutions and Maritime Authorities (APIMTIMA). In support of these programmes, SPC Library has two sections, one in Noumea headquarters and the other in Suva. This article describes the Noumea library's collection, activities and developments in the area of marine sciences in 2004.

SPC's library dates back to the creation of SPC itself, and one of the strengths of the collection is its continuity over the lifespan of the organisation. The archival section of the headquarters library holds most SPC corporate documents, the majority of all SPC publications, manuscript proceedings of unpublished conferences, meetings or workshops, and other ephemeral materials produced in association with various SPC projects over the last 50 years.

The current collection has regional and international publications in French, English and to a limited extent, in some Pacific languages. Totalling nearly 34,000 monographs and 382 active journal subscriptions, the library's collection is a resource facility for SPC staff and reflects the organisation's work. In the marine sciences we collect materials on coastal and oceanic fisheries, aquaculture of seaweed, finfish, crustaceans and invertebrates, safety at sea, women in fisheries, and seafaring. We also work on the intersection of health and fisheries in the seafaring and HIV/Aids program. We receive materials from FAO in Fisheries, the ILO in Fisheries and Safety at Sea, and from regional bodies such as FFA, SPREP, SOPAC and the Forum Secretariat. Of the total collection, one quarter is on marine science and fisheries, making this the largest subject area collection in the library. Having said that, I would add that I use the document delivery services from IAMSLIC, PIMRIS, Kinetica, University of Hawai'i, University of the South Pacific (Suva) and locally in New Caledonia from IRD, frequently. There is rarely a day that goes by without having necessary recourse to the excellent services of other libraries in supplying our clients with their requests. Fisheries and aquatic sciences information is expensive and SPC library would not be able to function as smoothly as we do without these co-operative networks. In 2005, I would like SPC to become a contributing member of IAMSLIC's document delivery service, if possible.

Key features of the library service are reference and research, bibliographies, document delivery, acquisitions, cataloguing, and the preparation of cataloguing-in-publication data for SPC publications. SPC library will provide research on both subscription and free databases on all the topics and subject areas addressed by SPC's projects and programmes. When research is provided to institutions other than the SPC, it is only by a formal request by the librarian, information officer or staff person of that external institution to the library, and some charges may be incurred depending upon the level of service delivered.

As a support service to SPC programmes, the library caters to the specific demands of SPC staff. As a facility open to the public, the library also meet the requests of a diverse group of patrons that includes elementary school children, university students, visiting professors, and individuals working on private research. Interestingly, in the area of marine science and fisheries, the public clients who visit the library demonstrate a pattern of need that reflects a need for practical, rather than information. The same questions are repeatedly asked. How can I recognise if a fish in the market might give me ciguatera? How do I start a shrimp farm? What are the best components of fish feed? How much fish did a certain country catch in a certain year, and what was the price paid for it? What is the status of Pacific tuna stocks? We receive an average of 141 research questions a month on these and very similar questions. The clients are SPC staff, staff from other regional and governmental bodies, and the general public.

Access to the collection is by whatever means is convenient to the user. A SPC staff person is most likely to send an e-mail request and most of the persons who walk into the library to browse the shelves are from outside of the organisation. The library provides inter-library loans by e-mail, fax, or phone. Members of the public may use the library

but not borrow materials. The library has a web-based catalogue at [www.spc.int/library](http://www.spc.int/library) that is open access to the public. The collection management system is DB/Textworks, which provides a user-friendly interface for searching the collection. The library, housed above the SPC Conference Centre in an impressive and beautiful building built in 1995, is reminiscent of the hull of an upturned canoe. The physical architecture of SPC's library embodies the continual adaptation of the organisation to the changing needs of the region while privileging traditional concepts unique to the Pacific.

The first development and change in our library was that in March 2004, SPC Library Noumea welcomed a new and much appreciated Assistant Librarian, Anne Gibert, in 2004. She replaces the former Cataloguing Assistant. Anne distinguished herself by cataloguing a mountain of approximately 2000 books that had been sitting "awaiting cataloguing" since the late 1990s. She now provides reference, cataloguing and current awareness services. One recent accomplishment is that Anne has created a "A Bibliography on Fisheries and Aquaculture" of materials, published both by SPC and externally, held at SPC Library. This bibliography is prepared for the delegates to the upcoming Heads of Fisheries Meeting (4<sup>th</sup> : 30 August -3 September 2004 : Noumea, New Caledonia) and it is available on the web as IP6 "SPC Library Catalogue of Fisheries Papers" <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/reports/hof4/index.html>. The Library will provide delegates with listed materials on request.

Another change in the library service this year has been in the area of serials management. We now receive electronic table of contents (ETOCs), which are distributed by e-mail to the persons on the circulation lists for that journal, and then articles are printed from online or print subscriptions by request. For expensive Fisheries and marine science journals, this system has proved an invaluable improvement in managing the collection.

In the year 2005 we hope to move to assisting in the production of digital fisheries materials. The Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries program at SPC produce many publications. Several of these are now in electronic format only. We are looking to work on the necessary task of making these searchable and therefore more usable. Also, given the challenges of cost and reliability to adequate Internet access, it is perceived as necessary to distribute these fisheries bulletins and newsletters in CDs, which of course must be searchable.

Another project for 2005 may be to digitize a wonderful collection of historic photos of landed fish, fishing techniques, boats, pirogues and fish markets. These are mostly black and white photos, from the 1950s and 1960s. Generally, there is no provenance for the photos, but SPC does believe that we hold copyright to the images.

Finally, as part of SPC Open Day, the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2004, we are hosting an exhibit on pirogues and traditional navigation in the Pacific region in the library. We will use this exhibit as a way into the collection when we introduce SPC's guests to SPC Library.