



SUCCESS STORY

The Latest FAD in Papua New Guinea

Fish aggregation devices increase catch, relieve pressure on reefs



Fishermen from Pere and surrounding communities gather each morning and evening around this FAD to catch fish for their families and to sell at the market.

Photo: © CTSP / T. Read

“Do not think about fisheries management only. Think outside the box. Focus on the big picture. We want to develop EAFM to practical status.”

- Leban Gisawa, Inshore Fisheries manager, NFA

Papua New Guinea’s (PNG) National Fisheries Authority (NFA), a semi-autonomous agency of the government, has come up with a winner in marine conservation. With support from USAID’s Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP), NFA developed an inexpensive Fish Aggregation Device (FAD) designed to attract both pelagic fish and local fisherman to offshore areas, reducing pressure on reefs. Under the guidance of Inshore Fisheries Manager Leban Gisawa, NFA has tested FADs at several sites and is deploying the devices in multiple coastal provinces.

What is a FAD? It is surprisingly simple: a large float anchored to the sea floor with old fishing nets dangling from it, placed in near-shore areas away from reefs. The nets grow algae almost immediately, attracting small reef fish. These small fish attract medium fish, and the pelagic species such as tuna and mackerel follow. At one test site near Pere Island in Manus Province, local fishermen reported catching 4000 fish in one day, using hand lines only. Results like these have drawn fishermen away from their over-used inshore reef areas, allowing these ecosystems to recover from years of hard use.

NFA deployed the first FAD in 2012 after completing two years of design, policy, and baseline survey work. Based on early positive results for local fisherman and reefs, NFA is deploying 20 new FADs around Manus Island, with plans for more throughout the maritime

provinces. Villages in Milne Bay and Manus, where CTSP partners are working on marine protection and climate change adaptation, are clamoring for more.

NFA is also working on other projects inspired by the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF). The FAD project is part of a larger CTI-CFF effort to apply an Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM), and NFA, a member of the PNG CTI-CFF National Coordinating Committee, is also attempting to forge coherence in marine programs at the national, provincial, and local levels. To this end, NFA administrators have met with provincial fisheries leaders to determine their needs and set up a financing system for implementing Papua New Guinea’s CTI-CFF National Plan of Action at the provincial level. Gisawa told the provincial officials, “Do not think about fishery management only. Think outside the box. Focus on the big picture. We want to develop EAFM to practical status.”

Under the leadership of NFA, marine resource management policies, funding and practical local-level applications are coming together in Papua New Guinea with help from CTSP partners. The “fad” for FADs is a just one example of a simple marine conservation idea that is dramatically improving life and nature in coastal communities.

WWF, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Conservation International (CI) are the lead implementing partners for CTSP and the USCTI Support Program in Papua New Guinea.