

## Marine aquaculture – Pacific nations advised to proceed with caution

**A new report on mariculture (marine aquaculture) has urged Pacific nations to think twice before embarking on sea-farming enterprises.**



Credit: Antoine Teitelbaum, Secretariat of the Pacific Community

The report, *Opportunities for the Development of the Pacific Islands Mariculture Sector*, commissioned by the [Secretariat of the Pacific Community \(SPC\)](#) found that many mariculture projects had been undertaken in the past without proper study of the costs involved and the potential markets for fish products.

Mike Batty, Director of SPC's Marine Resources Division, says the Pacific has a 30-year history of failed attempts at mariculture and has not learnt from these mistakes.

'Mariculture is not easy and it's not cheap. Pacific Island nations should think of it as one possible option, rather than something to be promoted at all costs.'

The report describes mariculture as a risky activity. Potential difficulties include expensive feed, long cropping cycles, competitive markets, expensive transportation and products requiring high labour inputs.

The report includes on-ground assessments of mariculture activities in five Pacific Island countries: PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Cook Islands and Marshall Islands.

It calls for more thorough market appraisals and estimates of production, distribution and marketing costs of proposed new ventures. It advises that involvement of private industry at an early stage in research and development helps add a dose of realism.

The report is not entirely gloomy about the prospects for mariculture. Some products in some countries show promise, but their potential still requires further investigation. Farming seaweed, shrimp, coral, sponges and some types of fish are among the mariculture activities that can work under the right conditions.

Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community

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