



**Ministry of
Fisheries Fiji**
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IMPROVING FISHERIES TRANSPARENCY IN FIJI

WWF Fiji Workshop No.2 Overview and Reflections

6th – 8th November 2024 | Novotel Suva Lami Bay, Lami, Fiji





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report summarizes the second workshop on “Improving Fisheries Transparency in Fiji,” held from November 6-8, 2024, in Lami, Fiji. The workshop aimed to enhance collaboration between government, civil society, and stakeholders in advancing fisheries transparency in Fiji. Improving transparency in fisheries management and governance is recognized to be an effective tool to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and achieve more responsible and sustainable fisheries management. Key themes discussed during the workshop included:

Global Best Practices: Presentations from international organizations like the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency (CFT), Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI), and Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) highlighted tools and strategies for improving transparency in fisheries, focusing on vessel information, fishing activities, and governance. These tools aim to combat IUU fishing, promote compliance, and build consumer confidence.

Fiji’s Context: The workshop examined Fiji’s progress in increasing transparency, specifically addressing legal frameworks like the Offshore Fisheries Management Act and the work of the Ministry of Fisheries. Despite progress, challenges like the need for better coordination, technology integration, and financial resources were noted.

Challenges and Solutions: Barriers to greater transparency in fisheries management were identified, such as limited resources, lack of coordination, and a potential need for legislative amendments.

Recommendations included establishing a multistakeholder working group, mapping existing initiatives, and creating a roadmap for transparency in Fiji.

Collaborative Efforts: Key opportunities for Fiji to enhance transparency were discussed, including potential collaborations with regional organizations and the development of an Ocean Rangers Program to monitor illegal activities. The need for greater public awareness and youth participation was also emphasized.

Next Steps: The report recommends the establishment of a working group to drive the transparency agenda, as well as continued engagement with stakeholders to refine Fiji’s fisheries management strategies.

The workshop series outlined a clear path to improving fisheries transparency, focusing on collaboration across government, industry, and civil society. Key actions include forming a multistakeholder working group, enhancing data sharing and technology, and developing a roadmap for transparency. The Fiji government’s commitment to fisheries transparency, such as endorsing the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency and the FiTI Standard, is crucial for guiding these efforts and ensuring long-term success. While challenges remain, the steps laid out offer a strong framework for progress. Continued collaboration, government buy in, and policy reform will help Fiji build a sustainable, transparent fisheries management system, setting a regional example for responsible ocean stewardship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WWF Pacific, through the Improving Fisheries Transparency in Fiji project, would like to thank the various agencies of government, fishing and fish processing industries, regional institutions, and non-government organisations for your participation and contribution to the workshop.

Our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Fisheries for their continued support during a very busy period of juggling participation in other workshops and preparations as host of the 21st session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC 21).

We would like to express our sincere thanks for the attendance and participation of representatives from the Forum Fisheries Agency, Honiara; the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency, Washington DC; the Fisheries Transparency Initiative, Abu Dhabi; WWF US; Oceans 5; and Fiji's Ministry of Fisheries and Forests.

Virtual presentations were given by representatives from the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS), University of Wollongong, and the Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment, New Zealand.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Fiji is an island nation located in the Western Pacific encompassing more than 300 islands and hosting a population of more than 900,000. With an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.29 million square kilometres, the sustainable management and protection of Fiji's ocean is critical for the wellbeing of its people. The Fiji government is making significant efforts internationally and within government Ministries to advance and solidify marine conservation and management across Fiji's EEZ. As part of these efforts, there is a need for increased transparency and collaboration between government and civil society on the commitments, tools, and pathways to achieve ocean management in Fiji.

Improving transparency in fisheries management and governance is recognized to be an effective tool to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and achieve more responsible and sustainable fisheries management. The 1995 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries encourages States to seek transparency in decision making processes, fisheries management mechanisms, trade measures, and laws. Several tools have also been developed to support increased transparency. They include the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency (CFT) and its Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency, Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) and its Standards, and Global Fishing Watch (GFW) and its transparency programme among others.



This Report

This report summarises the second workshop “Improving Fisheries Transparency in Fiji” held in Lami, Fiji, 6-8 November 2024. It presents an overview of the workshop focus, discussion topics, and potential challenges related to the various transparency initiatives in place or proposed for Fiji fisheries including:

1. Understanding and alignment with international best practices.
2. Focus on current challenges and barriers to success.
3. Leadership and action required.
4. Wider opportunities that will arise for Fiji in implementing greater transparency within its fisheries management framework.



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The report highlights the core challenges and opportunities and recommends next steps to improve fisheries transparency in Fiji.

Project Overview

This is the second workshop in the WWF Fiji Project “Improving Fisheries Transparency in Fiji” which has the following objectives:

- Collaborate and support the priorities of the Ministry of Fisheries (MoF) to champion transparency in the Fisheries Sector.
- Support the MoF and partners to develop a national roadmap and plan of action in support of ongoing efforts to improve transparency in the fisheries sector.

Workshop 1 was held in Lami, Fiji, on 17-18 October 2023. It presents an overview of the challenges related to the various transparency initiatives in place or proposed in Fiji fisheries.

The Workshop

WWF Fiji with support from the Fiji MoF organised the workshop including identifying the speakers, logistics, facilitation, and agenda design. Terra Moana Ltd’s Tony Craig was again contracted to provide input into the final agenda design and workshop programme (Appendix 1 - Workshop Programme) and facilitate the workshop during the three days. Invitations were again extended widely to ensure the workshop reflected the importance of encompassing wide-ranging perspectives across government, regional organisations, civil society, the fishing industry, as well as an independent expert review of the legal context.

Workshop 2 included 39 participants from the Fiji government including the MoF and Ministry of Environment (MoE), national and regional fishing industry, and environmental and labour Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) over a period of two and a half days.



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Workshop objectives

- Better understand the wider global focus on transparency and what that may mean for Fiji as well as gain insights into actual implementation initiatives that are taking place globally.
- Understand the current work that supports transparency in fisheries or that is linked to fisheries.
- Outline the challenges faced by the MoF in moving forward with greater transparency and discuss possible solutions to overcome these barriers.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and the potential pathways for progress.

DAY 1

Workshop participants kicked off day 1 of the workshop by outlining their expectations and goals for the next three days. The key objectives included:

- Facilitate wider engagement with key stakeholders and ensure the excellent work of the previous workshop was not lost.
- Maintain momentum by identifying key roles, responsibilities and governance requirements for the project.
- Identify specific actions or those things needed to make real progress in advancing fisheries transparency..
- Improve understanding of transparency, what it means for Fiji, high-level support needs and the legislative and regulatory support needed to make it happen.
- Identify the challenges/barriers to implementation and identify possible solutions.
- Develop a plan to ensure the support of ongoing efforts toward increasing Fisheries Transparency in Fiji and implement recommendations.
- Most critically, ensure the right resources (funding, systems and personnel) are put in place to make it all happen.

Session 1 – Global Refresh

The first session of the workshop focused on three global transparency initiatives from the CFT, FiTI, and Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF). The purpose of these three presentations was to give global context to fisheries transparency work as well as highlight tools that might benefit Fiji in the process of developing its own transparency projects. Furthermore, as these are international organizations already working in this geographic context, they offer opportunities to collaborate and further this work.

CFT is a global network of civil society organizations (CSOs) that emphasizes the key role that CSOs can play in driving policy change worldwide. CFT presented its Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency which consists of 10 key priorities. The Global Charter aims to provide an actionable framework with advocacy tools, clear low-cost solutions, and measures that governments can adopt in partnership with CSOs and other partners. The principles are divided into three buckets: vessel information (principles 1-4), fishing activity (principles 5-7), and governance and management (principles 8-10). These principles are designed to be implemented by states so that information about vessels and fishing activity is widely available to support fisheries management regimes that ensure seafood is free from illegal fishing practices and human rights abuses. CFT works to help tailor the process country by country to help create enabling conditions and campaigns within countries that make a voluntary endorsement of the Global Charter.

FiTI presented on the meaning of transparency and the many different ways this can be applied to fisheries. The presenter outlined the three main categories of transparency efforts: authenticating seafood as it moves through the supply chain with an emphasis on consumer confidence; compliance of fisheries activities to identify illicit behaviour; and fisheries management by governments. FiTI is a multistakeholder partnership that aims to bring greater transparency, participation, and inclusivity to fisheries management by ensuring equal participation from government, companies, and civil society. The implementation of FiTI is voluntary and country-centred, with governments who are willing to follow the mandatory requirements of the FiTI Standard. The FiTI Standard provides governments, the fishing industry (both large-scale and small-scale), and civil society with a comprehensive and credible way to achieve and maintain high levels of transparency on the management of the marine fisheries sector and the activities of fishers and fishing companies.

EJF then presented on transparency work focused on combatting IUU fishing and human rights abuses in Thailand. EJF's work in Thailand centred around highlighting the linkages between unsustainable fishing practices, IUU fishing, and forced labour and how the lack of connectivity for crews at sea is a contributing factor to that risk. Prior to 2015, there was a lack of monitoring, control, and surveillance schemes (MCS), no compliance with international standards, and no fleet control in Thailand. There were several allegations of human rights abuses on board vessels. EJF worked to mandate vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and inspections to screen for indicators of abuse. The presentation emphasized the need for labour considerations to be built into transparency initiatives.

Session 2 – Fiji Focus

The second session of the day was focused on Fiji's specific context and the work being done so far. Starting with reintroducing the "Improving Fisheries Transparency in Fiji" Project. The main objective of the project was "to secure a commitment from government to implement transparency in fisheries." This was a 3-year project funded by Oceans 5, a group of philanthropists with a shared desire to see tangible improvements in the health of our global ocean and strengthening ocean conservation. The project's activities included engaging with the MoF to champion transparency in the fisheries sector; securing an agreement on the concept of increased transparency in the fisheries sector and in other relevant government agencies; and a commitment from government to implement the obligations for increased transparency. Consultations with key stakeholders including workshops and smaller pocket meetings, communicating the message of fisheries transparency to the wider community using various platforms, and developing an ocean ranger programme for Fiji in partnership with the relevant agencies made up the planned work programme of the project.

One of the main priorities for the next phase of this project included engaging with the MoF to champion transparency in the fisheries sector. This includes identifying barriers to achieving greater transparency, consulting regularly about the latest global developments, reviewing and preparing a MCS strategy, securing a commitment from the government of Fiji and key stakeholders to improving fisheries transparency, releasing a position paper for key audiences, and discussing potential new policies. This work must be done with input from government, NGOs, and industry. As such, a key next step of the work is to establish a multistakeholder working group that will be headed by the MoF.



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The next presentation provided an overview of the legal landscape for transparency in Fiji. The speaker emphasized the fact that greater transparency can benefit national fisheries management by helping decision makers make informed decisions and building trust in the government. Fiji's Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012 establishes various fisheries management tools including consequences for fishing without a license, fishing in closed areas, prohibited fishing methods, and long-term sustainable management plans. The speaker noted that some of Fiji's legislation is already aligning with the aims of transparency, and with some amendments there could be immediate signs of progress towards greater fisheries transparency. The session concluded by detailing what activities the MoF was already undertaking and where improvements could be made based on guidance from NGOs like CFT, FiTI, and others. Important questions about the legality around data confidentiality and other industry concerns were also raised.

Session 3 – Progress from workshop 1

The third and last session of Day 1 was dedicated to assessing the progress made in the interim year between workshop 1 and workshop 2 of the project. WWF Fiji and the MoF co-presented on the different activities undertaken from the 15 recommendations of workshop 1.

Evaluating the current status of fisheries transparency in Fiji – There was a fair amount of engagement with government agencies, industry, CSOs, and other service providers for the creation of the summary report from workshop 1. There was also continued engagement with other governments and discussions with the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST), but many discussions either stalled or did not result in concrete actions. The MoF underwent some major personnel changes which impacted the momentum following the first workshop and has also impacted MoF's capacity to address these projects.



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Industry status regarding fishery transparency in Fiji – There is a need to properly understand and document the transparency efforts of industry and it was noted that industry representatives in the room desired greater participation moving forward, especially with the multistakeholder working group. The MSC certification process involved MoF, the Fiji Fishing Industry Association (FFIA), and WWF Fiji as part of the consultation process and could provide further insight into areas of improvement. MoF is working with IT to ensure they are collaborating and now are looking at how to continue improving the systems and what the associated costs might be.

Technology options and direction – While the consensus remains that technology systems will play an important role in furthering Fiji's transparency work, there was no progress on identifying technology providers or assessing existing options.

The overall direction for fishery transparency in Fiji – The working group had not yet been established, but remains an important next step in this process, including understanding what is and is not possible in this space and developing a road map for Fiji. Discussions also included potential activities for the working group such as identifying sustainable financing to modernize the domestic fleet, increasing communication and cooperation amongst stakeholders, and learning to celebrate successes.

The overall conclusion of the session was that while some progress has been made, many efforts are either by individual organizations and there has been a lack of coordination on some of the larger objectives.

Recommended Next Steps from Workshop 1 (Oct 2023)

Evaluating the current status of fisheries transparency in Fiji:

1. Evaluating what works against what needs more work.
2. Mapping existing transparency initiatives and their criteria to benchmark where fisheries transparency in Fiji currently sits.
3. Build capability within the Ministry to monitor fisheries and document catch.

Industry status regarding fishery transparency in Fiji:

4. Mapping what industry already implements in relation to fisheries transparency including documenting reflections from industry.
5. Document the improvements and/or gaps that the existing MSC Chain of Custody fills.
6. Streamline the internal processes within the industry at the fisher and processor levels through digitization and automation. Ensure the system can be used to gain insights from improved data.
7. Develop comparative analysis of real time catch tracking within the FFIA fleet.

Technology options and direction:

8. Identify what could be improved by technology providers.
9. Develop selection criteria for technology providers and critically assess the technology options, including designing the practical business rules before changing regulations or law, or designing/ selecting IT solutions.

The overall direction for fishery transparency in Fiji:

10. Establish an independently facilitated working group to develop these recommendations into a coherent work plan that is resourced, implemented and reported upon.
11. Conduct a study tour of fishery transparency systems being successfully used in similar jurisdictions or fisheries.
12. Describe what a Fit for Purpose Ocean Transparency Framework would be for Fiji.
13. Explore potential partners to develop a fishery transparency pilot towards fulfilling the sustainable financing requested by FFIA to modernize the domestically based fleet.
14. In establishing the independent working group, scope the potential for work program efficiencies in applying analysis and learnings to improve fishery transparency in the small-scale inshore fisheries sector in Fiji.
15. Document and communicate, including in a public campaign (repeated annually over 5 years), the benefits of existing transparency initiatives to build confidence in sustainable fisheries management and fair treatment of workers by Fiji tuna fisheries.



DAY 2

Workshop participants began the day by sharing reflections and goals from the first day of the workshop. Key participant takeaways were that there are several initiatives and tools available that Fiji could build on to help jump start this work, but ultimately participants wanted to see decisive actions taken following this workshop.

Session 1 – Fisheries Transparency Case Studies

This session featured case studies from the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), New Zealand, Australia, and the US to share the fisheries transparency efforts and perspectives.

FFA presented their regional MCS strategy for 2024-2029 giving an overview of the strategy and main goals. The scope of the strategy focuses on MCS arrangements for offshore fisheries for tuna in the Pacific Islands Region, is a component of the overall Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), covers EEZ, high seas, and businesses covered under Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). The primary goal of the strategic plan recognizes that the primary function of MCS is to support sustainable management of fisheries resources. The speaker then outlined the main objectives of the strategy and answered questions from other workshop participants.

Next, case studies were presented to showcase work around labour transparency work in New Zealand and fisheries management transparency in Australia. WWF US presented on the current market appetite for transparency from the US government and market access requirements that encourage transparency and traceability from exporters.

Session 2 – Ocean Ranger Program

This session focused on a proposed project called the “Ocean Rangers Program” (ORP) the goal of which is to create a voluntary program to help prevent IUU activities and boost the limited monitoring capacity of national enforcement agencies.

Ocean rangers would help monitor national waters with the intent of ensuring that activities occurring in these waters fell within what is deemed legal. The ORP would require a collaborative, regional approach with coordination between Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, and other areas that have high probability of vessel encounters. The program would utilize tools such as Global Fishing Watch (GFW) to identify areas of transshipment and discussed the possibility of developing an app to crowdsource information around potential IUU activities.

Discussions that followed covered the feasibility of such a program, infrastructure needs, potential risks and liability, as well as challenges to coordination.

Session 3 – Working Group Discussion

The workshop participants were divided into three smaller working group to answer two questions:

1. What has been learned and what has changed since the first workshop?
2. What should be Fiji's core focus going forward and why?

The discussions across the three groups emphasized the critical role of transparency in fisheries management, highlighting progress, challenges, and necessary actions. There is growing recognition that transparency enhances accountability, sustainability, and informed decision-making, but its success depends on political will, stakeholder engagement, and trust-building. While there have been workshops and consultations, more concrete steps are needed, such as the formation of a technical working group with clear responsibilities and regular meetings. The government's commitment, reflected in the 2024-2029 Fisheries Strategy, signals readiness for reform, yet challenges like limited resources, outdated legislation, and data accessibility remain.

Key actions identified include improving data-sharing protocols, fostering inclusive decision-making that involves traditional fishers and communities, and enhancing enforcement capacity through training and funding. There is a strong push to review and modernize fisheries laws, digitize records, and secure funding from both government and international sources. Additionally, advancing technology adoption for monitoring and reporting, supporting Fijian-owned and flagged vessels, and ensuring compliance with international labour and fisheries agreements are crucial steps. Strengthening collaboration between industry, NGOs, and government agencies will be essential to overcoming barriers and driving lasting transparency reforms.

Group 1

Key Learnings:

- Transparency involves sharing the right information and ensuring access to data
- The first transparency workshop in 2023 lacked clarity, but progress is evident in the second workshop
- Effective transparency fosters accountability, sustainability, traceability, and better decision-making
- Trust is crucial and must be built through relationships
- Continuous collaboration and communication among stakeholders are essential

Actions Needed:

1. Enhancing Collaboration:
 - a. Establish a technical working group and conduct follow-up consultations
 - b. Hold regular meetings (e.g., quarterly)
2. Steps to Improve Transparency in Fiji:
 - a. Ensure access to data and incorporate transparency in workflows (e.g., data sharing)
 - b. Develop a Terms of Reference (ToR) to define Working Group (WG) responsibilities
 - c. MoF to lead the initiative
3. Legislative & Regulatory Improvements:
 - a. Review and strengthen existing laws (e.g., Fisheries Act 1942).
 - b. Update fines and penalties
 - c. Support the ongoing review of Fiji's Offshore Fisheries Management Regulations
4. Market & Compliance Considerations:
 - a. Ensure data and information accessibility to support fisheries transparency
 - b. Implement measures to safeguard key markets, such as the EU market

Group 2

Key Learnings:

- Improved understanding of global transparency efforts
- Greater preparedness for transparency but dependent on political will
- Identifying stakeholders is essential for progress
- Government support and management participation are crucial
- Need to determine readiness to establish a technical working group and address barriers to progress

Actions Needed:

1. Short-Term Actions:
 - a. Develop a work plan with timeline and accountability
 - b. Build trust and encourage buy-in through open discussions and mutual learning
 - c. Identify key stakeholders, skills, and organizations working in fisheries transparency
 - d. Conduct government and stakeholder consultations to foster collaboration
 - e. Assess legal frameworks, existing laws, and policies impacting transparency
 - f. Launch a public awareness campaign targeting stakeholders and communities
2. Long-Term Actions:
 - a. Digitize existing records to improve data accessibility
 - b. Develop a coordinated and targeted approach for sustained transparency efforts

Group 3

Key Learnings:

- Leadership changes with a new Minister for Fisheries and Permanent Secretary
- Increased use of electronic systems for monitoring and reporting
- Recognition of seafarers' agreements with major states (e.g., UAE)
- Need for inclusive industry-NGO-MoF consultations and improved fisheries management
- The 2024-2029 Fisheries Strategy signals stronger government commitment
- Greater capacity building and resources are needed for enforcement officers
- Initial discussions on diversifying the fishing industry and implementing international labor and fisheries agreements

Actions Needed:

1. Adopt a multi-sectoral approach to fisheries management through a working group
2. Establish clear data-sharing protocols between industry and the MoF
3. Secure resources and technology for better monitoring and reporting
4. Ensure inclusive decision-making by involving traditional fishers, communities, and the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC)
5. Strengthen fisheries enforcement by investing in training, personnel retention, and funding
6. Increase government investment in Fijian-owned and Fijian-flagged vessels
7. Ensure international commitments on labour rights and fisheries are implemented at the national level



DAY 3

The day started with a recap of Day 2 discussions and raising the need for greater public awareness and youth participation in this transparency work.

Session 1 – Revisiting FiTI’s approach

FiTI led a second session on the potential approach for Fiji if the MoF were to adopt the FiTI standards. The presenter outlined the possible structure of a multistakeholder group which would result in an overall group size of 15 members with 5 government representatives, 5 businesses, and 5 CSOs. Each stakeholder group should choose who represents them in the group with a three year term limit (with potential to be renewed). The multi stakeholder group is consensus driven with equal participation, specific voting procedures, quarterly meetings, operational support, terms of reference, and a code of conduct. The FiTI approach does not have a minimum threshold to start the process and is based on progressive improvement rather than a set timeline.

Session 2 – Mapping Fiji’s progress against the Global Charter Principles

CFT led an exercise mapping the current progress in Fiji against the 10 principles of the Global Charter (see Table 1). The exercise revealed that Fiji met Principles 1, 4, 6, and 7 and partially met Principles 2, 3, 5, 8, and 9. The only Principle not met was 10: Collect data on the conditions of fishing vessel crews and publish it in aggregate form.

This exercise highlighted the current status of fisheries transparency in Fiji while clearly identifying areas of improvement. CFT further iterated how the coalition could support Fiji in addressing the gaps in Principles 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10, should the Ministry choose to endorse the Global Charter. Drawing from its experience working with CSOs and governments in other regions, CFT emphasized its ability to facilitate progress through its established network and expertise in implementing these principles.

TABLE 1: CFT Principles of Fisheries Transparency Against Current Practice in Fiji

Coalition for Fisheries Transparency (CFT) Principle Number	Status in Fiji Plenary discussion responses by the MoF
1. Require unique identification numbers for all fishing vessels (including transport and supply vessels)	All vessels fishing beyond Fiji's EEZ have a UVI as required under Fijian regulations. Requires RFMOs to provide specific vessel identification including vessel name, call sign number, and registration number, and registration number.
2. Publish list of licences, authorisation, and sanctions	<p>WCPFC website has vessel listing information on licenses and IUU-listed vessels for vessels beyond Fijian waters.</p> <p>No information currently on sanctions, authorisations, and access agreements - not including information on coastal fisheries, focused on offshore. FFA maintains a record of fishing vessels and their public standing</p>
3. Make public the beneficial ownership of vessels	<p>Currently recording and publishing the owning company of offshore fishing vessels, not the ultimate beneficial owner (UBO)</p> <p>Fijian government is recording the UBO but it is not publicly available. Company search is possible (with cost) via the government database within the registrar's office. Still converting paper-based files to electronic.</p> <p>Current gaps regarding legal ownership vs beneficial ownership information. Policies to track beneficial owners across sectors for investment purposes within Fiji</p>
4. Stop the use of flags of convenience by fishing vessels	New vessels being flagged to Fiji go through review and approval process, including UBO, comparison against IUU-listing and vessel inspection Strong national vessel register
5. Make vessel position data public	Current gap - still need to figure out what vessel information can be made available

Coalition for Fisheries Transparency (CFT) Principle Number	Status in Fiji Plenary discussion responses by the MoF
6. Ban or closely monitor at-sea transshipment	Domestic fleet: Transshipment monitored under current legislation. Only support transshipment.
7. Mandate seafood traceability from boat to plate	Mandates seafood traceability from boat to plate as aligned with the EU regulations for import
8. Ratify international agreements that set standards for fishing vessels and trade. (Including the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) Agreement on Port State Measures; International Labour Organization (ILO) Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; ILO C188; and International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Cape Town Agreement)	Have ratified the PSMA
9. Ensure public and equitable access to fisheries data and participation in fisheries management and decision-making.	Government engages in public consultation with civil society, NGOs, and industry on fisheries.
10. Collect data on the conditions of fishing vessel crews and publish it in aggregate form.	Ministry of Labour oversees labour component on fishing vessels

KEY

	Principles met
	Principles partially met
	Principles not met

Session 3 – Working Group Discussion

The workshop participants were divided into smaller working group to answer two questions:

1. What actions are needed now to maintain momentum for the project?
2. What are the priorities, timelines, responsibilities, and actions for next steps?

The discussions emphasized the need for strong governance, leadership, and coordination to advance fisheries transparency. A dedicated working group, backed by the MoF, is crucial for structuring efforts, setting clear objectives, and ensuring accountability. Key actions include conducting a SWOT analysis, securing sustainable funding, and improving inter-agency collaboration to streamline decision-making. Strengthening infrastructure, technology, and data-sharing platforms at both national and regional levels is essential.

Additionally, clear governance frameworks, a work plan with defined milestones, and public awareness campaigns will help build trust and engagement among stakeholders.

However, several challenges hinder progress, including political reluctance, limited resources, and regulatory barriers that slow reforms. A lack of coordination, stakeholder trust, and leadership engagement further complicates efforts. Many stakeholders are hesitant due to uncertainty about the cost-benefit of transparency, while secrecy around data sharing remains a significant concern. Overcoming these barriers requires stronger government buy-in, clearer mandates, and dedicated leadership to drive transparency initiatives forward.

Group 1

Key Actions:

- Include the inshore sector in transparency discussions
- Conduct a risk assessment (SWOT) on public information misuse
- Embed a dedicated resource/person within the Ministry to support transparency efforts
- Establish formal collaboration through a working group or MSC
- Review existing mechanisms to improve transparency
- Identify funding sources, including government, international donors, and cost recovery methods
- Secure a legislative mandate for a transparency group
- Obtain government approval for fisheries transparency initiatives
- Enhance information technology systems for better data management

Challenges/Barriers to Progress:

- Political will and commitment
- Limited resources (personnel and funding)
- Confidentiality clauses restricting data sharing
- Risk of misusing transparency for the wrong motives
- Mindset and resistance to change
- Corruption affecting transparency efforts

Group 2

Key Actions:

- Secure sustainable funding through long-term planning and deliberate financing strategies
- Establish a focus group or informal taskforce to drive initial efforts
- Conduct resource mapping to identify gaps and existing capacities
- Develop clear governance frameworks with strong leadership from a government champion
- Define a focal point with a structured work plan, strategy, and timeline
- Assess existing transparency principles (e.g., CFT, FiTI) and determine the best approach
- Launch public awareness campaigns and enhance communication systems for outreach
- Promote digitization to improve data management and accessibility
- Set clear goals, activities, and milestones within a structured timeline

Challenges/Barriers to Progress:

- Limited political will and difficulty securing government buy-in
- Competing priorities leading to insufficient manpower and funding
- High costs and challenges in securing appropriate funding sources
- Difficulties in forming partnerships due to conflicting interests
- Lack of public awareness and the need for a localized communication strategy
- Confusion over different policies and transparency principles
- No dedicated working group or leadership to drive progress
- Limited infrastructure, including technology and data management systems
- Lack of coordination among stakeholders, leading to inefficiencies and slowed progress
- Trust issues and negative perceptions around data sharing and transparency



Group 3

Key Actions:

- MoF to take leadership, providing structure and support for the working group
- Establish a clear timeline, stakeholder roles, and responsibilities for WG participation
- Conduct a SWOT analysis of Fijian fisheries and management
- Assess and secure resources (funding, staff, technology, infrastructure) to support WG operations
- Strengthen inter-agency coordination and collaboration with industry, NGOs, and other stakeholders
- Improve technology and infrastructure to support fisheries data management and transparency
- Align national and regional data-sharing platforms with a dedicated coordination team

- Track and share progress through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Finalize WG operations through a ToR with clear objectives and timelines

Challenges/Barriers to Progress:

- Regulatory and legal barriers limiting fisheries transparency reforms
- Lack of engagement from WG members, secrecy around data sharing
- Limited capacity and resources within MoF to operationalize the WG
- Uncertainty about the cost-benefit of transparency, leading to hesitation
- Difficulty securing government buy-in and high-level support
- Challenges in involving key decision-makers and implementers in discussions
- Lack of trust among stakeholders, with differing levels of concern over transparency



DISCUSSION THEMES

This section outlines the key issues and topics raised during the workshop regarding Fiji's path toward greater fisheries transparency. These discussions centred around critical areas that need attention and action, from the establishment of a multistakeholder working group to overcoming barriers in technology adoption and data sharing. Central to these conversations was the need for the MoF to take a leadership role, with a focus on improving capacity, enhancing IT infrastructure, and collaborating with both local and international stakeholders. The following subsections delve deeper into these themes, exploring the challenges, opportunities, and practical steps that can be taken to strengthen transparency in Fiji's fisheries sector, as well as the importance of celebrating progress and keeping the momentum going

Multistakeholder Working group

One of the most reoccurring topics was the need for a multistakeholder working group headed by the MoF. Many participants felt that the establishment of this official group would be a big signal that the MoF is serious about its commitments to transparency and that work will continue to move forward. Regular meetings should be scheduled to ensure consistent collaboration and progress. The group will be responsible for developing a roadmap to address barriers to transparency and advancing the implementation of transparency initiatives in Fiji.

Navigating Barriers to

Transparency

Discussions during the workshop highlighted several broader challenges that Fiji faces in advancing fisheries transparency. One significant issue is the economic status of the offshore fishing fleet, which is affected by high fuel costs, low prices, and declining catches. Given these pressures, technology adoption—particularly for transparency purposes—may not be a priority for the industry at this time. Additionally, there are concerns about the capacity within the MoF and enforcement agencies, which may limit their ability to effectively oversee and manage fisheries practices.

Another critical challenge identified was the lack of robust IT systems for digital record-keeping and data sharing. The group emphasized the need to enhance Fiji's IT infrastructure to support real-time data collection and improve transparency. Addressing these technical barriers, including strengthening the IT systems for better data-sharing capabilities, will be a key focus for the working group moving forward.

The MoF's lack of capacity, both in terms of staffing and resources, was also acknowledged by participants. This limitation affects the MoF's ability to effectively manage fisheries, enforce regulations, and support the implementation of transparency initiatives. Strengthening the MoF's capacity will be crucial for improving oversight and driving the success of fisheries transparency efforts. This could be achieved by improved technology systems and streamlined recordkeeping processes that would reduce the administrative burden and capacity strain on the Ministry.

Data sharing and technology

Data access and sharing are fundamental to effective fisheries management and transparency. Reliable, accessible data allows key stakeholders—such as the government, industry, and civil society—to make informed decisions about fishery practices and sustainability. Transparency in fisheries relies heavily on robust data-sharing systems, which ensure real-time tracking of fishing activities, catch documentation, and vessel operations. This enables authorities to detect and address IUU fishing, promoting a more sustainable and accountable fishing industry.

However, there are several challenges related to data sharing. Barriers include limited technological infrastructure, concerns over data confidentiality, and capacity constraints within the MoF and other agencies involved. Balancing data privacy and commercial confidentiality with the need for transparency is essential, especially when dealing with sensitive information related to vessel operations and business interests. Tailored solutions will be necessary to address these concerns while still ensuring that transparency is prioritized.

Technology plays a crucial role in overcoming these challenges and enabling better data sharing. Solutions like electronic monitoring systems (EMS), VMS, and electronic catch documentation can automate tracking and reporting, improving data accuracy and efficiency. The digitization of record-keeping will help reduce administrative burdens, streamline fisheries management, and support real-time data collection for enhanced monitoring. Strengthening Fiji's IT infrastructure and integrating technologies like Global Fishing Watch will be vital for improving monitoring and compliance, particularly in addressing IUU fishing activities. Moving forward, the working group will be instrumental in identifying technology partners and evaluating solutions that align with Fiji's fisheries transparency goals.

Mapping legislation, stakeholders, and international tools

A key task will be to map existing legislation to identify gaps, opportunities, and areas where current laws can be strengthened, particularly in relation to data access, fisheries management, and international obligations. This will involve understanding the current regulatory landscape and determining what improvements are needed through national legislation to align with transparency goals. The working group will also assess how existing frameworks, such as FiTI and CFT, can support these efforts and help guide the process.

Additionally, identifying potential local and international partners for transparency initiatives will be a priority. This includes collaborating with NGOs, regional organizations, neighbouring governments, and other relevant bodies to create a network of stakeholders committed to improving fisheries transparency and ensuring sustainable management practices.

Celebrating wins

Although some progress has been made, the results may not have been effectively communicated to previous workshop participants, which may have hindered the momentum of the project. To maintain engagement and secure public buy in, it will be crucial to implement communications strategies to emphasize the importance of this work and Fiji's successes. As part of the long-term goals, the working group should plan to celebrate milestones and successes by the end of the first phase of the project. This could include publishing a report, issuing a press release, or creating a web story to highlight the progress made in fisheries transparency and ensure stakeholders are recognized for their contributions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short term

1. Establish a multistakeholder working group that consists of representatives from the MoF, NGOs, and industry and set a regular meeting schedule.
2. The working group will develop a road map of how to address the barriers to transparency identified in this workshop and how to move transparency forward in Fiji. This can include activities such as:
 - Mapping existing legislation to identify key opportunities, gaps, and areas to build on existing work. This includes access to data, fisheries management policies, and international obligations.
 - Mapping potential partners in the transparency space. This could include local and international NGOs, regional governing bodies, neighbouring national governments, and others for collaboration.
 - Identifying needs for a more robust IT structure, including potential partners.
 - Developing a work plan with goals, activities, and milestones to be achieved in a set timeline.
3. The MoF, on behalf of the government of Fiji, should consider making commitments to endorse the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency and adopt the FiTI standard. This will publicly signal Fiji's commitment to improving fisheries transparency and help provide additional framework for the working group to develop the road map for national-level efforts.

Medium term

1. The MoF, with input and assistance from the working group, should work to develop a national policy for Fisheries Transparency that builds on existing legal frameworks, compliments international and regional transparency policies, and codifies Fiji's transparency goals.
2. The MoF, with input and assistance from the working group, should move towards full digitization of record keeping system for ease of data sharing and reducing capacity burden on industry, the MoF, and enforcement agencies.
3. The working group should develop public awareness campaigns that highlight the progress made in fisheries transparency and its importance to all constituents and stakeholder groups.

Long term

1. Establishing a plan to improve Fiji's fleet capacity through modernization of electronic monitoring systems, electronic catch documentation, and other
2. Increase enforcement capacity through the development and establishment of the Ocean Rangers Program to assist with on data collection and monitoring to counter IUU activities.
3. The working group should make plans to celebrate wins achieved by the end of phase one of this transparency work. This could include a report, press release, web story, or other such announcement to highlight the progress made.

CONCLUSION

The Fiji Transparency Workshop series has successfully outlined a clear path toward enhancing fisheries transparency in Fiji, highlighting key areas for immediate and long-term action. The discussions have emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts across government, industry, and civil society to tackle the challenges associated with transparency, data sharing, and fisheries management.

A multistakeholder working group will be crucial in driving these efforts forward, addressing barriers, and ensuring the development of a robust roadmap that aligns with global best practices. The importance of data sharing, technological advancements, and the establishment of effective IT infrastructure was underscored as pivotal to improving transparency, ensuring sustainable fisheries practices, and combating illegal fishing.

While challenges remain, particularly in terms of resources, capacity, and coordination, the steps outlined provide a comprehensive framework for advancing transparency in Fiji's fisheries sector. The next steps are clear: strengthen collaboration, secure commitment from key stakeholders, implement necessary policy reforms, and focus on both immediate actions and long-term sustainability.

Celebrating successes, recognizing milestones, and continuously engaging stakeholders will be essential to maintaining momentum and ensuring that Fiji remains on track to achieving a transparent, sustainable, and globally recognized fisheries management system. Through sustained effort and collaboration, Fiji has the opportunity to set a precedent in the Pacific for fisheries transparency and responsible ocean management.

Next Steps

The MoF should demonstrate clear leadership by making a formal commitment to fisheries transparency, such as endorsing the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency and adopting the FiTI Standard. This commitment will publicly signal Fiji's dedication to improving transparency in its fisheries sector. To ensure progress toward these commitments, the MoF should establish a multistakeholder working group composed of representatives from the government, NGOs, industry, and civil society. This group will be responsible for developing a detailed roadmap to address barriers to transparency, and regular meetings should be scheduled to ensure consistent collaboration and progress.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Workshop 2 Draft Programme

IMPROVING FISHERIES TRANSPARENCY IN FIJI

06th – 08th October 2024

Novotel Suva Lami Bay, Lami, Fiji

Objectives

The Objective of this Workshop 2 is:

- To unpack challenges identified by stakeholders in last year's transparency workshop.
- To do a deep dive into finding solutions that guide and support improving fisheries transparency in Fiji.
- To facilitate a comprehensive understanding of fisheries transparency within the legal framework of Fiji.
- To identify potential tools and approaches that can be adapted to Fiji's unique context to achieve greater transparency in fisheries management.

Wednesday 06 th November 2024		DAY 1	
Time	Agenda	Description	Responsible
0700 – 0830	Registration		WWF Fiji / Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
0830 – 0930	Prayer		
	Welcoming		
	Remarks by WWF-Fiji		
	Remarks by the chief guest – Ministry of Fisheries		
	Remarks by the Facilitator – Tony Craig (NZ)		
0930 – 1000	Housekeeping matters		Novotel
	MORNING TEA		

SESSION 1 - Global Refresh			
1000 – 1100 Includes Q&A	Presentation by Fisheries Transparency Initiatives (FiTI)	About FiTI and fisheries transparency FiTI’s transparency initiatives FiTI’s in-country work	Sven Biermann Executive Director, FiTI
1100 – 1200 Includes Q&A	Presentation by Coalition for Fisheries Transparency (CFT)	About the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency The Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency and its application CFT’s campaign approach	Emily Porterfield Senior Associate of Membership & Outreach, CFT
1200 – 1300 Includes Q&A	Online Presentation by Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)	About the EJF The EJF Transparency Principles and practical applications for transparency A global toolkit for participatory fisheries governance	Pruksa (Pat) Singhapol SE Asia Regional Manager, EJF
1300 – 1400	LUNCH		Novotel
SESSION 2 – FIJI FOCUS			
1400 – 1430	Reintroducing “Improving Fisheries Transparency in Fiji” Project	Objectives, activities to date, planned work programme	Seremaia Tuqiri WWF Fiji
1430 – 1500	Fisheries transparency in Fiji from a legal perspective	National legislation in relation to fisheries transparency International agreements and commitments	James Sloan Lawyer & Partner, Siwatibau & Sloan Lawyers
1500 – 1515	Q&A		Facilitator (Tong Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
1515 – 1530	AFTERNOON TEA		Novotel
SESSION 3- Progress from Workshop 1			
1530 – 1535	Introducing the session	Recap - 15 recommended steps from the first transparency workshop in 2023	Facilitator (Tong Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
1535 – 1550	WWF-Fiji	Reflections on what has worked, what has not & approach going forward.	Seremaia Tuqiri WWF Fiji
1550 – 1605	Ministry of Fisheries – perspectives and thoughts	Reflections on what has worked, what has not & approach going forward.	Meli Raicebe Principal Fisheries Officer, Ministry of Fisheries

1605 – 1630	Q&A or Panel Discussion	Opportunities for improvement – reducing barriers to success.	Facilitator (Tong Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
END OF DAY 1			
Thursday 07 th November 2024		DAY 2	
0730 – 0830	Registration		WWF Fiji
0830 – 0900	Prayer & Recap	Summary of Day 1	Facilitator (Tong Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
0900 – 1000	Continue from SESSION 3 of Day 1: Breakout Session	Sharing thoughts and perspectives of the previous day Challenges/ barriers to progress and solutions identified and documented.	Facilitator (Tong Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
1000 – 1015	MORNING TEA		Novotel
SESSION 1 – Fisheries Transparency from the FFA, NZ, Australia, WWF US Perspectives			
1015 - 1045	Presentation – a regional Pacific Islands perspective	The new 2024 - 2029 Regional MCS Strategy (RMCSS) How can the Transparency project link up to the 6 objectives under the RMCSS	Allan Rahari Director Fisheries Operations Division, FFA
1045 – 1115	Virtual Presentation by MBIE, New Zealand	Fisheries Labour Transparency in NZ	Kevin Finnigan Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment Wellington, NZ
1115 – 1145	Virtual Presentation from Wollongong University, NSW, Australia	Fisheries Management Transparency in Australia	rofessor Alistair McIlgorm, Wollongong University, NSW, Australia
1145 – 1215	Presentation by WWF US	Fisheries Market Transparency in the USA	Colleen Sullivan WWF US Washington, USA
1215 – 1230	Q&A	Discussion on challenges and barriers to progress	Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
1230 – 1330	LUNCH		
SESSION 2 – Ocean Ranger Programme (ORP)			
1330 – 1400	Present on the ORP concept	Ocean Ranger Programme (ORP) – an introduction	Seremaia Tuqiri WWF Fiji
1430 – 1500	Deep dive into ORP	Presentation on how ORP could work	Semisi Seruitanoa Oceans 5

1500 – 1530	Q&A session	Focus: the ORP	Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
1530 – 1545	Afternoon Tea		
SESSION 3			
1545 – 1615	Breakout/ panel Session (prize for team that has the most responses; best scribe; feedback) Questions to test the audience throughout the 3 days	Reflection on the day – What was one of the key things you learnt from the day + 2 or 3 other questions (Note: Reflections to go on butcher paper)	Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
END OF DAY 2			
Friday 08 th November 2025 – DAY 3 ¹			
0700 – 0745	Registration		WWF
0745 - 0845	A FiTI presentation (tbc)	An introduction on the collective action for fisheries transparency	Sven Biermann, FiTI Leba Dranivesi, FiTI
0900 – 0930	Prayer & Recap	Summary of Day 2	Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited)
SESSION 1			
0930 – 1230	Breakout Session to gather feedback on key questions Morning Tea as you work in your groups	What have we learned/ what’s changed since the first workshop	Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited) / Participants
1230 – 1330	LUNCH		
1330 – 1430	Breakout Session to gather feedback on key questions	Deep dive into previous workshop last 6 recommendations (p.36 of Workshop Summary Report 2023) (What needs to happen to maintain/enhance momentum with the project?)	Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited)/ Participants

¹ The Friday programme was revised. Initially the FiTI presentation was intended to be a breakfast session but was then moved to become part of the main programme. The other sessions were combined enabling the programme on Day 3 to be completed by lunch hour.

1430 - 1515	<p>Breakout Session to gather feedback on key questions</p> <p>Afternoon tea as you work in your groups</p>	<p>Prioritisation, agreed actions, agreed timelines, agreed responsibilities</p> <p>E.g. Get a name from the respective agencies (within 2 weeks) to be part of the working group.</p> <p>Is there an existing WG?</p> <p>To establish how it will work and source funding to make WG work</p> <p>Agencies need to decide whether they are part</p>	Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited) / Participants
1515 – 1545	Recommended Next Step (and discussion on the Overall Direction for Fishery Transparency in Fiji)	Plenary	Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited) / WWF
1545 – 1600	Sum Up / Thank you	Plenary	Facilitator (Tony Craig, Terra Moana Limited) / WWF / Participants

WORKSHOP ENDS

Appendix 2

IMPROVING FISHERIES TRANSPARENCY IN FIJI

Workshop No. 2
Novotel Suva Lami Bay, Lami, FIJI
06 – 08 November 2024

List of Participants

NAME	ORGANISATION
1. Abhishek Kumar	Viti Foods Pte Ltd
2. Adriu Iene	WWF Pacific
3. Ajesh Dutt	WWF Pacific (ICT support)
4. Allan Rahari	Forum Fisheries Agency FFA)
5. Anil Prakash	Viti Foods Pte Ltd
6. Apete Dabea	Ministry of Fisheries
7. Arishma Ram	Ministry of Fisheries
8. Colleen Sullivan	WWF US
9. Duncan Williams	WWF Pacific
10. Emily Potterfield	Coalition for Fisheries Transparency (CFT)
11. Epi Batibasaga	Ministry of Fisheries
12. Ilisabeta Vataniyaragi	Ministry of Fisheries
13. James Sloan	Siwatibau & Sloan Lawyers
14. Jimmy Gaunavou	Ministry of Environment – Climate Change
15. Joseph Tamani	WWF Pacific (volunteer / rapporteuring)
16. Karalaini Rereavosa	WWF Pacific (rapporteuring)
17. Kenneth Katafono	TraSeable Solutions
18. Laisenia Maisema	Ministry of Fisheries
19. Leba Dranivesi	Fisheries Transparency Initiative – FiTI
20. Liliana Rabuku	Ministry of Fisheries
21. Meli Raicebe	Ministry of Fisheries
22. Namal Rajapake	Golden Ocean Fish Pte Ltd
23. Dr Patricia Kailola	Human Dignity Group (HDG)
24. Pauliasi Nawaqa	Ministry of Fisheries
25. Ranjeeta Chand	Ministry of Trade
26. Ravai Vafo'ou	WWF Pacific
27. Sairusi Colati	Fiji Navy
28. Saras Sharma	Blue Prosperity Fiji

NAME	ORGANISATION
29. Semisi Seruitanoa	Oceans 5
30. Seremaia Tuqiri	WWF Pacific
31. Shanil Dutt	Pacific Fishing Company (PAFCO)
32. Shomas Chand	Fiji Police Force
33. Stella Avalon	WWF Pacific volunteer (rapporteur)
34. Sven Biermann	Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)
35. Tony Craig	Terra Moana
36. Tui Marseu	WWF Pacific
37. Ulaiasi Matakaiwai	WWF Pacific volunteer (rapporteur)
38. Unaisi Rabici	Blue Prosperity Fiji
39. Vilisoni Tarabe	Conservation International (CI)







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