

**TEIKABUTI FISHING COMPANY**  
**LIMITED**  
(Est.1990)

**"Private sector participation in fisheries development in PICs:  
*a case study of the Teikabuti Fishing TFC Limited, Kiribati*"<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Paper prepared by Michael A. Savins, Managing Director, Teikabuti Fishing TFC, Kiribati

# 1. Introduction

Teikabuti Fishing Company (TFC) is a small-scale, family-owned and operated commercial fishing entity. The TFC was established in 1990 with the approval of the Kiribati Foreign Investment Department. The number of employees— casual and permanent, correlates strongly with the viability and success of the TFC's operations. The number range from a low of 6 to a high of 40 inclusive of working shareholders.

The TFC's aims and objectives have always been to develop sustainable viable marine exports, with emphasis on value added shelf stable products. Care has been taken not to duplicate the efforts of other small business fishing ventures so as to avoid local conflict and competition.

TFC has survived periods of great difficulty and financial stress, common to many small commercial companies in remote small island states. Its survival is due in large to its being private and family run.

Its operations include: targeted deep-water snapper's for export; development and production of a savoury dried fish snack (Tuna Jerky); development and production of pet foods; catching and exporting of Sashimi-grade tuna; collection and export of lobster, shrimps and shell-fish meat, and vending of by-catch, mainly filleted fish and other products on the local market.

## 2. TFC's Operational Experience: a chronology

### 1990-91

TFC's first vessel catch was sold on the local market. During this year work was carried out on the development of a savoury dried snack. A very basic processing facility was established and various solar dryers tested. In 1992, it gilled and gutted whole deepwater snapper and exported it to Majuro, Marshall Islands.

### 1992-93

Sashimi grade deepwater snapper were sent to Hawaii transiting through Majuro. Initially fish were sold to a fish wholesaler in Honolulu. However, we soon discovered that the United Fishing Agency (UFA) open auction in Honolulu was the better option in terms of market access and price for our product. In order to benefit from this auction market, TFC had to maintain a very high product quality consistently as well as volumes. Information on handling, export packaging, temperature control, etc. is widely and readily available from reports and regional organizations in the Pacific.

In the year 1993, Air Nauru commenced operations through Kiritimati (Christmas Island) to Honolulu. TFC immediately took advantage of this flight service and exported fish to Honolulu on this service. Operations came to an abrupt halt when this service was discontinued in 1995. Similarly, TFC's export market access route through Majuro to Honolulu ended in 1994.

Without airfreight routes, exports of fresh fish stopped. At this point the TFC's operations consisted of two vessels and eight other private subsidiary small boats supplying the TFC's fish catch. A total of 31 fishermen were involved. Four boats had been equipped with vertical longlines and a training programme focused on board handling of Sashimi grade tuna was implemented. These boats, together subsistence and other traditional outrigger canoes were involved in tuna catching. The latter involved a technique known as *drop stone fishing* for tuna.

TFC's own boats, while vertical longlining, would buy tuna from outrigger canoes at sea as soon as the tuna were landed.

The first consignment of tuna had just been sent to Honolulu when the flights stopped! It was a very difficult time for all involved.

The end of airfreight options to Honolulu highlighted the need to change direction. A shelf stable dried product would be able to survive long transit times at various airports. Tuna Jerky became the focus for our attention.

It came to our attention at this time that AESOP, the Australian Executive Service Overseas Programme, were able to field a retired Australian professional food technologist on a volunteer basis. Mr Brian Doyle proved the perfect adviser at that time. In two weeks he provided training and technical advise that would enable us to develop a high quality tuna jerky product. Brian evaluated and modified our solar convection drier, and designed a heater back up system to help reduce product loses in bad weather. He further convinced the Australian High Commission of the potential of the project and need for a commercial drier. After preparing a project document approved by the Kiribati Government, AusAID funded a new commercial heat pump drier and the production of high quality tuna jerky was on its way!

The new drier, is a very gentle method of drying the fish and it is ideal for the tuna jerky. Samples were produced and sent to various trade organizations and all known market outlets. Initially, our main sales were to the local markets, but eventually, after sending many samples to every known outlet, TFC secured overseas orders. Trade Commissions in New Zealand and Australia assisted in displaying our products at various trade shows. A representative was sent to the Fine Food 1995 show in Sydney, where our product was displayed on a South Pacific stand.

## **1994-95**

In 1994, the TFC commenced the export of live lobsters to Singapore. With advise from the buyer TFC developed a suitable holding system for live lobsters and packaging techniques that

allowed the lobsters to survive up to 48 hours in transit. Live mantis shrimp and crabs were also exported together with various other items such as frozen lobster tails, cooked and frozen lobster meat, frozen shellfish meat. As it happened, the two species of lobster in Kiribati– *Penularus Penularus*, and *Penularus Varicolor*, proved uneconomical because of their head size, considered to be large. There is, however, potential to export lobsters from Kiribati during the off-season in the Australian lobster industry.

In 1995, TFC became an agent for three Hawaii owned tuna longliner's. These operated out of Majuro in the Marshall Islands and during the 12 month operation in Kiribati, they would take on ice, bait, fuel and provisions in Majuro then travel to Tarawa, where they would fish and off load their catch ready for exporting to Japan, Hawaii and Australia

Experience gained from this longline operation became the basis for the TFC to commence its own small-scale longlining, using a hand hauled operation. However, this proved to be an inefficient operational method.

Nevertheless, experience gained from this small-scale longline operation was to prove invaluable in the development of the first prototype medium scale tuna longliner for the Kiribati Fisheries Division which has since proven very successful in the country..

### **1996-97**

1996, the Tuna Jerky marketing efforts began paying off. TFC exported 250 kilograms (kg) of Tuna Jerky to Australia, 50kg to New Zealand, 250kg to Korea, 750kg to Japan, and 50kg to Hawaii, We believed we had made it! Alas, in the following year, the large follow up orders did not happen. And this was just at the time we were preparing, at great expense, to move into a new factory!

TFC was then lucky enough to engage the services of yet another AESOP Volunteer Mr Ted Enright, who assisted us in carrying out a review of the product and processing techniques. He

also assisted in the improvement of a tuna by-product, *Catsnack*, which the TFC had been working on.

Ted believed there would be a good future for our products and recommended new processing techniques that would be more cost effective and could be replicated on large-scale production. Plans were formulated for future development.

### **1998-99**

The new factory was operational, aptly equipped with new machinery and equipments. A new style Tuna Jerky was developed, while its waste were developed into *a cat snack* and exported.

The Tuna Jerky appeared to suffer from deterioration of flavour due to its totally natural ingredients. A natural antioxidant produced in USA improved the storage of the product.

The Cat Snack was tested in Australia and proved to have a very high “cat acceptance” with no detriment to the age of the product.

In 1999, a new air link from Tarawa, Kiribati direct to Fiji began. TFC built an 11.6 metre fishing vessel to recommence fresh fish exports to Honolulu via Fiji. Deepwater snappers have been exported in 1999, 2000 and 2001.

It is the intention of the TFC to complete the vessel as a medium scale tuna longliner as soon as sufficient funds can be raised for equipment.

### 3. TFC's Operational Bottlenecks

There are a number of difficulties, barriers, obstacles which almost certainly have influenced the development, not to mention the profits, of the TFC and perhaps, it is appropriate to mention them here. The bottlenecks listed herein is drawn from the experiences of the author, which should be addressed at all levels—local, regional and international— so that positive changes are made in the short term for the betterment of the small business enterprises in Kiribati and other similar operation in fish-dependent pacific islands economies.

#### 1. Transport linkages

Kiribati has continually suffered from extremely unreliable Airline services, both international and domestic. Expensive freight rates have not so much been the limiting factor as suitable, reliable scheduled flights to meet connections to target markets.

#### 2. Consistent supply of quality products

The high volumes required and low market prices for frozen seafood products are a very limiting factor for sea freight considerations. Sea freighting of dried marine products such as shark fins and bech-de-mer has proven successful. Kiribati has a constant stream of buyers from Asia needing to buy these products. There do appear to have been a number of disappointed Asian businessmen over the years who have put in large amounts of capital in good faith, for such products as bech-de-mer and shark fins only to find they receive little or no product and little or no return of capital! This Kiribati attitude to business may well be a major constraint for the future development of marine exports!

#### 3. Local infrastructure

Internal infrastructure is seriously lacking in many areas. Most importantly for the TFC has been the non-availability of ice. TFC's most serious limitation has always been ice. The TFC's own

ice production has been insufficient; it having to supplement from wherever possible. During only five of the last ten years has there been available the approximately 750kg/day of ice needed. When one considers domestic landings of approximately 4.5 tons per day it can be seen the difficulties that arise from this insufficiency.

#### 4. Credit supply

TFC's operations have continually been impaired by insufficient capital to expand into more profitable exports. The investment required to achieve the TFC's goals has been unavailable! This has caused the MD to go overseas in search of advice and funds, the consequence of which has been to employ temporary Managers who unfortunately have had little incentive other than to barely keep the TFC going.

##### *4.1. Local credit supply*

The Bank of Kiribati appears to have no intentions of lending money to ventures with any element of risk. On the other hand The Development Bank of Kiribati has provided excellent support to TFC but is rather too limited in available funds.

##### *4.2. International finance*

International assistance The reality of World Bank Funding is that for small countries such as Kiribati, soft loans have been unavailable. It is not viable for them to monitor one small project in one small country. The TFC has twice applied to the South Pacific Project Facility (World Bank Affiliated) for funds and indeed a market study was carried out, but due to personalities at play within the organization at that time no project was ever formulated.

## 5. Government support

### 5.1. *Human resource development*

The Kiribati Fisheries Division has a pool of well-qualified staff but their effectiveness at work appears to be reduced by the lack of an ongoing planning, monitoring system, appropriate training and resources.

Regional Organizations stipulate that commercial companies should be selected for overseas training, which causes Government owned commercial corporations to be chosen before the private sector is considered.

Over the last ten years, the TFC received only one opportunity for overseas training. The fisherman sent returned a captain and has made an extremely positive impact on the TFC.

### 5.2. *Technical assistance*

The TFC has written to Government on numerous occasions over the past ten years to request consideration of incentives to assist marine exports. It should be noted that longline bait still carries a 60% import duty (in line with all fish imports). Yet distant water longline vessels enter and fish in Kiribati waters utilizing effective bait at a fraction of the cost of the same bait used by a domestic TFC. Government in 1998 to identify bottlenecks that needed to be overcome to facilitate the encouragement of domestic tuna longlining established a tuna task force. This was seen at the time, as a major priority by Government. Only two meetings were held in two years. The task force was disbanded and a new one put in place. The new task force has so far held one meeting in approximately 6 months.

## **4. Potential Solutions to Overcome Bottlenecks**

The most significant and important successes of the TFC in overcoming some of the above difficulties have been the result of the generous use of the AESOP retired professionals. These devoted souls have been instrumental in improving the TFC by assisting with techniques, technology and with product development.

Otherwise, it has to be said that the TFC has been struggling along at a subsistence level, in spite of the hard work, the determination and the glaring possibilities of fishing in such a fish rich area! There is indeed little to show for ten years work although, as will be outlined below, there have been achievements which surpass the mere action of profit making.

Table 1

**Teikabuti Fishing Co. Ltd.**  
**Fish Catch Sales by Type, Operational Expenses and Returns**  
**1990 – 2000**

Year	Fresh Snapper	Deepwater	Lobster/Shrimps Crab/Other		Yellow Fin Tuna		Tuna Jerky		Total Returns	Total Expenses	Employees
	Export	Local	Export	Local	Export	Local	Export	Local			
1990	720kg \$1,122	5,165kg \$7,986	...	...	...	...	...	...	\$9,108	\$21,612	6
1991	740kg \$5,473	1,180.2kg \$1,821	...	7.5kg \$65	...	...	...	...	\$7,622	\$26,842	6
1992	7,691kg \$60,034	460.5kg \$1,727	...	...	...	...	...	...	\$62,305	\$72,005	30
1993	3,764kg \$38,186	314kg \$2,018	336 kg \$7,985	112 kg \$1,173	800 kg \$6,531	155 kg \$115	...	52 kg \$3,059	\$59,066	\$78,384	27
1994	4,528 kg \$50,625	141 kg \$1,095	889 kg \$9,103	11 kg \$256	1,978kg \$16,354	7,150kg \$7,314	85.4 kg \$4,324	395 kg \$13,271	\$102,440	\$96,111	45
1995	4,226 kg \$47,2478	164.7 kg \$1,278	...	...	...	...	165.8kg \$7,462	307 kg \$10,310	\$66,297	\$83,910	28
1996	...	238 kg \$1,845	...	...	...	486 kg \$437	1,380kg \$57,960	248. kg \$8,460	\$68,702	\$78,964	42
1997	...	...	...	...	...	...	349 kg \$14,674	253 kg \$8,865	\$23,539	\$29,308	22
1998	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	128 kg \$4,505	\$4,505	\$14,616	8
1999	2,709 kg \$32,513	131 kg \$1,014	...	...	...	...	50 kg \$2,040	146 kg \$5,110	\$40,677	\$33,305	28
2000	4,882.5kg \$63,473	218 kg \$1,744	38 kg \$1,976	...	487 kg \$7,305	...	...	192 kg \$6,720	\$98,418	\$89,949	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$298,674</b>	<b>\$18,235</b>	<b>\$19,064</b>	<b>\$1,494</b>	<b>\$30,190</b>	<b>\$7,866</b>	<b>\$86,460</b>	<b>\$60,300</b>	<b>\$522,283</b>		

Currency is expressed in US dollars.

## **Impact of large-scale industrial tuna fishing on the Nation.**

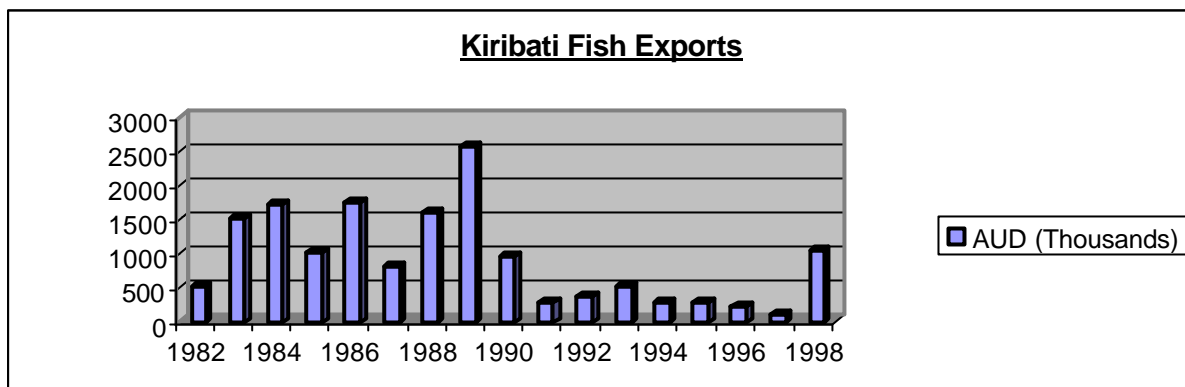
The importance of the “distant water fishing vessel licensing” needs to be considered together with its vulnerabilities. From 1996 to 1998 there was an increase in fishing licence revenue to almost 60 percent of GDP (double normal levels) in wake of strong El Nino climatic conditions that boosted catch in Kiribati waters.

This improved the country’s budget balance from an overall deficit of more than 35 percent of GDP in 1996 to a surplus of 24 percent of GDP in 1998, despite the Governments lack of progress in reducing expenditure. This jump in fishing licence revenue also contributed to an improvement in the country’s external position, with the current account deficit (excluding grants) narrowing sharply to 3 percent of GDP in 1998.

The 1999 outlook however, was for a fall in revenue from fishing licences (reflecting a reversal of climatic conditions) that caused the budget and external current account balances to return to sizeable deficits (more than 30 percent and 20 percent of GDP, respectively).

The effect on the nation in financial terms has been almost like playing tennis with the weather! It is nevertheless a well-proven and extremely important source of income for the country. The main concern is the sustainability of the tuna resource. If the industrialised nations seriously deplete the tuna resource, domestic operations will not be commercially viable and this would be seen as robbing the Kiribati people of a future.

In 1992, Kiribati accounted for 25 percent of the total volume of tuna caught in the waters of the member countries of FFA. The tuna resource in the Pacific represents one of the last remaining substantial fisheries resources in the world and accounts for over 50 percent of the world market supply for canned tuna.



The record of fisheries management the world over has not been encouraging. All but two of the world’s major fishing grounds have been significantly depleted. A failure to adequately restrict access has led to widespread and persistent over exploitation. Attempts to limit access after an unsustainably large fisheries industry has depleted the resource have proved to be exceptionally costly. The moratorium on the Grand Banks fishing ground off the west coast of Canada suggested that it was costing the Canadian government C\$1.5 billion a year in subsidies (World Bank 1995).

The current level of industrial fishing in Kiribati waters should be questioned, not only in terms of resource exploitation, but also in terms of where the licence money is going? Licensing of “industrial distant water fishing vessels” can be well justified if the returns are used to develop the domestic industry and eventually work away from complete reliance on the income from licence fees. The resultant incomes from increased fishing licences may help reinforce island welfare and cultural identity but do not help economic independence and island *raison d’être* through domestic investment and new domestic economic activity.

In 1994 a joint venture fishing operation was established with a Japanese partner. A purse seiner valued at US\$5 million was purchased. It has never done very well and being an old vessel is evidently costing US\$8 million to maintain. In 1999 it made a US\$ 12 million profit but in 2000 a \$1.5 million loss due to low fish prices. Kiribati has requested a large distant water longliner from Japanese Aid. Japan, however, ‘appears’ to have doubts regarding the Kiribati Government’s ability for tackling such a venture.

The establishment of a longline industry is stated as a Government priority. It should be noted, however, that an analysis of Pacific Fisheries by the World Bank (1995) found that medium size Japanese longliner's (approximately 250 ton) were loss making even in the most reasonable of scenarios.

The economics of the new (5-ton) medium scale longliner recently introduced to Kiribati is proving to be a viable option and even within reach of I-Kiribati fishermen provided financing is made available. Japan did not agree to fund the large-scale longliner but has indeed funded another 5-ton medium scale vessel for Kiritimati Island.

### **Impact of large-scale industrial tuna fishing on small-scale commercial operators.**

The principal small-scale commercial fishery that has and continues to be affected by distant water fishing vessels is the extensive domestic troll fishing business. This is very important and has been able to grow because of the large domestic demand for fresh fish. Kiribati has the largest fish consumption per capita known! (1993, 150kg person/year) The Asian Development Bank stated in 1992 that the consumption was 200kg on Tarawa and considerable higher on outer Islands. In Tarawa there are over 200 boats presently active on the Island that employ approximately 300 fishermen full time and 300 fishermen part time. Tarawa fishing produces approximately 1,500 ton of tuna per year, and an estimated annual financial return of AUD\$3.4 million. If this, together with their operational expenses, is then estimated at 10% of Kiribati's GDP it can be seen how critical this industry is to the country.

The employment situation in Kiribati in 1999 was about 4,730 people in Government; 1,892 in Public enterprises and 1,978 people in the private sector. Since Public Enterprises are Government owned, more than 75 percent of all formal employment is in the Government. The number of people engaged in domestic troll fishing can be estimated at 31 percent of private sector employment.

In 1993, Government introduced compulsory "near-shore foreign vessel offloading" in Tarawa, Canton or Kiritimati. This was done to help reduce "under-reporting catches".

During major fishing activity in the Gilbert group, generally 2 to 3 months each year, dozens of vessels offload in Tarawa, The National Fishing TFC, Central Pacific Producers (CCP) takes all by-products during offloading and sells domestically at AUD\$0.65 kg - good for residents, but kills the market for skip jack and yellow-fin tuna for the troll fishermen, who usually sell catch at \$2.20 to \$2.64 kg! All fishermen use two stroke outboards, the fuel price of which is \$1 per litre. This offloading not only damages the domestic market for locally caught fish but with dozens of purse seiners concentrated around Tarawa due to the offloading onto carrier vessels, it doesn't take a scientist to realize that tuna schools around Tarawa are being overfished and therefore seriously reduces the instance of tuna schools for the domestic troll fishermen! These fishermen are really having their livelihood seriously affected by the distant water vessels. On top of this, Kiribati is establishing its own domestic tuna longline industry. The catch from this industry will almost certainly be high and will be sold at approximately AUD\$1.35 kg (this was clearly seen with the Marshall Island Domestic Tuna Longlinebase). Cheaper fish for residents is a good thing, but measures must be taken urgently to assist the troll fishermen into more economical fishing techniques. Licensing of Foreign Fishing Vessels (FFVs) is an extremely important source of foreign exchange for the country. **The domestic tuna longline base could provide even more benefits than the distant water vessels.** The industrial fisheries do, however, have an effect on the domestic troll industry and this issue needs to be urgently addressed. Domestic tuna longline fishing could produce similar revenues to that of the distant water vessels. Fishermen have realized the effect of large volumes of fish offloaded from the distant water vessels, and are now aware and will adapt to change. Fishermen's existing boats can readily be adapted to vertical longlining that will support a domestic longline industry. Funds are urgently needed to implement an extensive F.A.D. (Fish Aggregating Device) programme to make vertical longlining viable, User pay systems and user monitoring systems would effectively support the new Industry.

### **Kiribati Domestic Offshore Fishing Industry.**

In 1981 the Government owned fishing company– Te Mautari Ltd, was established and equipped with two UK financed pole and line fishing vessels. The fleet was subsequently expanded to 6 vessels, including a mother ship. The TFC was plagued by problems associated with

inappropriate vessels, shortages of bait fish and bad management (Expatriate!) It consistently posted substantial losses despite repeated periods of technical assistance and donor involvement in the purchase and refit of vessels. Catches peaked at 2,282 tonnes in 1989. Management and financial problems resulted in temporary suspension of operations in 1991 and the catch slumped to 228 tonnes. After recovering to 554 tonnes in 1992, the catch fell again to 293 tonnes in 1993. The 1995 budget included a transfer of \$400,000 to the TFC. Some of the companies vessels were leased to Solomon Islands and also the leasing of the mother vessel became the only source of income for a number of years until the TFC was discontinued in the year 2000. Japan funded major reconstruction of the TFC facilities in 2000 and a new TFC Central Pacific Producers has been formed.

### **Appropriate Changes**

Consultants' reports regrettably fall short. Every Government office is filled with reports and more reports that often duplicate previous reports! Many consultants lack commercial experience but write nice reports that meet the organizations expectations. The fact that there is no progress as a result of these reports does not appear to unduly worry Aid Donors! There must be more liability and accountability to actually achieve something. Like any business, consultants might try being paid on results!

A private TFC in an industry could be identified; appropriate experts could then work with the private TFC and take them right through the whole development process to the commencement of exports. Other companies will follow suit when they see the benefits and how it is done. The process of following some else's business is common in the Pacific. When people actually see something work and the benefits, they will often follow.

Aid donors might well limit the number of projects they take on, but there would be a higher number of successful projects!

Governments should commit themselves to greater tax incentives for export-orientated businesses. Once concessions on import duties are implemented they should remain, TFC has

had concessions granted on importation of packaging materials for export only to be stopped more recently!

The TFC did succeed in having ice prices reduced when buying in bulk but this concession has also been abolished! It now pays the same price as those folk who buy party ice to keep their beer cold! Local jealousy appears to have been the cause for both of the above examples but the TFC is afraid this has put a great strain on its finances.

Governments must be prepared to offer greater incentives and incentives to remain long term.

Products that have well-established overseas markets only need limited direct assistance to get started.

The development of new products that stand to benefit the country need marketing assistance.

TFC has been able to export products in high demand but have fallen way short in market promotion of new product. Market promotion will mean market penetration.

Assistance to meet import country regulations is very urgently needed.

Governments require urgent assistance to monitor and regulate the quality of exports to international standards. At present Europe will not allow food imports from many Pacific Island Countries, as they do not trust the level or standards of inspection.

Developed countries such as Australia and USA should be urged to assist small Island countries, with the easing of certain red tape. It is very difficult to market shark meat and swordfish for example, because of high mercury levels; yet Australia and USA allow local sales of domestic caught shark and swordfish with very much higher levels of mercury.

The Kiribati Fisheries Division has a pool of well-qualified staff but their effectiveness at work is reduced by the lack of an ongoing planning and monitoring system, appropriate training and

resources. Skills need to be changed and upgraded to reflect the changing needs of the sector. As with many fishing agencies, the division, which has tended in the past to focus on resource and production sides of the sector, has a shortage of community-level institution building capacity and private sector support skills so vital to address community needs assessment and stimulate community development.

The Fisheries Division should act, where appropriate, in support of the private sector (both community groups and the formal private sector) by ensuring the sustainability of the marine resources; by creating a facilitating environment for the effective operation of the private sector and by providing positive support for their growth.

For Kiribati to be able capture a larger portion of the economic benefits from its rich marine resources, it will require more effective coordination of donor, Government and **private sector efforts**. Currently, the government of Kiribati is involved intimately in the development of marine export operations through the Government Public Companies, including Central Pacific Producers, Marine Exports Kiritimati, Atoll Seaweed and Outer Island Fisheries Projects. Because of its dual role as both manager of the marine resources and direct user of the resource base, the Government through its public companies tend to view the private sector as competitors to be controlled, rather than partners to be supported and nurtured. Government public companies operate under different constraints from private corporations and the “competition” element can become highly skewed. This basic philosophical conflict will not easily be resolved. Underlying the situation are pervasive attitudes that relate to the I-Kiribati socio-cultural orientation to community, outsiders and the traditional utilization of marine resources.

A third party entity should be established, with donor aid and revenues from fishing licensing. A marine export business support centre should be created. Being outside Government but not within the private sector, this centre could actually function to coordinate and focus donor aid into constructive activities which can help to create the necessary changes in Government policy while at the same time providing technical support to the developing private sector.

The export business centre might focus on three main objectives:

1. Help to bring about institutional changes in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Fisheries Division. Their respective roles in managing marine resources.
2. Help to coordinate donor aid and direct the assistance into the priority areas of need.
3. Make considerable effort to stimulate, promote and support the private sector through Technical assistance in business management and technical aspects of marine export ventures.

The centre could also help to define industry problems and help to identify alternative sources of assistance, such as overseas volunteers. They could further coordinate the specific technical assistance for the needs of the existing enterprises in areas such as production, processing, quality-control, grading, packaging and marketing.

### **Benefits and Achievements of the Teikabuti Fishing TFC**

As mentioned earlier in the report, 10 years is along time to run a TFC and not to have felt the financial benefits and to have had to exist on a subsistence type TFC lifestyle. There have been, nevertheless, many benefits and achievements, however seemingly insignificant to others they might appear.

Employment has been gained. Skills have been learnt. Families have been supported. Government has benefited. The country has benefited. The shareholders have met untold challenges. Fish have been caught to feed...whoever!

As stated Table 1, up to 42 people has been employed in any one year. This has meant the feeding and support of many more that the 42 employees themselves!

The skills obtained and learnt by the workforce have included: fishing techniques of a great variety, seamanship, navigational skills, lashing, rigging, fish-filleting, factory skills and routine, international hygiene standards, canoe building, boat building, canoe maintenance, boat

maintenance; engine maintenance, managerial skills, survival routines and in some cases selling techniques, buying, exporting, administrative skills and computer skills. The list goes on! Is this not development? Is this not progress?

Table 1 charts our efforts, and the challenges continue. The private operators of the small-scale commercial fishing businesses need support.

TFC is proud of its efforts and has a very positive attitude about the prospects for the future. It is appreciative of support from international organizations and governments but would like more. With this support it can easily turn itself into a profit making organization for the benefit of not only its shareholders, but also many fishing communities and other entities in the fisheries production chain in Kiribati and abroad.

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