



4th SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

12–15 October 2021 – Virtual meeting



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Outcomes and Actions Report from the 4th SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

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Background

1. In compliance with national restrictions imposed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related limitations in international travel, the 4th SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA4), including the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD), were held online using a virtual platform, from 12–15 October 2021.
2. The RTMCFA4 brings together coastal fisheries and aquaculture scientists and technical experts in the Pacific to discuss important technical and scientific gaps, needs, challenges and opportunities.
3. RTMCFA4 is the first meeting to include the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD) session convened by and focused on civil society organisation (CSO) and other non-state actor (NSA) participation.
4. The overarching theme of RTMCFA4 was to discuss and address some of the main technical issues affecting coastal fisheries and aquaculture in support of better science-based resource management and the equitable access to resources, by capturing lessons learned from the 'response phase' of the COVID-19 pandemic and identifying approaches and priorities as the region transitions to the 'recovery phase' in 2021–22 and beyond.
5. Given the online format of the meeting, RTMCFA4 focused on a limited number of high priority issues.
6. Over 165 participants from member countries and territories, observers, CSOs, non-government organisations (NGOs) and other NSAs participated in the virtual meeting.
7. RTMCFA4 was Chaired by the Republic of the Marshall Islands with Glen Joseph, Director for Marshall Island Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA), steering the meeting.
8. The opening prayer was given by Ulusapeti Tiitii from Samoa.
9. The meeting was opened by SPC Deputy Director General, Dr. Paula Vivili.
10. This report outlines the outcomes and action points of consensus among delegates that the meeting felt necessary to document in order to highlight priority issues and needs to be actioned by SPC members, provide guidance to SPC's Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (CFAP), and identify key recommendations to be taken to the 14th Heads of Fisheries Meeting in early 2022.

Coastal Fisheries ‘scene setting’: Summary of PICT coastal fisheries technical issues, needs and priorities

11. To make the most of this virtual meeting, prior to the meeting participants from the Pacific Islands countries and territories (PICTs), were sent a brief questionnaire on their national coastal fisheries and aquaculture issues, challenges and needs. This information was summarised into two categories a) priority technical needs; and b) technical issues or challenges, and presented in plenary “to set the scene” and use the information as background for RTMCF4 discussions.
12. The meeting noted Information Paper 2 that summarised the submitted priority needs, issues and challenges and Information Paper 6 that includes all the submitted coastal fisheries and aquaculture issues, challenges and needs.
13. The USA delegate announced two new major USAID activities for coastal fisheries over the next 5 years: the USD 15M ‘Our Fish Our Future’ to be implemented by the University of Rhode Island (with WWF, LMMA Network and University of the South Pacific) targeting Micronesia and Melanesia; and the USD 6M ‘Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management and Compliance’ being implemented by SPC FAME across all 12 USAID eligible countries to improve coastal Monitoring, Control and Surveillance capacities and enabling environment for compliance.

Supporting the integration of e-data systems into coastal fisheries across PICTs

14. SPC presented on ‘Supporting the integration of e-data systems into coastal fisheries across the Pacific Island Countries and Territories’ (Working Paper 1), highlighting a range of e-data tools developed for improving the process of data collection, analysis and reporting on coastal fisheries.
15. Using results from a survey questionnaire distributed to all members pre-meeting, and plenary discussions, SPC requested members to indicate: (i) their level of support for, and interest in, receiving training in data collection, analysis and reporting on coastal fisheries; (ii) their willingness to continue developing their coastal fisheries science and monitoring capacity with SPC support; and (iii) any feedback on other training options, which will help improve the ability of coastal fisheries staff to better manage their coastal fisheries.
16. The meeting agreed on the following actions to further improve data collection, analysis and reporting on coastal fisheries:
 - a. The members *support* the use of the e-data approaches as developed by SPC to improve the quality of coastal fisheries data collection and to continue investigating and delivering on innovative technology, such as satellites and drones, as appropriate.
 - b. The members *request* SPC to continue with the introduction of e-data systems to all interested countries and territories, with a focus on sustained training and capacity development to underpin successful implementation.

- c. The members *call for* SPC to progressively expand its training and capacity focus to include identified areas of need, including (i) analysis of fisheries data and (ii) use of spatial analysis software QGIS.
- d. The members *are looking forward to seeing* the full integration of socio-economic survey capability into the currently available e-data tools developed by SPC.
- e. The members *request* SPC to further define a clear articulation of how the new e-data systems developed by CFAP are complementary to other currently used e-data systems (e.g. TAILS).
- f. The members *agree* to work with SPC to explore effective ways to incorporate their historic data into the e-data system, subject to satisfying standard quality control issues, as outlined in SPC FAME's data policies.

17. Recommendation to the Heads of Fisheries:

- a. The meeting *requests* the 14th Heads of Fisheries meeting (HoF14) to support SPC's role both as a provider of sustained training and capacity building on e-data collection systems, including innovative technologies, and as an e-data repository with storage capabilities for past and present national coastal fisheries data, in reference to HOF10 outcomes¹.

Enhancing capacity for effective coastal fisheries management

- 18. SPC presented on 'Enhancing capacity for effective coastal fisheries management', based on Working Paper 2, discussing SPC continuing advisory and technical support during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 19. Through breakout groups and plenary discussions, SPC requested members to provide feedback on how SPC activities in policy, legislation and monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement (MCS&E) can be better integrated to enhance capacity for effective coastal fisheries management in their country/territory.
- 20. The meeting agreed on the following actions:
 - a. The members *reaffirm* the importance of effective coastal fisheries management, including in collaboration with local communities, and *support* the use of available IT platforms and e-learning tools to build PICTs capacity in the three broad areas of policy, legislation and MCS&E.

¹ HOF10 Outcomes. Para 55: Authorised SPC to look for this historic data on their behalf and with their support, supported the use of CFP as a repository for all forms of coastal fisheries and aquaculture data as a backup to national systems, and supported CFP to seek funding to undertake this activity a full and thorough manner to recover as much historic data as possible and convert this into a useable format for PICTs in the future. Para 56: Suggested the historical data be expanded to include all fisheries information, noting there may be some issues around copyright on some documents.

- b. The members *call for* more integration of data collection, policy, management, legislation and MCS&E in training opportunities offered by SPC, which can be tailored to members' needs, including by using online tools with limited supervision by SPC staff. In particular, members *request* support for learning exchanges within and between PICTs, including by synergising and coordinating regional efforts across different organisations.
- c. The members *remark* the need to have science-based evidence for management plans and regulations, and *request* SPC to prepare case studies on how to link data to specific policies and on the effectiveness of new management measures for specific fisheries.
- d. The members *request* SPC to develop guidelines for drafting laws and regulations for coastal fisheries and aquaculture, including legal terminologies and models for legislation.
- e. The members *suggest* that specific workshops on coastal fisheries laws and regulations be organised on request to allow for learning exchanges between PICTs and to assist fisheries agencies in the dialogue with local communities and traditional authorities (e.g. stakeholder consultations).
- f. The members *request* SPC to develop guidelines for preparing coastal fisheries and community-based management plans, including a step-by-step model or template, with instructions and information requirements to prepare, implement and review the plan.
- g. The members *propose* that regular workshops be held on how to monitor the implementation of management plans; workshops could target the training needs of all PICTs at regional level, rather than only be tailored to the needs of specific PICTs.
- h. With a view to effective management of coastal fisheries, the members highlight the need to:
 - (i) Incorporate traditional rules into local ordinances or by-laws to increase the chances of compliance by all fishers; and
 - (ii) Develop awareness materials for communities on prohibited species harvest during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. videos).
- i. The members *underscore* the importance for SPC and partners to involve local training institutions when delivering e-training; SPC should train the trainer in using innovative technology, which in turn will further build national capacity.
- j. The members *acknowledge* the need for training support at the community level and *call on* SPC to provide support by developing appropriate e-tools for communities to:
 - (i) Undertake scientific monitoring of local fisheries; and
 - (ii) Implement practical MCS&E approaches to compliance.

- k. The members *recognise* that more data are required to help implement and enforce current legislation and request SPC to continue providing tools to capture compliance data for effective coastal fisheries management by PICTs.

21. Recommendations to the Heads of Fisheries:

- a. The meeting *requests* HoF14 support the recognition of national institutions to offer regionally developed certified training as national priorities for action.
- b. The meeting *requests* HoF14 to encourage PICTs to use the data sharing portal for MCS&E, hosted by SPC, that provides guidelines and examples on compliance data and intelligence information to be shared at the regional level.

Aquaculture ‘scene setting’: Summary of PICT aquaculture technical issues, needs and priorities

22. To make the most of this virtual meeting, prior to the meeting, members were sent a brief questionnaire on their national coastal fisheries and aquaculture issues, challenges and needs. This information was summarised into two categories (i) priority technical needs; and (ii) technical issues or challenges and presented in plenary “to set the scene” and use the information as background for RTMCFA4 discussions.
23. The meeting noted Information Paper 3 that summarised the submitted aquaculture priority needs, issues and challenges and Information Paper 6 that includes all the submitted coastal fisheries and aquaculture issues, challenges and needs.

Risk planning for Pacific aquaculture

24. SPC provided an update to RTMCFA4 on work undertaken by FAME on risks to PICT’s aquaculture production. An overview of the kinds of risks there are in aquaculture was presented and highlighted the importance of risk planning management for aquaculture.
25. Through an interactive plenary session, using a virtual whiteboard (Miro board²), members were invited to: discuss and share information on the types of aquaculture risks they face within their countries and territories and any gaps in their capacity to manage risks; set priorities for development of practical management approaches to each risk type; and identify what works. Risks and management strategies were identified for the following commodities as examples: seaweed, tilapia, marine fish, and giant clams. Additional suggestions indicated that shrimp and coral species restoration might also make good risk management examples. SPC will further pursue the risk analysis exercise for the key commodities, focusing on quantifying risks and refining management strategies that are relevant at the regional level.

² <https://miro.com/>

26. The meeting identified the main aquaculture risks in PICTs, for which management strategies may need to be developed for the region. The meeting proposed the following actions:
- a. The members *invite* SPC to provide further guidance on the extent to which risk assessment is relevant and can be used for small-scale aquaculture at community level for food security purposes (subsistence and artisanal), while considering the importance of accounting for the diversity of national contexts and productions (including cultural aspects) and bearing in mind that most small-scale aquaculture activities in the region are not commercially oriented.
 - b. The members *request* SPC to further investigate options to secure seed and feed supplies for key commodities. SPC noted that this issue will be considered as part of the aquaculture workplan activities.

Aquaculture needs, priorities and future directions in the Pacific Islands Region

27. The 13th Heads of Fisheries meeting (HoF13) endorsed the process for SPC to undertake a regional assessment of the needs, priorities and future directions on aquaculture in the Pacific islands. The output from the regional aquaculture assessment and its recommended future directions and priorities would form the basis for consultations with members towards the development of a regional aquaculture strategy. The regional aquaculture assessment is now underway.
28. The meeting noted the impact of COVID-19 on the progress made and endorsed the proposal in Working Paper 4 that the findings of the regional aquaculture assessment and a proposed process to finalise regional aquaculture strategy will be presented at the 14th Heads of Fisheries meeting (HoF14) for discussion, to confirm the process and timeline to complete the Regional Aquaculture Strategy.
29. The meeting proposed the following actions and priority areas for inclusion in the regional aquaculture assessment:
- a. The members *note* the work already in progress for a regional aquaculture assessment, in line with the HoF13 Outcome 13 on future priorities for Pacific aquaculture development.
 - b. The members *endorse* the proposal in WP4 paper that the output from the regional assessment will be presented at the HoF14 for discussion, and confirmation of the process and timeline to complete the Regional Aquaculture Strategy.
 - c. The members *re-emphasize* the multiple and interdependent purposes that aquaculture can serve: food security, economic and restoration; and *stress* the key importance and expected contribution of small-scale non-commercial aquaculture to food security and livelihoods.
 - d. The members *request* SPC to continue providing tailored technical guidance (e.g. feasibility studies; cost-benefit-analyses) and capacity-building (e.g. training) to meet specific PICT needs in setting up integrated aquaculture operations, seed production

systems, as well as relevant enabling environment (e.g. policies, plans, knowledge sharing and awareness mechanisms).

- e. The members *stress* the importance to look at establishing new networks, or revive existing ones, and at strengthening collaboration to allow for exchange and transfer of knowledge and information from different experiences in aquaculture, within PICTs and regionally, with necessary safeguards, including to guarantee the availability of high-quality seeds and feeds adapted to local needs.
- f. The members *call* for further guidance and effort on sustainable and environmentally friendly aquaculture, including culturing native species and species with low environmental impacts; specific guidance is needed on aquatic biosecurity, as well as for robust food safety and quality standards, in respect of international norms, in order to increase access to local and international markets.
- g. In particular, the members *request* SPC to coordinate the development of guidelines and a code of practice in aquaculture at a regional level, as well as guidelines for food safety and value-adding opportunities.
- h. The members *recognise* the need to elevate the profile of aquaculture to allow access to financial support (e.g. bank loans) for small-scale aquaculture projects, further noting that climate-smart aquaculture relies on sustainable high-quality inputs and efficient infrastructure, including hatcheries, transport, and water supply.

30. Recommendation to the Heads of Fisheries:

- a. The meeting *requests* HoF14 to endorse the regional aquaculture assessment by SPC, noting it will provide the elements for broader support to members as they develop the Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy, as well as regional networks and hubs, best practices and codes of conduct for members' aquaculture priorities.

2021 Coastal Fisheries Report Card update

31. The initial draft of the Report Card was presented to the 2nd Regional Fisheries Ministers' Meeting in July 2021. Since 2015, some progress has been made in the following outcome areas:

- Coastal fisheries management policy, legislation, and planning;
- Political commitment and support for coastal fisheries management; and
- Resourcing in fisheries agencies to support coastal fisheries management.

32. Areas which have seen no clear progress, may be due to lack of proper data, include:

- Informed and empowered coastal communities with clearly defined user rights;
- Effective collaboration and coordination between stakeholders and key sectors of influence; and
- Harvest within sustainable limits and coastal developments do not damage fish habitats.

33. The meeting noted progress made towards the Future of Fisheries Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries as reported in the Coastal Fisheries Report Card, including the development of the online interactive dashboard for national level report cards.
34. The meeting also noted the lack of consistent data on some indicators and discussed options for reviewing current indicators, including the data gaps and the needs for repeat studies to measure change over time for several outcomes.
35. The meeting agreed on the following actions and priority areas:
 - a. The members *acknowledge* the efforts undertaken by FAME to develop an interactive dashboard that is annually updated and directly accessible online on training and capacity-building data, annual results and the regional and national level.
 - b. The members *re-emphasize* the need for strengthened data collection, analysis, and reporting for evidence-based management at the national and regional levels. Members *encourage* SPC to further support them to strengthen data collection and reporting mechanisms underlying the dashboards, and *note* the need to ensure better integration with existing reporting tools, platforms and obligations at national and regional level (e.g. on SDGs).
 - c. The members *encourage* SPC to further provide guidance and support on the selection of most relevant national Coastal Fisheries Report Card indicators for management and decision-making purposes.
 - d. The members *agree* on the importance to further work with CSOs and other NSAs involved in CBFM to strengthen data collection and reporting mechanisms at national and regional level, for instance on access rights and empowerment.
36. Recommendation to the Heads of Fisheries:
 - a. The meeting *requests* HoF14 to initiate the review of regional and national indicators for the Coastal Fisheries Report Cards, in line with the New Song for Coastal Fisheries and other regional frameworks.

Future RTMCFA formats and name

37. The meeting held a brief discussion on future RTMCFA formats (virtual, hybrid and in-person) and on suggestions for renaming RTMCFA (name and acronym). SPC invited members to provide suggestions on renaming and on improvements in the delivery and effectiveness of the RTMCFA through the meeting evaluation form.
38. A number of initial meeting titles were proposed by participants and an informal Slido³ poll was held to gauge the preferences between the suggested options. The informal poll result was closely split between two options, with strong reactions to both. The initial renaming

³ <https://www.slido.com>

options are provided in Annex 1 in order of the informal poll results. SPC will consult the full membership on the renaming and will present HoF14 with a selection of the preferred name options for consideration.

39. Recommendation to the Heads of Fisheries:

- a. The meeting *requests* HoF14 to consider the proposed adjustments to the format and name of the RTMCFA.

Scientific and technical support in a COVID-19 context

40. Following the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel bans, SPC experimented with alternate ways of providing coastal fisheries and aquaculture technical support to fisheries agencies, such as video conferencing and the development of on-line courses and videos. SPC informed participants that online tools, on-demand modules and training videos are available to members and to CSOs and other NSAs.
41. Reflecting on the last year's experiences, SPC proposed a way forward in WP6 with the guidance and feedback of Pacific island fisheries agencies on using video conferencing and on-line training options. Members were invited to provide feedback and preferences on the proposed video conferencing and on-line training options.
42. The meeting agreed on the following actions:
 - a. Members *request* SPC to continue providing them with remote training and assistance through diversified and accessible e-tools and platforms given the pandemic situation and travel restrictions.
 - b. Members further *invite* SPC to periodically inform them on any training materials, applications and e-tools developed that could be applicable and applied at the PICT level.
 - c. Members *invite* SPC to continue improving the video conferencing experience in support of coastal fisheries and aquaculture training, resorting to various tools and approaches for interactive sessions.
 - d. Members *encourage* SPC to further experiment and use diverse formats to maximise and improve the long term impact of training (e.g. short videos, on-demand training courses and tutorials, country or sub-regional remote training workshops) on the priority coastal fisheries and aquaculture topics identified during the meeting (statistical analysis, GIS, management plan drafting, MCS, etc.).
 - e. Members *agree* to continue working with SPC to identify alternative solutions to provide coastal fisheries and aquaculture related technical support for activities that cannot be done remotely, such as field and community work; they also *encourage* SPC to resort to in-country available experts whenever possible, in line with SPC procurement and financial procedures.

Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

43. The first meeting of the Cbfd was convened by, and focused on, CSO and other NSA participation. This ‘meeting-within-a-meeting’ was approved by the 12th Heads of Fisheries meeting (HoF12) and endorsed by the 1st Regional Fisheries Ministers’ Meeting. Mrs Kesaia Tubunawakai from Fiji served as Convenor.
44. The purpose of the Cbfd was to give the CSO and other NSA community an opportunity to provide information and advice on key needs, through the RTMCFA, to the Heads of Fisheries to assist with informing Pacific Leaders on priority issues associated with the sustainable use of coastal fisheries resources. The Cbfd also provides an opportunity to share experiences and lessons from community-based initiatives to strengthen efforts to maintain productive and healthy ecosystems and their associated fisheries resources that are critical to the wellbeing of coastal communities.
45. The first Cbfd focused on establishing an appropriate administrative foundation for future Cbfd sessions. Participants provided advice and recommended future Cbfd session arrangements relating to:
 - a. Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Cbfd session within the RTMCFA agenda;
 - b. Convening arrangements for the Cbfd session; and
 - c. Processes for the selection of participants in future Cbfd sessions.
46. The Convenor presented the Cbfd Outcomes Report (Annex 2) to the RTMCFA4, and the meeting agreed on the following actions:
 - a. The members *accept* the provisional ToR as recommended by the Cbfd.
 - b. The members *request* SPC to include the Report of the Cbfd in the Report of the RTMCF4 to HoF14.
 - c. The members *encourage* SPC FAME to proceed with implementation of the provisional ToR so that the necessary supporting logistical and administrative arrangements can be established in advance of meetings planned for 2022.
 - d. The members *encourage* SPC FAME to continue efforts to secure funding to maintain on-going support to the Cbfd.
47. Recommendations to the Heads of Fisheries:
 - a. The meeting *requests* HoF14 to adopt the ToR for the Cbfd.
 - b. The meeting *requests* HoF14 to recommend that SPC FAME continue to provide the necessary logistical and administrative support for implementation of the ToR.
 - c. The meeting *requests* HoF14 to encourage CSOs/NSAs to fully engage in the implementation of the ToR and forthcoming Cbfd sessions.

Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling-up CBFM

48. SPC presented the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up CBFM endorsed by 2nd Regional Fisheries Ministers' Meeting in August 2021 to the CBFM participants.
49. In an effort to contribute to the implementation of the Framework for Action, the meeting:
 - a. Noted that the endorsed Framework for Action is a broad regional framework that provides guidance in implementing the scaling up of CBFM that supports and empowers local communities.
 - b. Discussed how NSA regional or national programmes contribute and/or may further align to achieving the outcomes in the Framework for Action.
 - c. Discussed how progress in implementation can be monitored and evaluated and what role NSAs can play in strengthening / improving national and regional reporting.
50. The meeting agreed on the following priority needs to support implementation of the Framework for Action:
 - a. Evidenced-based management information to support communities.
 - b. Government support in developing national and subnational CBFM strategies to guide national CBFM implementation.
 - c. Government and donors funding support to sustain CBFM programmes at the national and subnational level.
 - d. CBFM capacity building at national and subnational level.

Summary of the key recommendations for the 14th SPC Heads of Fisheries meeting

51. The meeting provided an opportunity for SPC to update members on a range of activities carried out in support of sustainable coastal fisheries and aquaculture in PICTs. The members were invited to discuss how to improve SPC's assistance in the broad areas outlined below and agreed to make the following recommendations to the 14th Heads of Fisheries for both members and SPC to act on:

Supporting the integration of e-data systems into coastal fisheries across PICTs

Recommendation 17(a). The meeting requests the 14th Heads of Fisheries meeting (HoF14) to support SPC's role both as a provider of sustained training and capacity building on e-data collection systems, including innovative technologies, and as an e-data repository with storage capabilities for past and present national coastal fisheries data, in reference to HOF10 outcomes.

Enhancing capacity for effective coastal fisheries management

Recommendation 21(a). The meeting requests HoF14 support the recognition of national institutions to offer regionally developed certified training as national priorities for action.

Recommendation 21(b). The meeting requests HoF14 to encourage PICTs to use the data sharing portal for MCS&E, hosted by SPC, that provides guidelines and examples on compliance data and intelligence information to be shared at the regional level.

Aquaculture needs, priorities and future directions in the Pacific Islands Region

Recommendation 30(a). The meeting requests HoF14 to endorse the regional aquaculture assessment by SPC, noting it will provide the elements for broader support to members as they develop the Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy, as well as regional networks and hubs, best practices and codes of conduct for members' aquaculture priorities.

2021 Coastal Fisheries Report Card update

Recommendation 36(a). The meeting requests HoF14 to initiate the review of regional and national indicators for the Coastal Fisheries Report Cards, in line with the New Song for Coastal Fisheries and other regional frameworks.

Future RTMCFA formats and name

Recommendation 39(a). The meeting requests HoF14 to consider the proposed adjustments to the format and name of the RTMCFA.

Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

Recommendation 47(a). The meeting requests HoF14 to adopt the ToR for the Cbfd.

Recommendation 47 (b). The meeting requests HoF14 to recommend that SPC FAME continue to provide the necessary logistical and administrative support for implementation of the ToR.

Recommendation 47(c). The meeting requests HoF14 to encourage CSOs/NSAs to fully engage in the implementation of the ToR and forthcoming Cbfd sessions.

Annex 1: Alternative names for the RTMCFA: Initial suggestions and preliminary poll results

The following are some initial suggestions for alternative names for the “Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture” (RTMCFA) suggested by participants during the RTMCFA4.

An informal Slido poll was held to gauge participants’ preferences between the suggested options. The informal poll result was closely split between the top two options, with strong reactions to both.

The initial renaming options are provided below in order of the informal poll results. SPC will consult the full membership on the renaming and will present HoF14 with a selection of the preferred name options for consideration.

1. Regional Aquaculture and Fisheries Technical meeting (RAFT)
2. Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA)
3. Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Meeting (CoFAM)
4. Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical meeting (CFAT)
5. Pacific Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (PACFA)
6. Regional Technical Meeting of Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (CoastAqua)
7. Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Pacific (CoFAP)
8. Regional Aquaculture and Coastal Fisheries Technical Meeting (RACFTM)
9. More Fish, Better Future Meeting
10. Coastal Fisheries Aquaculture Regional Technical Meeting (CoFiA Reg Tech)
11. Regional Technical Meeting on Community-Based Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCCFA)

Annex 2: Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Outcomes Report

Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue – 13 Oct. 2021

Original: English

Outcomes Report from the 1st Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue
Virtual Meeting – 13 October 2021

Outcomes Report from the 1st Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

Background

1. The Regional Fisheries Ministers, at their Special Meeting¹ in 2019, requested the Pacific Community (SPC) to commission a review of the Coastal Fisheries Working Group (CFWG) to, in part, provide options and recommendations for a new mechanism for increasing the engagement of civil society and other non-state actors to give effect to the Pacific Island Forum Leaders' decision in relation to coastal fisheries (paragraph 10, 47th Leaders Communique, 2016²).
2. SPC Member Heads of Fisheries, past participants in the CFWG, civil society representatives, SPC staff, and other stakeholders were consulted during the independent review. The final proposed mechanism (referred to as the "CBF session") was reviewed, approved and endorsed by the 12th Heads of Fisheries meeting (May 2020) and endorsed by the 1st Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (August 2020).
3. The 4th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA4) was the first meeting to include the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD) session convened by and focused on Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and other Non-State Actor (NSA) participation.
4. The CBFD was held as a virtual meeting on 13 October 2021. As the first CBFD session, it was facilitated by an independent convenor, Kesaia Tabunakawai from Fiji, with at least 38 representatives of the CSO and other NSA groups engaged in plenary and breakout group discussions. There were over 105 participants in the CBFD session, including representatives of government agencies and other observers.
5. The purpose of the CBFD was to provide the CSO and NSA community with an opportunity to provide information, advice and key needs, through the RTMCFA, to Heads of Fisheries to assist with informing Leaders on priority issues and needs associated with the sustainable use of coastal fisheries resources. It also provided an opportunity to share experiences and lessons from community-based initiatives to strengthen efforts to maintain productive and healthy ecosystems and their associated fisheries resources that are critical to the wellbeing of coastal communities. The discussion within this Dialogue focused on issues of common regional significance to community-driven coastal fisheries generally.
6. This report outlines the outcomes and points of consensus among CBFD participants highlighting priority issues and needs to be actioned by CSOs and other NSAs, SPC members, provide guidance to SPC's Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (CFAP), and identify key recommendations to be taken to the 14th Heads of Fisheries Meeting in early 2022 via the RTMCFA4, and then transmitted to the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting in mid-2022.

¹ Special Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting Outcomes: <https://www.ffa.int/node/2296>

² Forum Communiqué, 47th Pacific Islands Forum, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, 8-10 September, 2016. http://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016-Forum-Communique_-Pohnpei_-FSM_-8-10-Sept.pdf

Session 1: CBF Dialogue Terms of reference and convening arrangements

7. As this was the first Cbfd, it focused on establishing an appropriate administrative foundation for future Cbfd sessions. Through plenary and breakout group discussions, participants reviewed and agreed on the future Cbfd session arrangements relating to:
 - a. Terms of Reference for the Cbfd session within the RTMCFA agenda, inclusive of
 - b. Convening arrangements for the Cbfd session; and
 - c. The processes for the selection of participants to future Cbfd sessions.
8. Recognising this is the start of a process that may be refined as Cbfd experience increases, four breakout groups met to review the Draft ToR for the Cbfd.
9. The Cbfd agreed that the following are among the key issues identified for further consideration, noting that:
 - a. **Membership.** The RTMCFA should include members of CSOs and NSAs that are actively engaged in CBFM in PICTs.
 - b. **Purpose.** The purpose of the Cbfd should be expanded beyond CBFM to include ecosystem-based fisheries management.
 - c. **Preparatory work.**
 - i. To increase value of the overall process, adequate resources should be assigned to preparatory time at the national level in the lead up to the Cbfd.
 - ii. The role of national focal point needs to be clearly defined and adequately resourced.
 - d. **Selection of Convenor/Vice-convenor.**
 - i. The establishment of a Technical Advisory Group to work with FAME, Convenor and Vice-convenor on agenda, report, etc., should be considered. The role, procedure for selection, period of appointment should be described for future consideration.
 - e. **Convenor and Vice-Convenor.**
 - i. SPC is encouraged to secure funding support for these two posts.
 - ii. Each Vice-convenor would be involved for two years – one year as Vice-convenor and a second year as Convenor- to assist with developing familiarity with the process and building capacity.
 - iii. Consideration should also be given to regional or international organisations that are working on CBFM within countries or territories, not just national groups.
 - iv. Consideration should be given to the option of rotating the role of convenor and vice-convenor between the three sub-regions of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia and, that within each region, alphabetical rotation be encouraged.

- f. **Selection of participants.**
 - i. The number of people involved in preparatory consultations should be increased.
 - ii. The national selection process would be led by CSO/NSAs, being sensitive to domestic considerations such as geography and other factors.
 - iii. Effective community representation is needed through representatives who are engaged in CBF and can speak confidently on behalf of their constituents.
- g. **Reporting.**
 - i. Cbfd outcomes should be reported back, in simple language, to CSOs/NSAs and community groups between the RTMCFA, Heads of Fisheries and RFMM.
 - ii. The Convenor and Vice-convenor will accompany the Chair of the RTMCFA to report to Heads of Fisheries and will be present at the time the HoF outcomes document to the RFMM is adopted by HoF.
 - iii. There is a need to provide for CSO/NSA minority/majority views when consensus is difficult to achieve.

10. The Cbfd agreed on the following on the Terms of Reference:

- a. The Cbfd *acknowledged* development of the revised provisional Terms of Reference included at Appendix 1.
- b. The Cbfd CSO/NSA participants will provide feedback on the revised provisional Terms of Reference within 4 weeks. The final provisional Terms of Reference will be used to prepare for and run the next Cbfd in late 2022.

Session 2: Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling-up CBFM

- 11. SPC presented the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up CBFM endorsed by the 2nd Regional Fisheries Ministers' Meeting in August 2021 to the Cbfd participants.
- 12. In an effort to contribute to the implementation of the Framework for Action, the Cbfd:
 - I. *Noted* that the endorsed Framework for Action is a broad regional framework that provides guidance in implementing the scaling up of CBFM that supports and empowers local communities; and
 - II. *Discussed* how Non-State Actors regional or national programmes contribute and/or may further align to achieving the outcomes in the Framework for Action.
- 13. The Cbfd and other RTMCFA participants *highlighted* broader activities being implemented to support the implementation of the Framework for Action and *raised* some key needs to support / strengthen future implementation. Key needs include:

- a. Evidenced-based management information to support communities;
- b. Government support in developing national and subnational CBFM scaling-up strategies to guide CBFM implementation in each PICT;
- c. Government and donors funding support to sustain CBFM programmes at national and subnational levels;
- d. CBFM capacity building at national and subnational level;
- e. Strengthening of legal frameworks and MCS&E to support implementation and scaling-up of CBFM.

*Specific outcomes and key recommendations from the Cbfd for the 14th SPC
Heads of Fisheries meeting*

14. The Cbfd agreed that the revised provisional Terms of Reference included in Appendix 1 will be used to prepare and run the next Cbfd in 2022.

Appendix 1:

[Provisional] Terms of Reference – Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

The Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA) includes a standing agenda item that establishes a dialogue for members inclusive of civil society organizations (CSO) and other Non-State Actors (NSA) that are engaged in community-based coastal fisheries (CBF).

Purpose: The purpose of the CBF Dialogue is to provide the CSO/NSA community engaged in CBF and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management with an opportunity to exchange information, advice and key needs through the RTMCFA, to Heads of Fisheries to assist with informing Leaders on priority issues associated with the sustainable use and management of coastal fisheries resources. It is also to provide an opportunity to share experience and lessons from community-based initiatives to strengthen efforts to maintain productive and healthy ecosystems and their associated fisheries resources that are critical to the wellbeing of coastal communities.

Discussion supported by this dialogue will focus on issues of common regional significance to community-driven coastal fisheries generally.

Time assignment: The CBF Dialogue will occupy eight consecutive meeting sessions across two days or, in the event the RTMCFA is less than a 5-day meeting, 40% of the total time available for the RTMCFA. For virtual RTMCFA of less than 5 days, the time allocation may need to be adjusted, but will not be less than 1 full day's sessions.

Convening: The CBF Dialogue will be convened by a representative from the CSO/NSA community selected utilising the process described below.

FAME will provide administrative support to the process to select a convenor and a vice-convenor. The process will be undertaken in consultation with the chair of forthcoming RTMCFAs.

A convenor will serve in that role for one RTMCFA meeting.³

The convenor of the CBF Dialogue will also accompany the Chair of that RTMCFA to the following HoF where the RTMCFA Report will be presented and discussed.

A vice-convenor will serve in that role at one RTMCFA meeting. The vice-convenor may assume the role of convenor at the following RTMCFA.

Process for the selection of convenor and vice-convenor:

The selection process for a convenor and for a vice-convenor for RTMCFAs will commence immediately after RTMCFA4. The selection process may broadly involve:

- a. FAME establishing and maintaining a register or list of affiliations and contact details for CSOs and other NSAs associated with CBF initiatives among PICTs to assist with communications;

³ This will mean that the convenor will serve as vice-convenor for the CBF Dialogue at their first RTMCFA/CBFD and convenor for their second.

- b. national CSOs and other NSAs will be encouraged to select a focal point for communications with FAME. SPC is unlikely to have financial resources to assist with the support of this role but, with the appointment of an SPC CBF Adviser, FAME will be in a position to advise on logistical and other elements of a national coordinating role;
- c. at least six (6) months in advance of RTMCFA5, utilising the FAME-maintained contact list, FAME will issue an invitation to representatives of CSOs/NSAs across all PICTs to formally nominate candidates for convenor and candidates for a vice-convenor for the CBF Dialogue in RTMCFA5 to FAME;
- d. at least three (3) months prior to RTMCFA5, FAME will provide a summary of the CBF experience and background and a statement of interest from the candidates nominated to assume the roles of convenor and vice-convenor for the CBF Dialogue to all official and technical contacts and CSOs and other NSAs representatives registered with FAME;
- e. CSO and other NSA representatives will be invited to propose their preferred candidate, with responses required at least eight (8) weeks prior to RTMCFA5. FAME will review the responses received and advise the successful candidate for each position; and
- f. FAME will engage the selected convenor and vice-convenor in preparations for RTMCFA5.

It is proposed that the vice-convenor for RTMCFA5 assume responsibilities for convenor of RTMCFA6 at the conclusion of RTMCFA5.

If the vice-convenor accepts the nomination to convenor, the selection of a new vice-convenor would commence six (6) months in advance of RTMCFA6 applying the process described at c. to f above. If the vice-convenor declines the opportunity, the process described in c. to f. would apply to the selection of both a new convenor and a new vice-convenor.

Unless there are no alternatives, the convenor, the vice-convenor and the chair of the RTMCFA should be from different PICTs. It also is recommended that the role of convenor and vice-convenor be rotated around the three sub-regions of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia and, that within each region, alphabetical rotation be encouraged.

The selection process will also promote gender balance with the positions of convenor and vice-convenor.

Technical Advisory Group

A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) will be convened to support administrative processes for the CBF Dialogue facilitated by FAME.

The TAG will include the Convenor, Vice convenor, FAME representatives and representatives from the CSO/NSA community engaged in CBF.

One CSO/NSA community representative will be selected from Polynesia, one from Melanesia and one from Micronesia.

The TAG will be convened and chaired by a representative from FAME.

The role of the TAG will be to:

- assist with the development of the agenda for the next CBF Dialogue,
- identify potential participants, and
- advise on engagement and reporting actions to support the CBF Dialogue.

The same process for the selection of a convenor and a vice-convenor, including time frames, will be applied to TAG participation.

TAG CSO/NSA representatives will serve for a period of up to three (3) years.

Role of the convenor: The responsibility of the convenor, with support from the vice-convenor, includes to:

- liaise with the chair of the RTMCFA and FAME staff on the development of the provisional agenda and associated schedule for the CBF Dialogue session in the forthcoming RTMCFA;
- support responsible FAME staff and CSO/NSA representatives on the selection of participants;
- work with FAME staff to identify resource personnel/subject matter experts/presenters to support the CBF Dialogue in the RTMCFA;
- monitor outcomes from the RTMCFA and HoF that directly relate to the mandate of the CBF Dialogue for possible future consideration and provision of advice;
- liaise with FAME staff on the preparation and timely circulation of CBF Dialogue resource materials (such as working and information papers);
- convene the CBF Dialogue in the RTMCFA;
- present the report, advice and recommendations of the CBF Dialogue to the RTMCFA;
- liaise with the chair of the RTMCFA and FAME staff on the CBF Dialogue report by the RTMCFA to HoF;
- participate in the HoF in support of the chair of the RTMCFA to present the RTMCFA report and recommendations; and
- provide the vice-convenor with a summary of the outcomes of the HoF meeting following the presentation of the RTMCFA report.

Role of vice-convenor: The role of a vice-convenor will include:

- providing support to the convenor in all aspects of preparing for the next CBF Dialogue in the RTMCFA including:
 - a. liaising with key stakeholders;
 - b. identifying potential participants;
 - c. formulating the draft agenda;

- d. drafting and reviewing meeting documents;
- e. facilitating small group brainstorming sessions; and
- g. assuming the role of convenor in the event the convenor is not available.

Unless there are no alternatives, the convenor, the vice-convenor and the chair of the RTMCFA will be from different PICTs, and the roles rotated between the three sub-regions of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia.

The selection process will promote gender balance with the positions of convenor and vice-convenor.

SPC FAME is encouraged to secure financial support for convenors and vice-convenors and CSO/NSA TAG members.

In an endeavour to optimise efficiency, maintain transparency and engender confidence, the selection process for convenor and vice-convenor may be refined from time to time.

Participation: Participation in the CBF Dialogue will be **led** by representatives of regional and national community groups (civil society organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actors (NSAs)) actively engaged in CBF consistent with the purpose of the CBF Dialogue (above)⁴.

Participation is **open** to representatives of SPC member governments. Representatives from the donor and development assistance community will be invited to observe the dialogue.

Representatives of the CSO/NSAO community will be invited to sit at the main table during in-person CBF Dialogue sessions.

Process for the selection of participants:

Participation in the CBF Dialogue, whether in-person or virtually, will be supported by a transparent and equitable selection or nomination process that includes:

- a. opportunities for participation and engagement that is open to all CSO/NSAs that fit the criteria;
- b. an endeavour to secure representation from each PICT;
- c. an invitation issued by FAME at least four (5) months in advance of the next RTMCFA for CSO/NSAs to nominate their representative(s) for the CBF Dialogue at that RTMCFA. A deadline will be imposed for a response;
- d. CSO/NSA focal points will coordinate the selection process at the national level and submit nomination(s) to FAME no later than twelve (12) weeks in advance of the RTMCFA;

⁴ A “Civil Society Organisation” (CSO) is a group of people that operates in the community in a way that is distinct from both government and business.” Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_society_organization)
“A Non-State Actor (NSA) is a legal entity that represents the interests of civil society including the private sector, academia and the media. NSAs are not established of, nor do they belong to, a structure or institution of the state.” PacificIslands Forum (<https://www.forumsec.org/civil-society-4/>)

- e. FAME, in consultation with CSO/NSA representatives, may develop criteria for guiding representative selection from nominations received. Nominations may be assessed against such criteria;
- f. FAME and nominated CSO/NSA representatives will assess nominations against agreed criteria and select participants to fill specific representative roles (i.e. at least one representative from each PICT);
- g. to promote equity and regional representativeness, numbers of representatives from specific interest groups may be offered limited places;
- h. selected nominations and their affiliate CSO/NSA will be advised by FAME at least eight (8)⁵ weeks in advance of the RTMCFA regarding their participation;
- i. CSO/NSA nominations for participation in the CBF Dialogue do not need to be approved by government; and
- j. SPC official contacts will be kept informed of CBF CSO/NSA engagement arrangements for the RTMCFA and they will be notified of the outcomes of nominations.

SPC FAME and the CSO/NSA community will widely publicise the nomination and selection process for NSA/CSO participation for the CBF Dialogue session in the RTMCFA.

SPC FAME is encouraged to secure financial support for national focal points to support their engagement in this process.

Report: At the conclusion of the CBF Dialogue, the convenor will present a summary of key outcomes, advice, recommendations and requests agreed at the Dialogue to the RTMCFA. The report may reflect majority and minority views. Together with a summary of any issues arising during the subsequent RTMCFA discussion, this report will be incorporated into the report of the RTMCFA to be forwarded to HoF.

SPC FAME will provide support for the preparation and distribution of the Report including to national and regional CSO/NSA and community groups.

Review: These ToR may be reviewed and revised by the CBF Dialogue from time to time.

Agenda: The 2-day CBF Dialogue may include a range of agenda topics. The convenor, vice-convenor and FAME will be responsible for preparing a Provisional Agenda. The Provisional Agenda will be circulated to SPC member administrations and the CSO/NSA constituency at least 90 days in advance of the next RTMCFA⁶.

Agenda topics, and the number of topics to be addressed, may change from one meeting to the next. Time allocations to each topic may also vary. Examples of candidate topics include:

⁵ At least eight weeks will allow time for the selected nominees to prepare for the dialogue.

⁶ This will provide adequate time for the identification and selection of appropriate resource personnel and participants with relevant experience to prepare to engage in the agenda items proposed for the Dialogue.

- **Progress on implementing the Pacific Framework for Action on scaling up CBFM: 2021-2025**
The Framework for Action has been approved by the 13th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting and endorsed by the 2nd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting, and is recognised as providing guidance to PICTs to assist in the sustainable management of coastal fisheries from the CBFM perspective. The CBF Dialogue could: review the progress on implementing the Framework for Action; support mobilising regional coordination of CBFM; contribute to regional coordination on the M&E of the Framework for Action; and consider means to improve/strengthen national level coordination between members and local CSO/NSA in implementing CBF programmes/projects in-country.
- **Lessons learned from CBF initiatives**
Experience and lessons learned in [x] community-based fisheries initiatives. Presentations under this item will describe: the context in which the initiative was implemented, a summary of threats to coastal fisheries resources that were identified to be addressed through the initiative, responses including achievements and challenges, and on-going needs. The Meeting will summarise the outcomes of discussion with a focus on issues arising of potential regional application and benefit. Particularly attention will be given to experience with scaling up initiatives for wider implementation.
- **Capacity building gaps and needs**
This item could include presentations from practitioners, including from national fisheries administrations and NSA/CSO representatives, that profile capacity building needs, responses and outcomes. The Meeting could discuss the development of capacity in CBF and identify priorities for on-going capacity building.
- **Partnerships and relationships**
Presentations from practitioners, including from national fisheries administrations and CBO representatives, to describe the process, and corresponding outcomes, associated with establishing partnerships and relationships. The dialogue could discuss key features of relationships and partnerships that are successful in addressing threats to coastal fisheries and which establish enduring outcomes for community-based fisheries.
- **Supporting sustainable livelihoods**
The CBF Dialogue could receive presentations from [x] community-based fisheries initiatives that addressed issues relating to the promotion of sustainable livelihoods.
- **Measuring success and addressing challenges**
Each session will discuss measures of success for CBF initiatives in terms of social, economic and ecological outcomes. What makes, and what breaks, CBF initiatives?
- **Sustainable financing**
Given the emerging interest and activities at the provincial level/landscape/seascape level, financing and success in Micronesia, for example, presentation on how SF is unfolding and what this means to communities will be discussed.
- **Gender and human rights-based approach**
The CBF Dialogue will discuss CBF-related issues relating to human rights-based approach, the participation of marginalised groups and gender-related considerations. Particular consideration will be devoted to successes and challenges associated with the meaningful engagement of these marginalised groups in CBF initiatives.