



Pacific
Community
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10th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting

Noumea, New Caledonia, 14–17 March 2017

Meeting outcomes

Original: English

HOF 10 MEETING OUTCOMES

Pacific Community (SPC)

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The 10th Heads of Fisheries (HoF) Meeting took place at SPC Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, from the 14th–17th March 2017. The meeting was chaired by Luisa Naseri-Sale, Senior Policy Advisor, Department of Economic Development, Natural Resources and Environment, Tokelau.

HoF is a regional meeting of the heads of SPC member country and territory fishery agencies, or their appointed deputies, covering the entire range of interests for which they have responsibility and on which the SPC Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) provides advice and assistance. As such, the HoF meeting plays a unique role in providing strategic guidance to the Director's Office, the Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP) and the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) of FAME.

The following outcomes constitute the main points of consensus agreement among delegates that the meeting felt necessary to document, either to guide the management of the FAME work programme, to draw to the attention of other regional agencies and development partners, or to signal agreement on issues that require attention by members themselves, and to inform the Forum Fisheries Committee and SPC CRGA.

The meeting was officially opened by Dr Colin Tukuitonga, Director General, SPC. The agenda of the 10th HoF was adopted with no additional provisions.

Opening session, FAME review and progress against HoF9 outcomes

Heads of Fisheries:

1. Noting the challenges and opportunities in considering the FAME review and progress against HOF 9 outcome, Heads of Fisheries stressed the need to elevate the coastal fisheries profile of its various members.
2. Reaffirmed concerns over the recent 'blue boat' poaching epidemic occurring in the Pacific, and inadequate coastal fisheries regulations and monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) in many coastal sectors.
3. Expressed support for the 2017 FAME performance review.
4. Recognised CFP's assistance with coastal fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS), including the new MFAT-funded project on coastal fisheries governance, and CFP's assistance with aquaculture and biosecurity, including the recruitment of a new Aquatic Biosecurity Specialist position and two aquaculture positions funded under MFAT.
5. Acknowledged CFP's ongoing commitment to the Pacific Islander Junior Professional program, and supported OFP's move to recruitment a similar position.
6. Called for future of Heads of Fisheries meetings to include sessions from other SPC Divisions involved in areas cross-cutting the fisheries sector, such as Climate Change and Geoscience Divisions.

Coastal Fisheries Programme report

Heads of Fisheries:

7. Recognising the importance of coastal fisheries to members, supported enhancing the profile of CFP's work.
8. Recognised and encouraged SPC CFP's ongoing focus on cross-cutting themes such as capacity building, gender, youth, human rights and climate change adaptation.
9. Recognised the immediate need to maintain the food security and livelihoods of coastal communities through the development of aquaculture and other sustainable marine-based alternatives.
10. Noted new advances in improving finfish identification in the region, including the development of the *Identification guide to the common coastal finfish species of the Pacific Islands region* and the corresponding mobile device application 'PacFishID'.

11. Acknowledged CFP's assistance with post disaster and rehabilitation work in coastal fisheries science and management, aquaculture and nearshore fisheries development.
12. Called for assistance in reviewing legislation to ensure improved coastal fisheries governance and MCS, particularly at the local and national levels.
13. Noted increasing incidents of coral beaching, raised concerns over the broader effects of climate change (and other cross-cutting issues) in the region, and called for ongoing scientific advice and monitoring to assist with this, including re-surveying the climate change monitoring sites established in 2011–2012.
14. Noted the small number of staff in the Nearshore Fisheries Development Section (NFDS) and called for strengthening the Section's capacity in fisheries economics, post-harvest methods and fishing technology.
15. Called to strengthen the Coastal Fisheries Science and Management Section's (CFSMS) capacity for science-based management.
16. Called for linking up of regional initiatives with national initiatives, such as the Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP) project.
17. Thanked CFP for its 'safety grab bag' initiative and called for donor assistance to expand this program, and requested training in use of the equipment.
18. Requested assistance with the development of policies and management plans for the aquaculture sector and in cage culture trials.
19. Called for CFP to embrace new developments and technologies to better address member concerns, specifically 1) low-cost FAD development, 2) data collection and e-recording for small-scale fisheries, and 3) coastal MCS.

Oceanic Fisheries Programme report

Heads of Fisheries:

20. Reaffirmed general support for OFP's work in oceanic fisheries, including in pelagic species stock assessments, data management, and fisheries and ecosystem monitoring and analysis, and OFP's role at regional, sub-regional and national levels. Reaffirmed OFP's role as premier scientific advisory body for oceanic fisheries in the region.
21. Supported the ongoing work of OFP in electronic data collection including Electronic Monitoring (EM) and Electronic Reporting (ER) and called for continued development of relevant tools, especially for mobile technologies, and support for on-site implementation and training in these areas.
22. Acknowledged the importance of the work done by observers and called for OFP to work with members to increase the quality and quantity of longline observer coverage to meet 5% agreed coverage.
23. Supported OFP's proposed plan to recruit a Pacific Islander Junior Professional.

24. Supported the Stock Assessment and Modelling Section's move to undertaking economic analyses and modelling of tuna fisheries.
25. Acknowledged the transition from national tuna status reports to regularly updated national web pages, and called for further information on the national consequences of oceanographic influences and climate change on tuna fisheries.
26. Supported OFP's recent and on-going tagging work and requested that where feasible, tagging studies also be conducted on non-tuna species (e.g. sharks).
27. Called for ongoing research into the interactions between the industrial and artisanal sectors.
28. Called for increased emphasis on ecosystem science.

FAME Director's Office, Information and Monitoring & Evaluation Sections

Heads of Fisheries:

29. Noted and supported the ongoing work and services provided by the Fisheries Information Unit into disseminating information to member countries and territories to make informed management decisions.
30. Supported the ongoing work of the Director's Office in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, including the internal review of the Fisheries Information Unit and analysis of FAME training data.

Programme planning

Heads of Fisheries:

31. Supported the change from the FAME Strategic Plan to the FAME Business Plan.
32. Provided group feedback to inform additional changes to the Business Plan, including the addition of a results framework to define how the quality of FAME work will be assessed; mapping how the FAME objectives support global, regional and sub-regional strategies; analysis to assess the amount of funding and human resources allocated to each objective; increased clarity that capacity development is integrated across all objectives; and wording changes to specific result areas.
33. Called for an analysis of how the Business Plan will reflect available national strategies.
34. Noted that the Business Plan is a 'living document', to be reviewed in 2018, and welcomed a report on FAME's performance against the Business Plan at HOF11.

Regional strategies

Heads of Fisheries:

35. Noted the briefing provided by SPC about the process to date to develop draft indicators for reporting of progress to achieve the outcomes of the New Song for Coastal Fisheries, and of the need to streamline and harmonise these with other international, regional and national reporting requirements that have fisheries components, such as the Regional Roadmap for Fisheries, and the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape.
36. Were invited to review draft indicators for the New Song, assess data availability and potential data sources, and provide SPC with their views about potential ways to verify the information provided for the Report Card.
37. Recommended that HoF feedback regarding fisheries indicators and data sources be fed directly into the discussions simultaneously taking place at the Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting towards the UN Ocean Conference being held in Suva, Fiji Islands.

The New Song: progress to date, future plans, and challenges to implementation

Heads of Fisheries:

38. Noted progress on the New Song and the 2015 and 2016 Coastal Fisheries Report Cards.
39. Called for SPC to ensure outcomes from HoF10 are presented to ministers, e.g. through a forum such as FFC and other appropriate fora.
40. Endorsed in principle FAME's suggestion of the establishment of a regional coastal fisheries working group to coordinate implementation of the PIF Leaders' decision on coastal fisheries.
41. Endorsed FAME's proposal that a technical task force be established to draft a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the establishment of a regional coastal fisheries working group, and reaffirmed that this ToR include clear governing mechanisms and membership criteria.
42. Requested the ToR for the establishment of a regional coastal fisheries working group be presented to FFC officials, and, if approved, to be taken to the FFC Ministerial Meeting for consideration and that the outcome of this process be reported back to the Marine Sector Working Group and SPC members for consideration.
43. Provided group feedback on potential national and sub-national responses to strengthen implementation of the New Song, and better enable communities to sustainably manage their coastal fisheries. Identified a number of activities and changes that could be implemented at community, sub-national and national levels, which have been summarised and forwarded to the Marine Sector Working Group's technical taskforce to inform their ToR.
44. Encouraged SPC to seek funding to support further work on these community engagement activities, and to establish mechanisms to support skill sharing among communities and participation in coastal fisheries management.

45. As a strategy to engage the attention of Forum leaders, encouraged SPC to work with the FFA to share bi-annually as host of the annual officials fisheries meeting so that HoF recommendations can be more directly transmitted to the fisheries ministerial fora.
46. Endorsed in principle the proposal from Tuvalu that a regional coastal fisheries technical meeting be convened on an annual basis.

Vanuatu proposal for coastal fisheries science to be moved from Coastal Fisheries Science and Management Section

Heads of Fisheries:

47. Agreed for the FAME review to explore Vanuatu's proposal regarding the reorganisation of the CFP in particular the separation of coastal fisheries science from the current Coastal Fisheries Science and Management Section and placed under a centralised FAME science program and that a report of that review be presented at FFC Ministerial Meeting in July and shared with SPC members for consideration.

Pacific Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Fisheries Statistics

Heads of Fisheries:

48. Noted and supported the progress made by SPC's Statistics for Development Division in the development of Pacific Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Fisheries Statistics (P-SPAFS), and the increased recognition of the importance of collection of fisheries-related statistics.
49. Endorsed the vision, mission and objectives of P-SPAFs and endorsed in principle the current P-SPAFs draft.

Harmonisation collection of small-scale domestic fisheries data

Heads of Fisheries:

50. Noted the progress made by SPC's FAME Division in small-scale domestic fisheries data collection, including e-recording tools, and data management.
51. Supported in general the move by FAME to attempt to proceed with regional harmonisation of its artisanal tuna and coastal creel survey programs, including the maintenance of minimum data standards, but called on SPC to undertake a greater examination of the positives and negatives involved in the initial stages of the harmonisation process.
52. Suggested pilot studies/trials of the harmonised approach could be conducted in a small number of PICTs as part of the initial stages of the harmonisation process before the two FAME programs are formally harmonised.
53. Suggested SPC convene a preliminary strategy meeting to develop the Terms of Reference for a formal body to ensure regional data standardisation and maintenance of minimum data standards that encompasses all small-scale domestic fisheries.

Data holdings and repository

Heads of Fisheries:

54. Expressed concern that historic data that is no longer available to them and the importance of this data for future management of coastal fisheries.
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 back-up 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.
56. Suggested the historical data be expanded to include all fisheries information, noting there may be some issues around copyright on some documents.

Marine Specimen Bank

Heads of Fisheries:

57. Expressed strong support for the proposal of SPC to host an expanded regional marine specimen bank including coastal and oceanic specimens.
58. Recommended that such a facility be used to address urgent science information needs around the life history of coastal and nearshore species and the region's ecosystems.
59. Welcomed the opportunity to have access to state-of-the-art facilities to explore biological and ecological questions relevant to the management of coastal and oceanic resources, especially in the context of developing scientific capacity for members to explore such questions in the region.

Fisheries economics: coastal and oceanic

Heads of Fisheries:

60. Noted the recent activities that have that have been carried out in fisheries economics.
61. Reaffirmed interest and commitment to economic analysis for fisheries management and policy decisions acknowledging that these decisions have management, livelihood and food security implications.
62. Reaffirmed that fisheries economics is a priority area of work and tasked FAME, in collaboration with other regional agencies as appropriate, to seek additional funding to expand future work in across priority activities.
63. Through group work, identified and prioritised upcoming national and regional needs in economic and analytical work in both coastal and oceanic fisheries, and prioritised upcoming capacity development needs in economic analysis within PICT fisheries administrations and identify the preferred options for addressing those needs.

Sea cucumber fisheries

Heads of Fisheries:

64. Noted the Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP) and endorsed the work being undertaken on sea cucumber fisheries by CFP's Coastal Fisheries Science and Management Section towards PROP Component 2: Sustainable Management of Coastal Fisheries.
65. Acknowledged and supported recent undertakings on sea cucumber governance and value chain analysis in Papua New Guinea by the University of Technology Sydney and partners; recognised the applicability of the results to other PICTs; and noted the importance of carefully considering how to best translate the fast cash inflow brought about by sea cucumber fisheries into long-term development opportunities for coastal communities.
66. Expressed appreciation for the recent analyses of Pacific Island sea cucumber export data undertaken by WorldFish, SPC and the Australian Institute of Marine Science, and noted with interest the correlation between PICT fishery size and land area.
67. Noted the lack of biological and economic data in most PICTs to inform the management of sea cucumber fisheries, and called for SPC's ongoing assistance with sea cucumber assessment and management, including in-water assessments, development of management plans, MCS and economic analysis.
68. Underscored the need for proactive regional initiatives and collaboration in addressing these issues, particularly in light of the boom-bust nature of the fishery, recent increases in the prevalence of 'blue boat' sightings and interceptions across the region, domestic illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and export activities, and high socio-economic costs associated with diving accidents.
69. Recognised importance of MCS in coastal fisheries, and in particular sea cucumber fisheries, and the need to raise this in upcoming MCS meetings.
70. Highlighted the need to better understand the ecosystem role of sea cucumbers in mitigating against urban sources of pollution, for example sewage associated with coastal development

Presentations from other organisations

Korea Maritime Institute

Heads of Fisheries:

71. Acknowledged with appreciation the Korean Marine Institute's contribution in the promotion of regional cooperation on fisheries issues across the South Pacific notably through the Annual KOSOPFF forum, and noted the potential for future collaborations on issues spanning aquaculture, management and policy.

Forum Fisheries Agency

Heads of Fisheries:

72. Recognised the positive contribution of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) on fisheries management in the region and expressed gratitude for the ongoing collaborations with SPC's OFP, notably in the provision of technical support in the undertaking of economic analyses that support the management of tuna and tuna-like species.

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Heads of Fisheries:

73. Acknowledged the key role played by the WCPFC in facilitating the management of tuna and tuna-like species in the region, and noted SPC OFP's role as data management and scientific services provider to the Commission.

Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations

Heads of Fisheries:

74. Noted the technical and financial support provided by the FAO in past and ongoing projects with SPC members, and, underscoring the synergy between the New Song and the FAO's CPF initiatives that aims to increase the availability of local healthy food sources and enhance the resilience of small-scale and subsistence fishers, look forward to continued integration of efforts with the goal of ensuring food security and alleviating poverty across the region.

International Maritime Institute of New Zealand

Heads of Fisheries:

75. Expressed gratitude for capacity building opportunities provided by the International Maritime Institute of New Zealand through their delivery of training activities in Nelson, New Zealand. Acknowledged the appreciation of the International Maritime Institute of New Zealand to SPC, and in particular the Fisheries Information Unit.

WWF

Heads of Fisheries:

76. Noted the data deficiencies of sharks and rays in the Pacific, and noted the initiative taken by WWF in the development of management plans, Shark Assessment Reports and National Plans of Action (NPOA) for sharks and rays, and welcomed the offer to trial the rapid assessment toolkits.

Conservation International

Heads of Fisheries:

77. Noted the initiative to consider the development of a proposal for submission to the Green Climate Fund by Conservation International and SPC on building the resilience of the 'Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries' and 'New Song' to climate change. Noting the need for close consultation with the appropriate national stakeholders including national designated authorities on the focal areas of the proposed project, which include: strengthening national FAD programs, defining the stock structure of the four main tuna species in the region, enhancing ecosystem modelling tools (e.g. SEAPODYM), determining the effects of ocean acidification on tuna larvae, developing climate smart fleets, continuing tuna tagging programs for stock assessments, and monitoring of catches and transshipments.

Annex to the Meeting Outcomes

Minutes of the Session on the introduction of new projects starting in 2017 for country input¹

Noumea, Friday 17 March 2017

The session was officially opened and chaired by Mr Moses Amos, Director, FAME, SPC

MFAT Coastal Fisheries Governance Project & Aquaculture Development Project (SPC CFP)

1. Two sister projects developed from the outcomes of HOF9 and funded by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) have started operations in the second half of 2016 – the Coastal Fisheries Governance Project “Improving fisheries food security and sustainable livelihoods for Pacific Island communities” and the Sustainable Pacific Aquaculture Development Project; both projects were presented for country input to their respective work planning.
2. The Coastal Fisheries Governance Project extends over 5 years with a budget of over NZD \$7.3 million and focuses mainly on the development of legislation, policy and management plans and on Monitoring, Control, Surveillance and Enforcement (MCS&E) for coastal fisheries and aquaculture, both at national and subnational level. The project includes a capacity building and awareness raising component as well as a number of attachment and junior professional positions.
3. The countries thanked MFAT and SPC for their efforts and welcomed the expertise provided under the project, noting that assistance in legal and MCS&E matters was eagerly awaited in the coastal fisheries sector. Several countries are in the process of revising their fisheries legislation, and the need for assistance is arising both at national and sub-national level. Many countries are also currently preparing or adopting management plans as well as regulations on size limits, but reliable scientific data is often lacking. It was suggested that SPC set up a reference database with available information on the minimum size of species to support the adoption of sound regulations and management measures.
4. A number of countries anticipated requests for assistance to review their coastal fisheries legislation, to develop coastal fisheries and aquaculture policies, to prepare management plans for specific species, and to receive training in MCS&E and gender issues. With regard to professional attachments under the project, it was suggested that a work programme be agreed with the country beforehand to allow lending institutions to reintegrate their staff at the end of the training experience.
5. The Aquaculture Development Project extends over 5 years with a budget of NZD \$4.9 million and focuses mainly on institutional strengthening and planning in the field of aquatic biosecurity, mentoring of aquaculture business enterprises, and capacity development and technology transfer in feed, seed and brood stock management. The project will also provide policy and legislative assistance through the Coastal Fisheries Governance Project team.

¹ Please note that these minutes have not been cleared by HOF10 participants.

6. Countries thanked the donor and SPC for the timeliness of the project, and noted that addressing biosecurity issues – including the risks related to ballast waters – is crucial for the upscaling of aquaculture activities. They supported the training workshops to be carried out under the project and suggested that the project is a great opportunity for country exchanges within the region. It was suggested that lead farmers be identified to allow countries to share experiences and lessons learnt. At the sub-regional level, the project should feed into the Micronesia Association for Sustainable Aquaculture (MASA) Network.
7. Some of the issues facing aquaculture development that were raised by the heads of fisheries include market access, hatchery design, feed production, aquaculture regulations and information on investors. In this latter regard, it was suggested that SPC set up a repository of information on aquaculture companies interested in investing in the Pacific to allow countries to share information on investors and assess their legitimacy.

DFAT PACFish II Project in 3 countries (WorldFish/ANCORS)

8. Funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), PACFish II is the second phase of the project titled 'Strengthening and scaling community-based approaches to Pacific coastal fisheries management in support of the New Song'. PACFish II covers 3 countries, namely Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. It is due to start in mid-2017 and will run for 4 years with an overall budget of AUD \$7.4 million. The project aims at strengthening institutions, policy and legislation related with Community-Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) in collaboration with SPC and the Locally-Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) Network and at supporting national Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) programmes. It is also involved in tilapia farming, gender and youth aspects and fish consumption issues.
9. Countries welcomed the project and the participating countries acknowledged the excellent work carried out during the previous phase. The proposal for an annual technical meeting on coastal fisheries where countries can share experience and present lessons learnt was reiterated as a possible activity under the project. Some countries showed particular interest in the impact assessment of FADs. Countries also highlighted the need to upscale activities while maintaining them at community level, as well as the efforts made by countries to realign communities with national priorities.

EDF 11 Update for Pacific ACP and OCT (SPC & FFA)

10. Discussions on the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership Programme (PEUMP), to be funded under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF11), started over 2 years ago. The programme has a broad objective aiming at promoting ocean governance in 15 Pacific ACP States, including Timor Leste, in collaboration with numerous partners, namely SPC, FFA, PIFS, SPREP, USP, WWF, IUCN, LMMA and others. FFA is the lead agency for project formulation, SPC will be the lead agency for project management and PIFS will be the regional authorising officer. Support from and engagement of all countries through national authorising officers and through the Ministries of Fisheries and Conservation is crucial for effective delivery at local level.

11. The contract should be signed before the end of 2017, with a budget of 45 million Euro (35 million from the EU and 10 million from the Kingdom of Sweden), of which around 13 million Euro are dedicated to the coastal fisheries management component and 4.5 million Euro to the oceanic fisheries science component. Discussions amongst the different implementing partners and the EU to finalise the budget will start shortly. The programme focuses on 6 result areas: (i) scientific advice for management of the oceanic fishery (OFP); (ii) economic development of national tuna industries (FFA & PITIA); (iii) coastal fisheries management including socioeconomic studies, community-based ecosystem approach to fisheries management (CEAFM), (SPC & LMMA), with legislative reforms and MCS&E covered under the MFAT project; (iv) enhanced MCS to control IUU fishing including blue boats (FFA & WWF); (v) ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation (SPREP & IUCN); and (vi) relevant tertiary training (USP including TVET).
12. In parallel, a programme is being developed under the EDF11 for Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs), of which New Caledonia is the regional coordinator. The OCT programme pursues two main objectives: the first one focuses on the primary sector and climate change, agriculture, marine resources, aquaculture and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) that has strong ties with the PEUMP for the Pacific ACP States; the second objective addresses issues related to biodiversity, water resources, ecosystem services, invasive species and integrated management of river basins. The programme has a budget of 36 million Euro over 3 years.
13. Countries thanked the donor for strengthening the CROP agencies but recommended that due attention be paid to ensure resources and benefits filter down at national level. Partnerships with active NGOs in the region is essential in this regard, and a regional steering committee will be held every year with all partners, including representatives from the 15 countries for the adoption of a yearly work plan reflecting the actual needs of the countries. HOF will have to work closely with national authorising officers to make sure that fisheries priorities are taken into account in the implementation of the programme. Finally, countries underscored the need for coordination between donors (i.e. Australia, New Zealand and the EU) to ensure the complementarity of interventions and activities, particularly in the fields of marine spatial planning, maritime delimitations and MCS training.

MFAT Harvesting Strategy Project (SCP OFP)

14. The key drivers for the proposed Harvesting Strategy Project are the regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries and related Report Cards. The project aims at supporting the implementation of harvest strategies within the WCPO, including WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure 2014-06 on establishing a harvest strategy for key fisheries and stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and the work plan for adoption of harvest strategies. It will also support the capacity building of members in the implementation of these approaches and the uptake of results. The project proposal is currently being reviewed by MFAT and is likely to be approved by April 2017 for a duration of 5 years.
15. Countries appreciated the proposed methodology featuring a staged approach for the preparation and adoption of harvest control rules as a member-driven exercise involving bilateral consultations, and capacity building to support to the wider WCPFC membership. The project is viewed as a tool to build country positions and to engage fishing nations through the WCPFC.

MFAT Tokelau Arrangement Project (FFA)

16. The New Zealand-funded project – ‘Improving South Pacific Tuna Longline Policy and Management’ – is a collaboration between FFA and SPC OFP, and will commence this month. It has a budget of NZD \$7 million, and a duration of 5 years provided that annual milestones are achieved. The project responds to the need for improved regional collaboration to achieve more effective management of the South Pacific longline fishery, which targets mainly albacore tuna. The FFA presentation noted that regional collaboration through the implementation of the PNA purse-seine Vessel Days Management Scheme appears to have stabilised the status of the skipjack stock, but the South Pacific albacore stock continues to decline under current management measures. This project will support the research and development needed to implement a regional management scheme for the South Pacific albacore stock arising from the Tokelau Arrangement. It also provides support to individual TKA Participants in the strengthening of longline management measures at the national level, particularly the need for electronic catch reporting. Implementation of this subregional management scheme will also improve the requirement for compatibility of conservation and management measures for high seas fisheries on the shared albacore stock, as required by international law and the WCPFC Convention.

Concept Note for GCF/GEF 7 – Coastal Fisheries (FAO & SPC)

17. Although FAO SAP and SPC have worked closely on fisheries for many years, SPC and FAO seek to enhance such collaboration. Opportunities for enhanced collaboration could arise through global funding sources such as the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). In this regard, and noting that food production across PICs needs to increase by 50% in order to meet dietary needs of growing populations, FAO and SPC are willing to prepare a concept note. The project may be multi-country or fully regional, and country input will be sought to ensure relevance of its design. National Fisheries offices would need to inform the National Focal Points/National Designated Authorities that such work was in progress to ensure funds were available. The extensive FAO in-country stakeholder consultations that took place as part of the 2018-2021 FAO Multi country programme Framework might provide useful insight as to the priority areas of work.
18. Countries unanimously supported the development of a concept note, bearing in mind that they should be the ultimate beneficiaries and partners of such a project and that it should reflect their national priorities and they have input to the process. The appropriateness of funding from GEF or GCF sources would become clearer as the concept note logframe took shape.
19. It was suggested that funds could be used to extend support for current activities and address gaps in existing projects. Ideas that came out from HOF discussions include good governance, coastal MCS, effective management of coastal resources, coastal communities’ resilience, the development of fishing technology, equitable access to resources and distribution of resources, institutional coordination and strengthening, and food gap reduction. Other areas that should be taken into consideration are the creation of a data repository, initiatives on data harmonization, south-south cooperation for aquaculture exchange, and the establishment of an annual meeting on coastal fisheries.
20. The session was closed echoing the importance of fisheries – oceanic and coastal, underscoring FAME’s role to give services that address the priorities of SPC member countries, and noting the importance of strengthening collaboration with the Heads of Fisheries.