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Update on the review of Coastal Fisheries Report Card indicators

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Background information

1. There are over 30,000 islands scattered across the Pacific Ocean, inhabited by over 10 million people. These islands are divided among 22 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) characterised by vast areas of ocean much greater than their land area. Coastal fisheries are fundamental to food security and livelihoods across the region, representing significant economic, social and cultural benefits for communities. The region has extensive coral reefs, consisting of 70 coral genera, over 4,000 fish/invertebrate species and 30 mangrove species. These coastal resources are under increasing threat and in many places either fully- or over-exploited.
2. The [Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries](#) and [A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to changes: The Noumea strategy](#) are two regional strategies aimed at improving the management of coastal fisheries and ensuring their long-term sustainability in response to challenges such as overfishing, climate change, and illegal fishing.
3. The Coastal Fisheries Report Card (Report Card) is an annual monitoring mechanism that reports on the status of Pacific coastal fisheries in relation to the goals, indicators, and strategies outline in the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries and A New Song for Coastal Fisheries. It provides a snapshot of progress towards implementing regional commitments related to coastal fisheries.
4. The indicators used in the Report Card were identified in consultation with partners and endorsed by the 11th SPC Heads of Fisheries and the Special Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting.
5. The Pacific Community (SPC) works with members' coastal fisheries report card focal points to collect national level coastal fisheries data on an annual basis, which is aggregated at regional level, to report on progress towards the goals established in the regional strategies at both regional and national levels.
6. The challenges around the availability of data on some of the indicators and establishing attributable contribution towards goals have made it difficult to see trends over time since the implementation of the two strategies. This has been highlighted and the need to address the issues of limited data to quantify progress around coastal fisheries management was endorsed by the 14th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting.
7. As the region emerges out of the pandemic and focuses on recovery efforts, the relevance and appropriateness of some of the indicators, particularly the ones with limited data have called for a review and development of improved indicators for the Report Card.

Purpose

8. This paper provides an update on the review of the coastal fisheries report card indicators as agreed during the 4th SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTCMFA) and the 14th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting (HOF) and endorsed by the 3rd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM3). The ministers in their statement of outcomes stated that:
 - *Ministers endorsed the development of the improved indicators for the Coastal Fisheries Report Card, including aggregation of qualitative indicators to better inform progress at the national and regional levels.*

Goals of the Report Card

9. The intentional alignment between the [Regional Roadmap](#) and [A New Song for Coastal Fisheries, the Noumea Strategy](#) has enabled the report card to be a single monitoring mechanism for both commitments. Reporting on progress against these two commitments remains a key challenge given the limitation in data availability, resources constraints, data variability, and validation for most outcome areas.
10. Main goals in the report card are:
 - **Goal 1: Empowerment** - *Within 10 years, all PICTs will have put in place policies and legislation that provide the involvement of coastal communities in the management of their fisheries resources. Supported by national controls on export commodities, communities will drive local management regimes with clear user rights.*
 - **Goal 2: Resilience** – *Within 10 years, all PICTs will be implementing strategies to manage the various threats to coastal ecosystems. Only by conserving fisheries habits, controlling pollution and addressing damage from outside the fishing sector can we develop resilience to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification.*
 - **Goal 3: Livelihoods** - *Within 10 years, all PICTs will have adopted policies to develop alternative livelihoods for coastal communities that are impacted by declining fisheries resources. In most cases, overfishing occurs because coastal communities have no alternative. Aquaculture, water-based tourism and small-scale fishing for tuna provide options, but many solutions will lie outside the fisheries sector.*

Progress update: Review of indicators for the Coastal Fisheries Report Card

11. The SPC has announced a virtual workshop to be held on April 11th-12th, 2023, to review and develop updated indicators for the Coastal Fisheries Report Card, with a focus on reporting against the New Song for Coastal Fisheries and the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries. The workshop notice has been sent to members, civil society organizations, non-state actors, and community-based organizations. The SPC has requested nomination submissions by March 31st, 2023. The two-day virtual workshop intention is to:
 - Review and evaluate the current indicators and their relevance and accuracy to monitor progress and trends over time
 - Consider key questions that the Report Card aims to answer
 - Discuss the criteria for the selection of new indicators using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies
 - Discuss the availability and quality of data as well as the cost-effectiveness of the data collection
12. The workshop will focus on ensuring that the selected indicators are scientifically sound, relevant, and practical for stakeholders to use and collect data with.
13. The outcomes of the workshop will be collated and disseminated for further comments and input from workshop participants and other relevant stakeholders.
14. The updated indicators from the workshop will also be presented at the 6th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture for consideration.

The proposed process to review the Report Card

15. The diagram below outlines the proposed process to review the indicators for the Report Card:

