

## Scaling-up community-based fisheries management in the Pacific region

### Overview

*A New Song for Coastal Fisheries* and *Future of Fisheries Roadmap*<sup>1</sup> outline pathways agreed by officials and other stakeholders to achieve long-term economic, social, and ecological benefits for coastal communities from sustainably managed coastal fisheries. A key emphasis of these policies is to scale-up community-based fisheries management (CBFM).<sup>2</sup> In the words of *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries*, this means moving from small pockets of effective coastal fisheries management to meaningful proportions of the coastal environment.

The regional policies<sup>3</sup> stress the importance of local community involvement to achieve sustainable coastal fisheries, supported by governments and other partners. Regional and sub-regional policies contain a wide range of tools<sup>4</sup> to support scaling-up but the approach taken will need to be tailored to local contexts, national policies and institutions and current CBFM progress. This document aims to provide a framework to help conceptualize scaling-up, assess progress and develop priority strategies.

### The scaling-up challenge

For some Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs), scaling-up CBFM from a few communities to many or most places is a significant challenge on many fronts, including overcoming the geographic isolation of communities, addressing great diversity in ecology and environmental circumstances, securing the political support for CBFM, and integrating CBFM into governance processes (Figure 1). For others, national programs are already in place and the challenge is in maintaining momentum and measuring progress. For most PICTs, sustained scaling-up strategies will require not only significantly more investments into coastal fisheries management, but also more effective use of those investments. Sustainable management must account for a range of dynamic threats and influences, including catchment management and external shocks, such as natural disasters and pandemics.

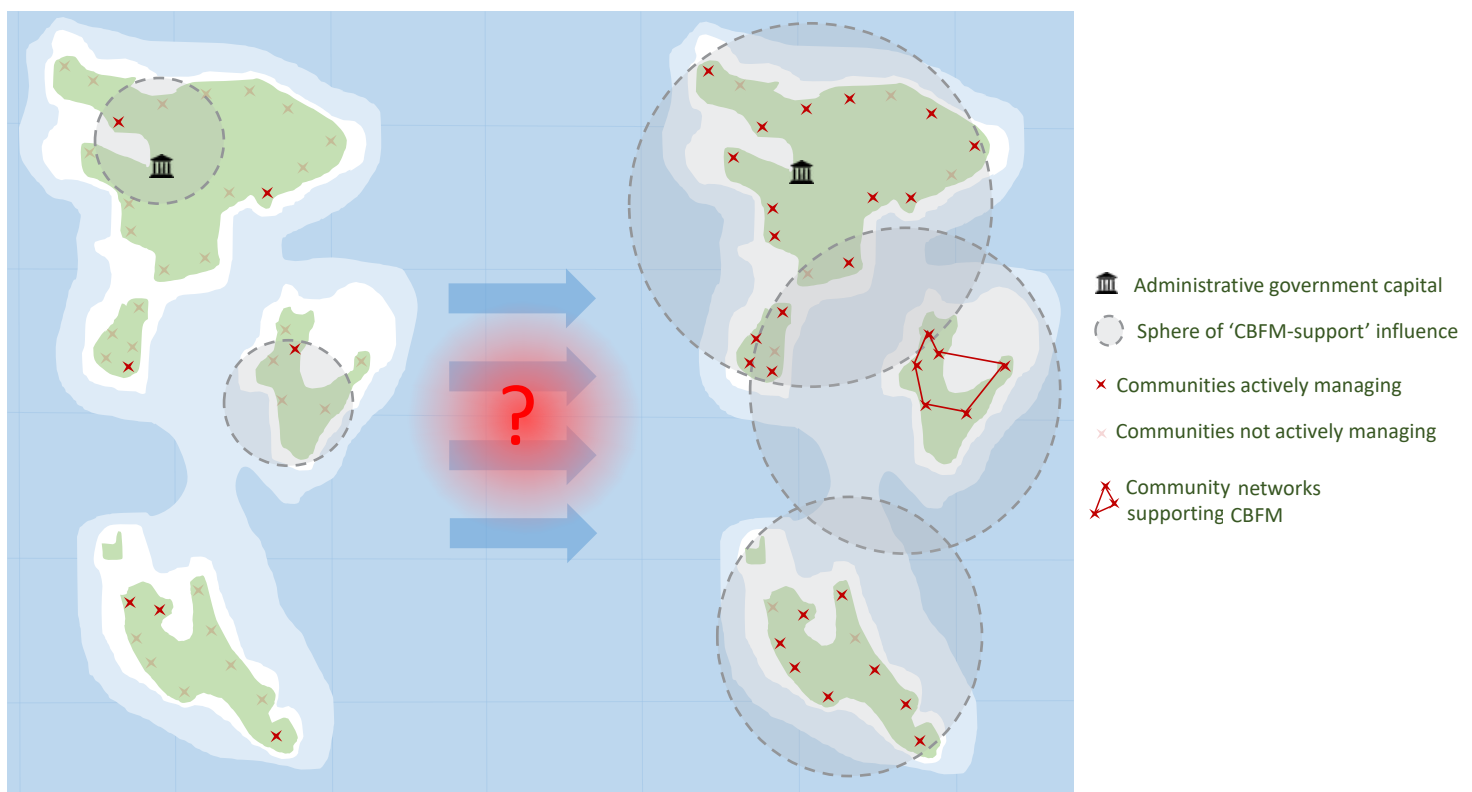


Figure 1: The challenge of scaling-up CBFM across diverse, dispersed and dynamic coastal landscapes; whereby ambitions are to (i) improve enabling environments of CBFM (spheres) and (ii) establish meaningful coverage of active CBFM along PICTs' coastlines.

## Strategic approaches to scaling-up CBFM

The shortage of financial resources and the fact that different communities may have differing needs means that a strategic approach is vital. Strategic approaches involve consideration of both development and implementation of **enabling** contexts for CBFM (Table 1) and **direct CBFM actions** (Table 2). Scaling-up therefore involves interventions at a number of institutional and geographic scales, and inevitably are subject to both controllable and uncontrollable changes. Scaling-up CBFM in PICTs can be thought of as a combination of two key strategies, that is enabling conditions and direct community-oriented-actions as outlined below (Figure 2).

### Enabling environments for CBFM

Firstly, governments have a critical role in creating and maintaining the legal and regulatory environment and conditions conducive to fostering CBFM at national, subnational and village scales. Without this work, CBFM activities are more likely to remain small and localised, and dependent on external agents and time-bound projects. Activities by government agencies are significant in scaling-up CBFM and this includes adopting, and most importantly implementing or enforcing laws, regulations, and policies. Other significant activities include setting agency work plans to ensure implementation aligns to laws and policies and supporting national fora to better coordinate government and non-government agencies. Prioritizing and ensuring adequate investment of staff and operational budget is key in implementing these activities and for sustaining management. It is important for government agencies to ensure that efforts and resources are also invested in areas where communities are relatively powerless and in particular controls on export commodities and the various threats to coastal ecosystems damage from outside the fishing sector or areas beyond the control of local communities. Although governments at national and sometimes subnational levels are mandated to complete these tasks, and are accountable for their delivery, there are many other national and provincial institutions that can support them in these roles, including for example, churches, women's and youth groups and schools.

Table 1: Overview of actions that would contribute to 'enabling' contexts for CBFM

STRATEGIC ENABLING ACTION	What
<b>Supportive legislation and policy</b>	Legislation and operational plans that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide for clear user rights and CBFM mandate</li> <li>2. Control export commodities / high value commercial fishery products</li> <li>3. Adequately supports local and national enforcement relevant to CBFM</li> </ol>
<b>Fisheries agencies capability</b> (national and subnational)	Capability of national and (where relevant) subnational fisheries agencies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-focused to CBFM (or coastal and management at least)</li> <li>2. Adequately resourced (recurrent budget and staff)</li> <li>3. Transparent and accountable</li> <li>4. Adequate coordination with non-state actors (NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, private sector, institutions, etc)</li> </ol>
<b>Ecosystem approaches</b>	Threats to coastal ecosystems from sources outside community waters that affect community fisheries: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Threats (most common) identified (environment vs non-environment)</li> <li>2. Engage relevant agencies and political will</li> <li>3. Strategies to manage the threats implemented</li> </ol>
<b>Equitable access to benefits and decision-making</b>	Assess involvement in decision-making of women, men, youth and marginalized groups and their access to benefits and identify areas that need addressing.

### Direct CBFM actions

Secondly, implementing community-oriented CBFM actions involves establishing or strengthening local management practices through sets of activities that range from distanced community engagement (i.e. lightest forms of participation like information provision) to active community engagement (i.e. active participation like collaborative management, design and implementation). Three broad categories of community engagement are distinguishable: two that focus on communication (**informing and awareness** and **interactive consultation**) and a third category that involves **active engagement with and in communities** to affect change. Within each category there are many pathways by which people can be reached and/or involved, each with its own assumptions, partners, costs and opportunities. The order of the three categories simultaneously represent (1) low-to-high intensity of engagement and (2) broad-to-narrow coverage of impact (Table 2).

Table 2: Overview of categories of direct community-oriented actions (refer to end note 4 for synthesis of regional government targets from A New Song for Coastal Fisheries and The Future of Fisheries Roadmap)

STRATEGIC ACTIONS	What	Who / target
<b>A. Informing and awareness</b> (1-way broadcasting)	Informed coastal communities and relevant stakeholders familiar with fisheries regulations, basic ecology and management tools and administration.	All coastal communities and stakeholders.
<b>B. Interactive consultation</b> (2-way communication)	Ensuring communications that enable monitoring situations, detecting problems and obtaining feedback.	Authorities within communities, fishers and other stakeholders, when needed.
<b>C. Joint action in communities and with stakeholders</b>	Collaboration with communities that may support site management planning, monitoring, enforcement, appropriate and realistic livelihoods and other ecosystem approach activities that ensure local practises are sustainable.	Sites with most need, most cost-effective impacts and priority issues including outside communities.

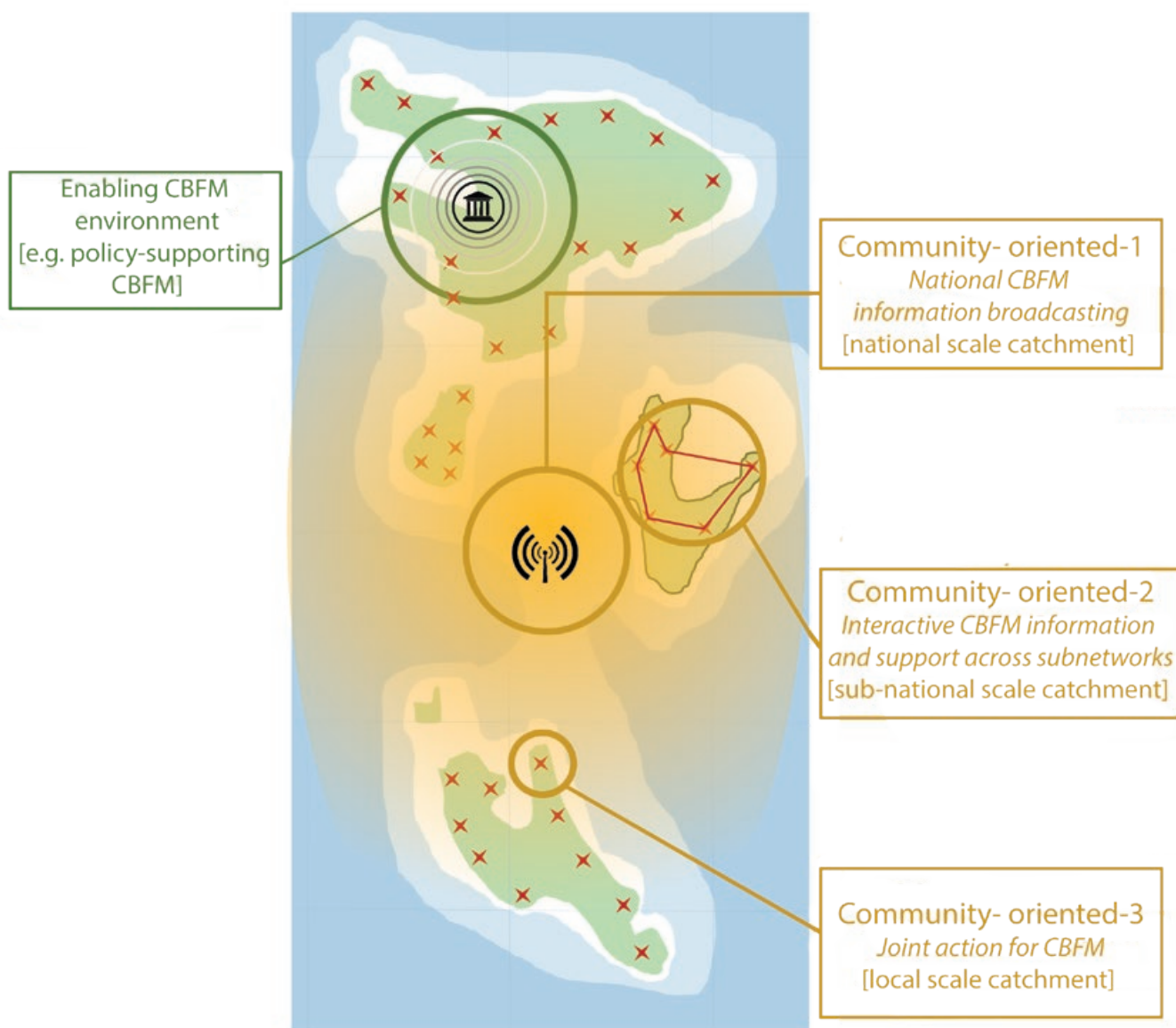


Figure 2: Pathways for scaling-up CBFM, illustrating two broad categories of activities, including (i) enabling environment action (green) and (ii) community-oriented CBFM support action (orange).

## Conclusion

Strategies to scale up CBFM to meaningful proportions of coastlines in PICTs can be framed in terms of developing enabling CBFM environments and taking direct community-oriented actions. The relative emphasis placed on these two strategies will differ among PICTs, as will the pathways used to implement activities within them, together forming national scaling-up strategies that may achieve and sustain the benefits for local communities and the environment. The rich history of experience in the region suggests there is a lot of knowledge available to catalyse change and bring the vision of *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries*, and the ambition of leaders to reality.

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# End notes

- The three critical regional policy documents that set out pathways to achieve long-term economic, social, and ecological benefits for coastal communities from sustainably managed coastal fisheries are:
  - FFA/SPC (2015). Future of Fisheries: A regional roadmap for sustainable Pacific fisheries. Noumea, New Caledonia, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Pacific Community (SPC). [https://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Brochures/FFA\\_SPC\\_2015\\_Roadmap.pdf](https://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Brochures/FFA_SPC_2015_Roadmap.pdf)
  - SPC (2015). A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea Strategy. Noumea, New Caledonia, Secretariat of the Pacific Community. <https://coastfish.spc.int/component/content/article/461-a-new-song-for-coastal-fisheries.html>
  - MSG (2015). Melanesian Spearhead Group roadmap for inshore fisheries management and sustainable development. Noumea, New Caledonia, Melanesian Spearhead Group. <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/mgtfs>
- Community-based approaches to fisheries management appear under many different labels (e.g. CEAFM – community-based ecosystem approaches to fisheries management, CBCRM – community-based coastal resource management), but have in common that they are community-driven and “encompass an ecosystem approach that will sustain livelihoods and ensure resilient communities” (SPC 2015, p.2).
- Strategies, actions and pathways for coastal fisheries management from regional policies:

<b>Future of Fisheries: A regional roadmap for sustainable Pacific fisheries</b>	Coastal fisheries targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empower coastal communities to drive local management regimes</li> <li>Improve resilience through integrated and ecosystem management</li> <li>Development of alternative livelihoods</li> </ul> Strategies to achieve coastal fisheries targets: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide relevant information to inform management and policy</li> <li>Re-focus fisheries agencies to support coastal fisheries management</li> <li>Ensure effective collaboration and coordination of stakeholders</li> <li>Develop and enforce strong and up-to-date legislation, policy and plans</li> <li>Ensure equitable access to benefits and involvement in decision-making involving women, youth &amp; disadvantaged groups</li> </ol>
<b>A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea Strategy</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informed, empowered coastal communities with clearly defined user rights</li> <li>Adequate and relevant information to inform management and policy</li> <li>Recognition of, and strong political commitment and support for, coastal fisheries management on a national and sub-national scale</li> <li>Re-focused fisheries agencies that are transparent, accountable and adequately resourced, supporting coastal fisheries management and sustainable development underpinned by community-based ecosystem approaches to fisheries management (CEAFM)</li> <li>Strong and up-to-date management policy, legislation and planning</li> <li>Effective collaboration and coordination among stakeholders and key sectors of influence</li> <li>More equitable access to benefits and decision making within communities, including women, youth and marginalised groups</li> <li>Diverse livelihoods reducing pressure on fisheries resources, enhancing community incomes &amp; contributing to improved fisheries management</li> </ol>
<b>Melanesian Spearhead Group roadmap for inshore fisheries management and sustainable development 2015-2024</b>	Objectives and actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement effective policies, legislation, management frameworks and financing mechanisms that ensure suitable capacity-building for all stakeholders to sustainably develop and manage coastal resources, as well as effective collaboration amongst all stakeholders:                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institute effective policies, legislation and management frameworks that empower communities to manage their marine resources</li> <li>Implement capacity-building activities to ensure the sustainable development and management of inshore marine resources</li> <li>Implement an adequate resource mobilisation program to support the sustainable development and management of inshore resources</li> <li>Establish appropriate mechanisms for effective collaboration with all relevant stakeholders</li> </ol> </li> <li>Conduct education, awareness raising &amp; provision of information on the importance and management of inshore fisheries to all stakeholders.</li> <li>Manage, maintain and restore fisheries stocks to secure long-term economic and social benefits to coastal communities:                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement effective mechanisms for the management, maintenance and restoration of sea cucumber stocks to maximise long-term economic value and ecological sustainability</li> <li>Supplementary and Alternative Income Generation activities investigated and implemented in suitable areas</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

- Synthesis of regional government targets from *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries* and *The Future of Fisheries Roadmap*.
  - Informed, empowered coastal communities: Science will be translated into simple and informative material to guide community management; and communities will be able to combine their traditional knowledge with scientific understanding.
  - Re-focused fisheries agencies that are transparent, accountable and adequately resourced: There is a need to re-direct staff and resources into supporting CBM, and enforcing national regulations and restrictions where appropriate, on (sub)national scales.
  - Strong legislation: The new approach of empowering communities to manage their resources needs to be backed by strong and appropriate legislation, policies and plans and ensure management regimes with clear user rights.
  - Strengthened enforcement: By community authorized officers, fisheries and law enforcement officers and customs, especially for national controls on export commodities.
  - Strategies to manage the various threats to coastal ecosystems: Only by conserving fisheries habitats, controlling pollution and addressing damage from outside the fishing sector can we develop resilience.
  - Equitable access: Involving women, youth and marginalized groups in decision making and access to benefits of marine resource use is not only fair; it is necessary for success. Women and youth are closely involved in harvesting and selling marine resources and are less likely to respect management measures on which they are not consulted.
  - Appropriate and realistic livelihoods: Diverse livelihood options for communities that contribute to improve coastal fisheries management and continue to support community incomes.

Supportive policy from civil society. LMMA's policy advice on scaling, dubbed the '100% solution' which captures the key elements and challenges to securing sustainable and resilient coastal livelihoods:

- A larger geographic reach: For many fisheries (& other issues) results may not be achievable in a single community but need (joint) action over wider areas.
- A more integrated scale of management: Community livelihoods and resilience depend on more than fish e.g. watersheds and land management, waste management, disaster preparedness etc. All of which can be addressed through access to information and community-based adaptive management (CBAM).
- Vertical scale i.e. improving and building institutions at different levels, policy development, partnerships, networks and other aspects of enabling environment.

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