

Establishment of the Coastal Fisheries Working Group (CFWG)



Takwa market, Solomon Islands (image: Johan van der Ploeg, *WorldFish*).

In 2016, the Pacific Island Forum Leaders tasked the Pacific Community to ‘coordinate with National Fisheries Agencies, CROP agencies and regional and national community groups, to strengthen support and resourcing for coastal fisheries management’. The leaders noted ‘links to communities, food security, health issues and, in particular, non-communicable diseases’. Leaders also noted ‘the need to ensure ecosystem integrity to address issues such as ciguatera outbreaks and to sustainably manage beche-de-mer’.

The setting up of a Coastal Fisheries Working Group (CFWG) was proposed by the SPC Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division in 2017 and the terms of reference were drafted and subsequently endorsed by the Forum Fisheries Committee. The intent of the CFWG is to bring together a small standalone stakeholder group of representatives of communities, national and regional agencies, donors and relevant institutions in order to look at the current and potential coastal fisheries initiatives, so as to ensure that an adequate level of support, resources and services are directed towards assisting national fisheries agencies and that local communities implement management of their coastal fisheries resources.

The CFWG’s guidance on the way forward is contained in the *New Song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy*¹ and the *Future of Fisheries: A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries*², which were endorsed by Pacific Island Forum Leaders in 2015. Other national and sub-regional policies on coastal fisheries are also of relevance, including the *MSG roadmap for inshore fisheries management and sustainable development 2015–2024*³.

The second meeting of the CFWG was held in Noumea on 18 April 2018. Participants approved the current terms of reference and commenced addressing matters of substance.

The participants of the meeting agreed to hear first from the community representatives from Solomon Islands and Nauru on the issues facing the local management of coastal fisheries in their countries. The participants then heard updates on the coastal fisheries report card⁴, the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries that was held in December 2017⁵, and other recent activities.

The work of the CFWG kicked off with an agreement on a draft work plan and activities, the approval of a task force on coastal fisheries law and policy (see p. 8 in this Newsletter), as well as collaboration on mapping activities that are linked to community-based ecosystem approaches to fisheries management in the region, developing training modules for coastal fisheries enforcement officers, and the development of key messages for the CFWG report to the Pacific Island Forum Leaders meeting to be held later in the year.

For more information:

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¹ <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/b8hvs>

² <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/xnc9f>

³ <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/mgtfs>

⁴ <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/i58vk>

⁵ <http://www.spc.int/fame/en/meetings/240>