

COASTAL FISHERY REPORT CARD 2019



Solomon Islands - © Francisco Blaha

Introduction

The *Coastal Fishery Report Card* provides annual regional reporting on the current status of Pacific coastal fisheries in relation to the goals, indicators and strategies adopted by Pacific Leaders in both the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries Strategy*. This is the fifth Report Card produced since the series was first initiated in 2015. It provides a snapshot to enable fisheries stakeholders and political leaders to monitor progress on implementing regional commitments relating to coastal fisheries.

Context

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 are either fully- or over-exploited.

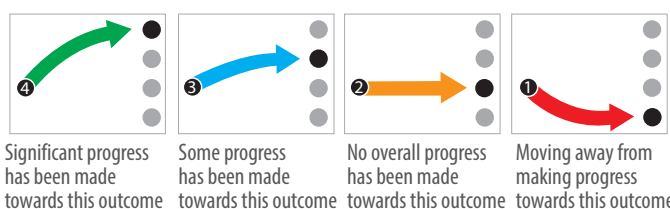
Method used to compile card information

The intentional alignment between the *Regional Roadmap* and *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries* has enabled one single monitoring mechanism for both commitments. 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.

Given the nature of coastal fisheries, reporting on progress itself remains a key challenge in implementing regional commitments. Limitations of data availability, resource constraints, data variability and validation mean that the quality of information varies between outcome areas, and not all indicators are addressed in the Report Card.

The 2019 Report Card includes information from more PICTs than 2018 card, improving data quality and showing increased participation in the process.

Information gaps are noted in the Report Card with a question mark. For outcomes where progress has been noted, the amount of progress ranges from 1 to 4, as shown below.



Goal 1 – Empowerment

Informed, empowered coastal communities with clearly defined user-rights



User rights defined in 14 PICTs

User rights and tenure systems in PICTs are most commonly recognised through constitutional arrangements, or national or sub-national legislation, such as island/village council acts, provincial acts or island state acts.



Access rights and empowerment

The ability of rights holders to claim / control the use of their rights is unknown at the regional level, as is this level of community awareness and community action to manage coastal resources.

Adequate and relevant information to inform management and policy makers



Ratio of extension officers to fishing households

The role of fisheries extension officers is varied, but commonly includes dissemination of information, development activities and providing advice to communities. Data from eight PICTs showed a total ratio of one extension officer to 658 households participating in fisheries.



Extent to which information informs management and policy

The extent to which coastal fisheries management measures are informed by scientific evidence across the region is unknown at this time, as is the adequacy and accessibility of information being provided to communities.

Recognition of, and strong political commitment and support for, coastal fisheries management on a national and sub-national scale



National resource allocation

The median level of governments' financial commitment to coastal fisheries as a proportion of the total national budget was 0.2% (range 0.01% to 1.4%, n=12 PICTs).

The median proportion of fisheries budgets allocated to coastal fisheries was 40% (range 3% to 100%, n=14). The median proportion of fisheries staff working in coastal fisheries is 51% (range 14% to 100%, n=17).

Data from eight PICTs showed a total ratio of one coastal fisheries staff member to 354 households participating in fisheries.



Increasing regional commitment

In 2016 Pacific Leaders agreed to expand "fisheries" to include coastal fisheries. In 2019, the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting endorsed the compilation of national report cards on coastal fisheries, to be led by countries.

Re-focused fisheries agencies that are transparent, accountable, and adequately resourced, supporting coastal fisheries management and sustainable development, underpinned by CEA FM



10 PICTs

reported they annually publish financial statements for their national fisheries budget.



USD 43

is the total coastal fisheries' government budget per household participating in fisheries across eight PICTs (total sum).



11 PICTs

have a current national coastal fisheries roadmap or strategy in place.



Goal 2 – Resilience

Strong and up-to-date management policy, legislation and planning



5 PICTs

have enacted new coastal fisheries management legislation since 2015.



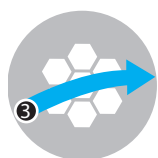
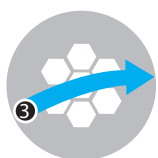
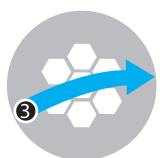
9 PICTs

have current coastal fisheries management policies. Ten have policies in need of drafting or revision.



12 PICTs

have evidence of monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement of coastal fisheries management measures.

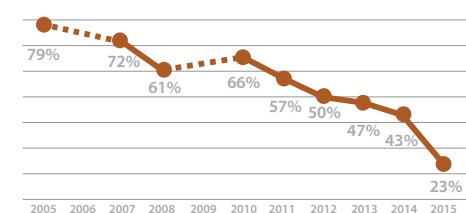


Effective collaboration and coordination between stakeholders and key sectors of influence



Projects implemented in partnership

Marine and coastal projects implemented in partnership (i.e. more than one agency) have reduced over time:



* Source: msp.csiro.au Notes: Project start year. Insufficient data for 2006 & 2009



Level of effectiveness of partnerships

The level of effectiveness of partnerships, collaboration and coordination is unknown.

More equitable access to benefits and decision-making within communities, including women, youth and marginalised groups

BENEFITS



of households participate in fishing. Median across PICTs, range 10% to 64%



of households sell fish. Median across PICTs, range 3% to 30%

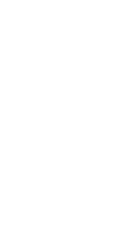


of working age population (WAP) is employed in fisheries. Median across PICTs, range 4.9% to 45.1%

SHARING



Access to benefits and decision-making relating to household fishing and selling fish among women, young people and marginalised groups is unknown from HIES data.



Out of WAP employed in fisheries, 18% are women (range 8% to 38%).

Data source: Above data are based on current HIES available for 12 PICTs (2010–2016). The median value across the PICTs is used.

Goal 3 – Livelihoods and food security

Keep harvests within sustainable limits and ensure coastal developments do not damage fish habitats



Key indicatives species

Giant clams:

Generally considered overfished region-wide

Sea cucumbers:

Most sea cucumber fisheries now closed due to overfishing and/or lack of survey data



Finfish indicator species:

Monitoring of five indicator species (*Naso lituratus*, *Naso unicornis*, *Lutjanus gibbus*, *Lethrinus obsoletus* and *Ctenochaetus striatus*) indicate mixed results across seven regional sites, where some locations show overexploitation, others show appropriate exploitation. Data on most species are deficient as sites not assessed.



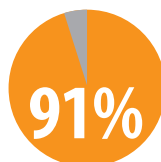
Reefs and ecosystems

In 2011, 48% of reefs in the Pacific were considered threatened (Source: Chin et al. 2011). Since then, reefs in multiple PICTs have been severely affected by coral bleaching and tropical cyclones.



At last calculation, 8% of coastal villages/communities practised CEA FM (Source: Govan et al. 2015).

Enhanced food security from sustainable fisheries, including the supply of tuna for domestic consumption



Per capita fresh fish consumption

of households consume fish or seafood weekly (median range 69% to 98%).

Source: HIES data from 10 PICTs (2010–2016)

42 kg of fresh fish is consumed per person per annum (regional population weighted average, range 11 kg to 70 kg).

Source: HIES data 12 PICTs (2010–2016)



Enhanced contribution to food security is unclear from available data, including food safety elements (i.e. levels of fish poisoning and contaminants)

Diversify the supply of fish, primarily through nearshore fish aggregating devices (FADs) and sustainable aquaculture



Using HIES data, the locations used by fishing households were: inshore (44% of households), nearshore (69%), and offshore (34%). 7% of households reported using FADs (median values from seven PICTs).



12% of household food expenditure is on fish (median, range 8% to 21%, n=12 PICTs, source: HIES)

Using HIES data, the use of fishing gear by fishing households was: net (37%), line (45%), trolling (21%), spear (23%); and gathering (25%). (median values from seven PICTs).

Data notes

Further information on the regional coastal fisheries indicators utilised in this Report Card, including data sources and how figures were calculated, can be found in the Background Report.

Data from HIES were available for 12 PICTs (Cook Islands, FSM, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu). Figures presented are the median across PICTs unless otherwise stated. Data from National Fisheries Offices on staff numbers and budget information were received from 12 PICTs in 2019 (Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna). For 5 PICTs earlier figures were used in the absence of 2019 figures (French Polynesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, Pitcairn and Tuvalu), with some missing data. The inclusion of data from additional PICTs in 2019 means that figures are not directly comparable with previous Report Cards. It is hoped that in future Report Cards data coverage across PICTs and data quality will continue to improve.