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Title:	Supporting members to review regional fisheries policies - <i>The Future of Fisheries: A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries</i> , and, <i>The New Song for Coastal Fisheries: Noumea Strategy</i>
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Summary/short description/key points:

In 2022, the Pacific Fisheries Ministers at their 3rd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting in Tarawa, Kiribati, tasked their fisheries officials, supported by FFA and SPC, to review existing regional fisheries policies including the Regional Roadmap and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries to ensure close alignment with implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

This paper seeks guidance from members on the elements of a process and timeline for the review of the regional fisheries policies which would proceed in partnership with FFA.

Recommendations:

1. Members are invited to discuss a review of regional fisheries policies, including:
 - i. review scope
 - ii. the objectives for the review
 - iii. the process and elements for the review
 - iv. the timeline for the review
 - v. support for members during the review, and
 - vi. any gaps or additional considerations for the review.
2. Members are requested to, subject to deliberations during the meeting, identify membership of a review committee to be finalised at the Forum Fisheries Committee in May.

Supporting members to review regional fisheries policies – *The Future of Fisheries: A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries, and, The New Song for Coastal Fisheries: Noumea Strategy*

Background

3. The *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries: Pathways to Changes – Noumea Strategy* were developed to promote sustainable management of fisheries, enhance livelihoods, increase economic growth, and address food security from fisheries in the region. These strategies are approaching the end of their respective timeframes.
4. The *Future of Fisheries: A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* (Regional Roadmap) was endorsed by Pacific Forum leaders in 2015, with the aim of achieving seven goals for the sustainable management, increased economic returns, and conservation of oceanic and coastal fisheries by 2025. The Regional Roadmap identified Tuna Fisheries and Coastal Fisheries as two crucial elements. The goals for Tuna Fisheries focused on sustainability, value, employment, and food security, while those for Coastal Fisheries prioritized empowerment, resilience, and livelihoods. The Regional Roadmap emphasised the importance of the leaders' commitment to 11 strategies that would enable the Pacific region to take control of the future of its fisheries and ensure the long-term viability of these fisheries and the communities that depend on them.
5. The *New Song for Coastal Fisheries: Noumea Strategy* (New Song for Coastal Fisheries) was developed and adopted in 2015 to address the declining resources and ecosystems of coastal fisheries and provide direction and coordination for effective use of regional support services. The New Song for Coastal Fisheries requires a strong, community-driven approach, and collaboration among stakeholders from different sectors to meet future national and regional food security demands. Its vision is to achieve sustainable, well-managed coastal fisheries that provide food security and long-term economic, social, and ecological benefits to communities. The New Song for Coastal Fisheries' long-term outcomes include improved well-being of coastal communities and productive and healthy ecosystems and fish stocks.
6. In 2022, the Pacific Fisheries Ministers at their 3rd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting in Tarawa, Kiribati, tasked their fisheries officials, supported by FFA and SPC, to review existing regional fisheries policies including the Regional Roadmap and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries to ensure close alignment with implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

Purpose

7. The purpose of this paper is to seek guidance from SPC members on the elements of a process and timeline for the review of the regional fisheries policies including the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries: Pathways to Change - The Noumea Strategy*. Any process must of course proceed in partnership with FFA.
8. It is assumed the review would include assessing the effectiveness of these policies in achieving their goals to date and identifying opportunities for collaboration and integration with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (2050 Strategy).

Review of the key regional fisheries policies

9. In seeking guidance from members on how best to support them in a review of regional fisheries policies, this paper outlines some key questions which are intended to assist the design and implementation of such a review. These questions fall into five key areas:
 - i. scope of the review
 - ii. objectives of the review
 - iii. process and elements for the review
 - iv. timeline for the review, and
 - v. support for members in the review.

Scope of the review

10. There are two key scope questions with respect to this review, which policies are in-scope, and which topics are in-scope. It is assumed that current work to improve the Regional Roadmap indicators (for both coastal fisheries and tuna fisheries) is out of scope.
11. On which regional fisheries policies to include in the review, the Regional Roadmap and New Song for Coastal Fisheries are clearly in-scope given the directive from Ministers. However, guidance is sought from members on other regional fisheries policies which should be included in the review.
12. On the topics, clearly fisheries are in-scope. However, should aquaculture also be in scope? The Regional Roadmap states, "*...Although aquaculture has potential, it currently makes only a tiny contribution to fisheries production in FFA member countries. This paper therefore focuses on tuna and coastal fisheries...*". In the New Song for Coastal Fisheries, there are only a few indirect references to aquaculture. These policies do not explicitly cover aquaculture.
13. In 2022, Ministers at RFMM3 identified the significant socio-economic value and economic potential of aquaculture within the region, and noted that it remains largely under-developed. Ministers commended progress on developing a Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy and endorsed the need for a regional approach to developing aquaculture.

Objectives of the review

14. It is proposed that the review would consider both the effectiveness of the policies to date, and how they can best be updated and adapted to better support the achievement of sustainable fisheries, enhanced livelihoods, promote sustainable economic growth, address food security, build resilience, and adapt to external pressures, including climate change and natural disasters.
15. Within this context, possible objectives of the review of regional fisheries policies include:
 - i. to assess the effectiveness of the policies in achieving their goals
 - ii. to assess the policy elements and their ongoing relevance in the region
 - iii. to identify gaps and challenges in the implementation of the strategies
 - iv. to identify opportunities for collaboration and integration with the 2050 Strategy, and
 - v. to propose recommendations for the alignment of the future policies with the 2050 Strategy.

Process and elements for the review

16. A proposed process and elements of the review include establishing a review committee, developing terms of reference, appointing consultant(s) to carry out technical support for the review and preparation of a report(s), and a consultative process with members through FFA and SPC processes to take advice to Regional Fisheries Ministers for their approval. Each element is explored further below, noting that each step also needs input from FFA and FCC processes to progress.
17. Establish a Review Committee – it is proposed the meeting identify membership of a review committee, comprising key stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the policies, noting that such a committee would oversee the review process – noting that this would remain a first step until such time as input from FFA and FCC processes is integrated. This approach is suggested to support review progress between meetings.
18. Develop Terms of Reference (TOR) – based on member input from SPC HoF and FCC, terms of reference are needed to guide the review. The review committee would develop the TOR for the review, including the scope of work, methodology, and criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the strategies and their relevance in the region.
19. Endorsement of Terms of Reference – as it is Ministers that asked for the review to be conducted, it is important that they have a role in endorsing the TOR. It is suggested that the officials' meetings prior to the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting would be used to finalise the TOR, so that the following RFMM was able to endorse the TOR for the review.
20. Engagement of external consultant(s) – the review will need resources outside current SPC and FFA staff to complete in a timely manner. It is suggested that after the endorsement of the TOR, the Review Committee would engage a reputable external consultant(s) to carry out the review. The first deliverable would be an inception report and work plan. These would be drafted by the consultant and outline how the review would be carried out, the review methodology and proposed timeline. To facilitate progress of the review it is suggested that the inception report and work plan would be approved by the Review Committee.
21. Interviews, analysis and report – it is proposed that the consultant(s) would be required to conduct detailed interviews with key stakeholders, guided by the Review Committee, and to conduct analysis of the policies and their successes, short-comings, and analysis of the alignment with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. A draft report summarizing the findings of the review, including recommendations for improvement, alignments and their relevance would be prepared and presented to SPC Heads of Fisheries and FCC meetings. It is envisaged that after review and revision a final report with recommendations would then go to the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting for endorsement.

Timeline for the review

22. The timeline for the review will need to be flexible, and progress will need to balance other processes and requests from Ministers.

23. A proposed timeline for the review is proposed below, but may be altered to adapt to changes in the regional fisheries calendar:
- i. March 20-25 2023 15th SPC HoF: Endorsement of a review process and timeline by the 15th SPC HoF meeting, and initial establishment of a Review Committee
 - ii. May 22-26 2023 FFC126: Endorsement of a review process and timeline by FFC126 meeting, and establishment of a Review Committee
 - iii. July 3-7 2023 FFCMIN20 and RFMM4: Endorsement of the review process and TOR
 - iv. August to October 2023: External consultant(s) engaged to carry out the review
 - v. November 2023 to March 2024: Interviews and stakeholder consultations, desk reviews, analysis and report drafting
 - vi. April 2024 16th SPC HoF: The consultant(s) and Review Committee would update the meeting on the review and provide initial draft report for review and comments
 - vii. May 2024 FFC(?127): The consultant(s) and Review Committee would update the meeting on the review and provide revised draft report for review and comments, and
 - viii. July 2024 – FFCMIN21 and RFMM5: Draft Report presented for endorsement.

Support for members in the review

24. The work required to conduct this review is substantial. The review itself will require a consultancy to complete within the proposed timelines. It will be particularly important that broad consultation is undertaken with members during all stages of the review. The consultancy and the consultation will require resources from SPC and FFA to support.
25. It is also likely that some technical analyses may be required from SPC and FFA staff during the consultancy to support comparative analyses of the regional policies. Staff and resources will also be required to support the work of the Review Committee.
26. The other key area of FFA and SPC support will be the inclusion of this work in annual workplans and in the agendas and supporting documents for the meetings during 2023 and 2024.

Recommendations for HoF

27. The SPC Heads of Fisheries meeting is requested to provide guidance on a review of regional fisheries policies, including:
- i. review scope, which policies are in-scope, which topics are in-scope, and in particular whether aquaculture should be in-scope for this regional fisheries policy review
 - ii. the objectives for the review
 - iii. the process and elements for the review
 - iv. the timeline for the review
 - v. support for members during the review, and
 - vi. any gaps or additional considerations for the review not raised in the paper.
28. Subject to its deliberations, the SPC Heads of Fisheries meeting is requested to identify membership of a Review Committee to be finalised at FFC in May.