

Information Paper 1

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A strong and coordinated approach to coastal fisheries management – *the big picture*

SPC's Second Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries has been organised
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Purpose

1. The purpose of this Information Paper is to outline the coastal fisheries big picture approach and the long and winding pathway undertaken by SPC FAME Division that leads to achieving it.

Introduction

2. The approach to management and development of fisheries in the Pacific is based on two key types of fishing activities - “Oceanic” (sometimes called “Offshore”) – fishing operations that take place in the deep sea; and “Coastal” – fishing operations that take place in lagoon, reef, deep-slope or shallow sea areas, and open sea adjacent to islands. Coastal fisheries also include fresh water aquaculture and mariculture.
3. The monetary importance and value of the coastal and oceanic fisheries resources also contributes to the level of importance, resource allocation, and political attention given to the management of coastal and oceanic fisheries resources. While coastal fisheries is of fundamental importance to the Pacific people, national and regional attention has been devoted to management and development of the oceanic fisheries. The national and regional attention positively influences funding support from donor partners. Less and weak management interventions, less financial resources, less human resources, and less political attention and support on coastal fisheries meant that for many years management of coastal fisheries resources has been neglected.

Coastal fisheries management crises

4. Coastal fisheries is of fundamental importance to the Pacific island countries. Much of the region’s nutrition, welfare, culture, employment, and recreation are based on the living resources in the zone between the shoreline and the outer reefs and reef slopes. Although dwarfed in both volume and value by the oceanic tuna fisheries, the region’s fisheries is based on coastal resources provide most of the non-imported fish supplies to the region and hence have a crucial role in food security¹.
5. Driven by demand for food security due to increases in population in coastal communities, livelihoods needs and the hunger to generate quick money, harvesting of coastal fisheries resources became an uncontrolled open fishery with little to no management and enforcement measures; coastal monitoring, control and surveillance measures; data collection measures; good scientific advice; and policy and legislative support. Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) devise own in-zone systems to manage their coastal fisheries resources, while international and regional agencies, and NGOs utilise the opportunity for purposes of attracting funding support from donors to support PICTs, although large portions of the funding support ended being used to cover huge overhead costs and visibility purposes. Approaches taken by both national and regional coastal fisheries initiatives and stakeholders are disconnected, not coordinated and are siloed. Despite efforts made at the national and regional levels to sustainably manage coastal fisheries resources, as well as millions of dollars spent to assist and support PICTs manage their coastal fisheries resources, the coastal fisheries resources continue to decline widening the gap between the amount of fish required for food security and sustainable harvests from coastal fisheries.

¹ Pacific Perspectives 2014, Pacific Perspectives on Fisheries and Sustainable Development. Authored by Robert Gillet. Publication prepared by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Coastal fisheries management big picture approach

6. It became evidently clear that that more of the same will not do and a strong and coordinated approach to coastal fisheries management dealing with declines in coastal fisheries resources and related coastal ecosystems is needed. The new and innovative big picture approach would:
 - a. provide direction and encourage coordination, cooperation and an effective use of regional and other support services in the development of coastal fisheries management;
 - b. at the regional level bring together disconnected coastal fisheries initiatives and stakeholders into a strong, coordinated approach with a shared vision of coastal fisheries management;
 - c. at the national and sub-national levels, seek political recognition of the value of coastal fisheries to food security and rural development; and,
 - d. call for an enhanced focus on sustainable coastal fisheries management and related development activities in the Pacific region.

Regional frameworks set up to achieve the big picture approach

The new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy.

7. In March 2015 with funding support from DFAT Australia, the SPC FAME Division convened a dedicated regional Community-based ecosystems approach to fisheries management (CEAFM) workshop attended by representatives from all 22 Pacific Island countries, representatives from other Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific, donors, researchers, and many NGOs. The CEAFM regional workshop developed “*The new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy*”.
8. The ‘new song’ for coastal fisheries initiatives provides the regional platform for a strong and coordinated approach to coastal fisheries management, requiring that in order to effectively implement the ‘new song’ actions, national governments and all other stakeholders will need to commit to substantial support for a community-driven approach.
9. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community was tasked to be responsible for building momentum for the new direction at the regional level and for supporting, facilitating, and preparing regular assessments of the progress with the ‘new song’ initiative.

Coastal Fishery Report Card

10. The region has been following a pathway of missed opportunities particularly with regards to the Pacific fisheries which is the region’s largest shared natural resource and a sector in which regional cooperation has already provided real results – but can do much more. In order to correct the pathway of missed opportunities, the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders (PIFL) endorsed in 2015, *the Future of Fisheries – A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries*. The roadmap has seven clear goals for oceanic and coastal fisheries for the next 10 years.

11. The ‘*new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy*’ key outcome areas and the pathways to change framework were summarised and became the goals, indicators and strategies for coastal fisheries component under the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries. The SPC FAME Division produced the first Coastal Fisheries Report Card (CFRC) in 2015 to report against the roadmap goals and result areas for coastal fisheries to the PIFL. The production of the CFRC has improved over the years. As part of building momentum for the new direction at the regional level a total of four CFRCs (2015, 2016, 2017, & 2018) have been produced by the FAME Division and submitted to PIFL through the Forum Fisheries Committee Ministers.

Coastal Fisheries Working Group

12. In 2016, the Pacific Community (SPC) and partners guided by the principles of the ‘new song’ made a submission² to the Framework for Pacific Regionalism that further highlighted the consequences of inadequate attention to coastal fisheries. The Pacific Island Forum Leaders’ tasked SPC 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 eco-system integrity to address issues such as ciguatera outbreaks and to sustainably manage Beche-de-Mer”.
13. In 2017, the Coastal Fisheries Working Group (CFWG) was established under the guidance of the SPC FAME Division. The purpose is to bring together a small standalone stakeholder group of representatives of communities, national and regional Agencies and Institutions to look at the current and potential coastal fisheries initiatives so as to ensure an adequate level of support, resources and services are directed towards assisting national fisheries agencies and local communities implement management of their coastal fisheries resources. The CFWG reports directly to the PIFL and its terms of reference include:
 - a. Bring together regional initiatives and stakeholders with a shared vision of coastal fisheries management aimed at building a strong coordinated approach and implementation at the national and sub-national levels;
 - b. Discuss and advocate the role and importance of coastal fisheries in regards to the long-term sustainability of island societies, and the basis for their food security and livelihoods;
 - c. Provide regional guidance and support to SPC to continue to build momentum and implementation of the New Song;
 - d. Review the New Song Indicators;
 - e. Peer-review the annual Coastal Fisheries Report Card;
 - f. Support and develop national coastal fishing community representative processes;
 - g. Develop, improve, and identify priorities, strengths, weaknesses and gaps in implementation plans and guide relevant regional partners in efforts to develop joint funding proposals;

² Pacific Community; IUCN Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance; Locally Managed Marine Areas Network; WorldFish; and ANCORS, University of Wollongong. 2016. Coastal Fisheries – Averting the food, health, and employment crisis in the Pacific region. Submission to the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

- h. Addressing a notable challenge in current planning and proposal development in terms of national and in particular community involvement, and;
 - i. Discuss the Tuvalu proposal for reviving a Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries – focusing on science, management, and capacity building aspects.
14. Membership of the CFWG comprises –
- a. CROP Agencies (SPC, PIFS, other relevant agencies on a case by case basis) - 3 Participants;
 - b. Regional civil society representatives of community fishers, gender and youth – 2 Participants;
 - c. Community fisher representatives (Melanesia, Polynesia & Micronesia) – 3 Participants (rotating at each meeting);
 - d. Regional/international NGOs and Research/Education organisations - 3 Participants for a term of 2 years (rotating, including national or regional NGOs, universities and others)
 - e. National Fisheries Agencies (3 sub-regions) – 3 Participants (rotating alphabetically through sub region after each meeting)
 - f. Donors – 2 Participants (to be reviewed every two years through expressions of interest)
15. Participation is encouraged from the wider SPC group of member countries (i.e. not just the PIF members).
16. With funding support from DFAT Australia, a Community-based Fisheries Officer position was established under SPC FAME Coastal Fisheries Programme to provide Secretarial support to the CFWG as part of its terms of reference. The Coastal Fisheries Working Group held its first meeting in SPC head Quarters in Noumea, New Caledonia on 01st December 2017.

Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries

17. The proposal for reviving a Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries – focusing on science, management, and capacity building aspects was tabled at the 10th meeting of the Heads of Fisheries (HoF) in March 2017 and again at the FFC102 meeting in Canberra in May 2017. It became apparent that a regional technical meeting on coastal fisheries needed to be convened to bring together national coastal fisheries scientists and technical experts to discuss important technical and scientific gaps and challenges.
18. Given the important role of the RTMCF, the first RTMCF was held in November 2017 with funding support from DFAT Australia, NZ MFAT, FAO. It is envisaged that the RTMCF will be held annually. The outcomes will be presented to the Heads of Fisheries as follows:
- a. Technical outcomes not requiring HoF approval for implementation will be presented at HoF meeting for noting;
 - b. Technical outcomes needing HoF support and approval for implementation by SPC FAME Division and PICTs at the national and regional levels will be tabled for discussion and approval at the HoF meetings; and

- c. Technical outcomes needing HoF support and approval for implementation by SPC FAME Division and PICTs at the national and regional levels but requires funding support from regional initiatives and stakeholders coordination and collaboration with a shared vision of coastal fisheries management will be tabled for discussion and approval at the HoF meetings for tabling at the CFWG meeting for discussion and support for development of joint funding proposals;

Heads of Fisheries meeting

19. Part of the challenge contributing to less attention given to coastal fisheries management is that the Heads of PICTs Fisheries institutions meet every two years to discuss important management challenges and gaps. Therefore, management approaches discussed and approved by HoF to address coastal fisheries management challenges are always reactive and not proactive in nature.
20. In order to proactively engage in building a strong and coordinated approach to addressing coastal fisheries management challenges and priority areas to strengthen management, it is important that the HoF meets annually. This enables HoF to provide:
 - a. adequate attention to addressing important coastal fisheries management priorities and adequate monitoring of the implementation of the new song pathways to change framework;
 - b. adequate attention to discussing the CFRC before it is discussed by the CFWG and presented to the Pacific Fisheries Ministers for consideration and endorsement to tabling at the PIFL meeting;
 - c. relevant attention to the RTMCF outcomes needing support and approval;
 - d. guidance to the CFWG on coastal fisheries issues needing funding support from regional initiatives and stakeholders coordination and collaboration; and,
 - e. adequate attention on important coastal fisheries issues needing political support from the Pacific Fisheries Ministers and PIFL;

Pacific Fisheries Ministers Meeting

21. The FFC Ministers met in Rarotonga in July 2018 and agreed that it would be useful to convene on the margins of their annual FFC Ministerial Meeting as “Regional Fisheries Ministers” (RFM) to consider issues across the whole spectrum of fisheries and to identify high priority matters to refer to Forum Leaders. Ministers agreed that there are practical, mandate and governance reasons for such a meeting to be separate to their formalised role as members of the Ministerial Forum Fisheries Committee. The FFC Ministers decision was endorsed by the PIFL.
22. Given that the RFM will convene annually at the margins of the annual FFC Ministerial meeting, it will provide an excellent political platform and opportunity where the annual HoF outcomes can be presented to the Ministers to obtain political support and endorsement.