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POLICY BRIEF

Scaling up community-based fisheries management: A regional commitment supporting Pacific island communities in sustaining coastal fisheries

Purpose

The aim of this policy brief is to:

- reiterate the importance of coastal fisheries and the need to scale-up management through community-based fisheries management (CBFM) approaches;
- emphasise that the *Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up CBFM: 2021-2025 (Framework for Action)* is a broad regional framework that provides regional and subregional guidance in implementing the scaling up of CBFM that supports and empowers local communities; and,
- highlight the agreed key actions required to support and ramp up implementation of the *Framework for Action*.

Key messages

- Less than 10% of coastal communities in the Pacific have received some level of support for CBFM and large areas are not under effective management.
- Effective support and empowerment of coastal communities are vital to achieving national coastal fisheries management goals, the vision of *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy* and the Pacific leaders' ambition on the *Future of Fisheries: A regional roadmap for sustainable Pacific fisheries*.
- The very limited resources and staffing for coastal fisheries management, including CBFM, at national and subnational fisheries agencies, mean an inclusive strategic approach is vital for sustainable coastal fisheries management in the Pacific region.
- The *Framework for Action* provides regional and subregional CBFM scaling-up strategic guidance for Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) to adapt to the diverse range of national CBFM contexts.
- Fisheries Ministers and Heads of Fisheries are encouraged to support the implementation of the *Framework for Action* at national and subnational levels.



CBFM context in the Pacific

The regional context for community-based fisheries management in the Pacific islands is provided by three main policy documents adopted in 2015, namely *A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy*¹, the *Future of Fisheries: A regional roadmap for sustainable Pacific fisheries*² endorsed by Pacific leaders and the *Melanesian Spearhead Group roadmap for inshore fisheries management and sustainable development*.³ Overall, these policies reflect the FAO's global *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries⁴ in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (2015)*. The combined aims of these policies can be summarised as follows:

Communities are empowered to drive local management regimes that secure and improve coastal fisheries, marine ecosystems, and associated livelihoods, underpinned by community-based approaches and supported by policy, legislation and national controls.

With the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries*, PICTs agreed to scale-up coastal fisheries management that incorporates CBFM approaches. Scaling-up consists of moving from small pockets of effective coastal fisheries management to supporting meaningful proportions of the coastal environment to achieve healthy coastal fisheries that continue to feed local populations and support national development aspirations, with appropriate national and regional support.

Based on the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries*, CBFM means:

Fisheries management approaches that are community-driven and encompass an ecosystem approach that will sustain livelihoods and ensure resilient Pacific island communities.

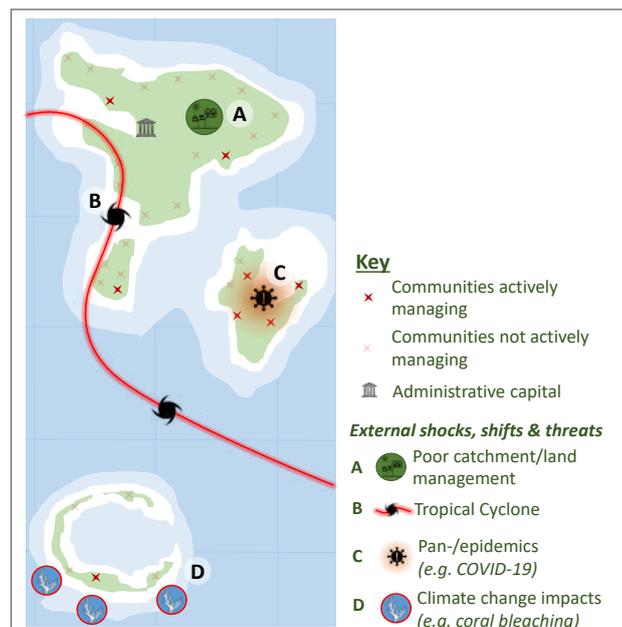


Figure 1. CBFM challenges

Pacific coastal fisheries challenge

Coastal fisheries resources continue to decline through overfishing and degradation of coastal ecosystems. Poor land management, logging and mining are some of the major non-fisheries threats that also affect coastal fisheries. All these threats are further exacerbated by external shocks such as natural disasters, climate change and pandemics (Figure 1).

Most coastal communities in the Pacific region have not received adequate support for CBFM, and large areas are not under effective management. Continuing to work with a small number of CBFM sites, or even a series of sites, leaves most of the Pacific coastal waters under-managed and thousands of community livelihoods at risk. At the institutional and governance level, inadequate investment (staff and budget) in coastal fisheries management, including CBFM, is an ongoing challenge.

The need for strategic scaling-up approach

Given the inadequate budget and staffing of fisheries agencies for coastal fisheries management, especially for CBFM, the fact that different communities have different needs, and the geographical isolation of communities, a strategic scaling-up approach (Figure 2) is needed to allow support and empowerment of all coastal communities to achieve an impact on sustainability of coastal resources. The *Framework for Action* provides that nationally relevant strategic guidance.

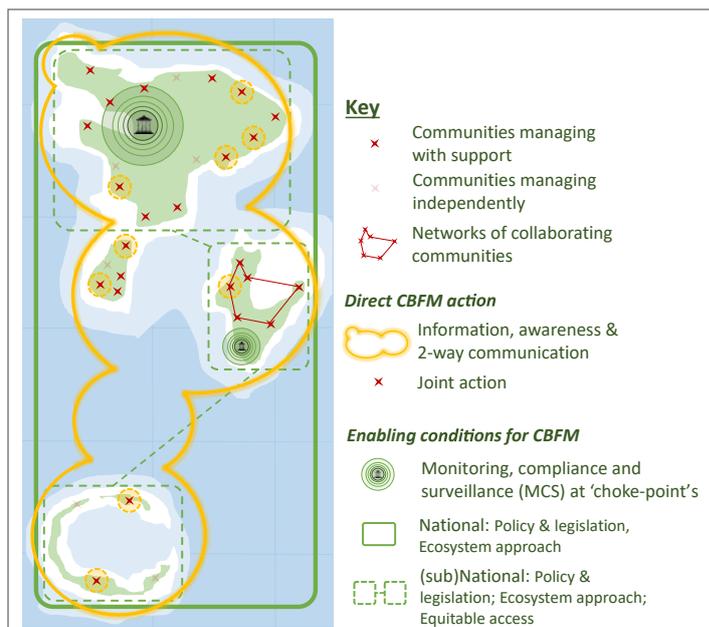


Figure 2. Strategic approach to scale-up CBFM

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

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

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

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/3/i4487e/i4487e.pdf>

Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up CBFM: 2021–2025

To achieve the vision of the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries* and to implement the Pacific leaders' ambition on coastal fisheries under the *Future of Fisheries Roadmap*, the *Framework for Action* was reviewed and approved by Pacific Community (SPC) members at the 13th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting⁵ and endorsed at the Second Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting in August 2021.⁶

Recognising SPC member government's responsibility for coastal fisheries management at the national level and in acknowledging the diversity of contexts and progress made in CBFM implementation among PICTs, the purpose of the *Framework for Action* is to provide regional and subregional guidance to PICTs in developing, prioritising, and implementing national and sub-national actions in scaling up CBFM that support all coastal communities and achieve national and regional coastal fisheries management goals.

Recommended priority actions

Regional level

- Fisheries Ministers and Heads of Fisheries to promote and support the implementation of the *Framework for Action* at regional, national and subnational levels and find ways to reaffirm support in re-focusing and adequately resourcing (staff and operational/recurrent budgets) fisheries agencies to ensure effective implementation of CBFM.
- SPC to support implementation of the *Framework for Action* through collaboration and coordination with government agencies, non-state actors, donors and development partners at regional, national and sub-national levels.

National and subnational level

- Firstly, to implement the *Framework for Action* at the country level, an inclusive national prioritisation process to develop CBFM scaling-up actions is highly recommended⁷ and ensures that priority actions are incorporated into national and subnational agencies and organisations' work plans and budgets and are shared with subregional and regional partners.
- Secondly, regular and inclusive monitoring and evaluation⁸ of implemented actions are necessary for improving and adapting national scaling up actions or approaches.

⁵ <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/254>

⁶ https://www.ffa.int/system/files/2021%20RFMM2%20Statement%20of%20Outcomes_FINAL.pdf

⁷ Action / Steps 1 and 2 of Section 6.3 of the *Framework for Action*

⁸ Action / Steps 3 and 4 of Section 6.3 of the *Framework for Action*



Further reading

Pacific Community. 2021. Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management: 2021–2025. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 20 p. <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/yr5yv>

SPC, LMMA and UOW. 2021. Scaling-up Community-Based Fisheries Management in the Pacific region. [Information paper]. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 4 p. <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/cc937>

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