



13th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting

1–4 June 2021 – Virtual meeting



Original: English

Outcomes of the Thirteenth SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting

FAME Secretariat

Background

1. The 13th SPC Heads of Fisheries (HOF) meeting was held online from the 1st to 4th June 2021 utilising the Zoom platform. This is the second consecutive HoF meeting to be held online due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic.
2. HoF is a regional meeting of the heads of SPC member country and territory fishery agencies, or their appointed deputies, covering the entire range of interests for which they have responsibility and on which the SPC Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) provides advice and assistance. The HoF meeting plays a unique role in providing strategic guidance to FAME.
3. The meeting was chaired by Ms Alexa Cole, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States of America.
4. The meeting was opened by the SPC Director General Dr Stuart Minchin.
5. The outcomes outlined here are the main points of consensus among delegates that the meeting felt necessary to document in order to: guide the management of the FAME work programmes; draw to the attention of CROP agencies, development partners and donors; signal agreement on issues that require attention by members themselves; and inform the upcoming Regional Fisheries Ministers' Meeting (RFMM), SPC Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA), and the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting.

FAME 2020 results reporting

6. Heads of Fisheries:
 - a. *Reviewed and noted* with appreciation the reported results achieved by the Oceanic Fisheries Programme and the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme against the FAME business plan (Working Paper 1) in 2020.
 - b. *Acknowledged* the enhancements made to the results dashboard, including FAME performance stories, that enable members to explore results by region, members and donors, *further noting* that SPC is responding to member requests for additional information through the interactive online 'Results Explorer' (www.famerresults.org), which includes country-specific reporting, and through the development of a member request tracking system.

FAME priorities work areas and future developments

7. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. *Reviewed and approved* the FAME priority work areas for 2021 and the long-term strategic direction and emerging work areas outlined (Working Paper 2).
- b. *Invited* FAME to continue ensuring that priorities are aligned to both regional and member plans and needs in the post-COVID recovery environment.
- c. *Requested* FAME to take note of the priorities identified during the meeting, in particular the following thematic areas, some of which were further discussed under other agenda items (7 and 8):
 - i. Electronic approaches to monitoring and reporting, for both oceanic and coastal fisheries.
 - ii. Coastal fisheries and aquaculture science and traditional knowledge in support of evidence-based management.
 - iii. Data analysis for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, including origin of fish imports.
 - iv. Coastal fisheries and aquaculture policy and legislation development and implementation.
 - v. Customary and traditional governance of inshore fisheries.
 - vi. Diversity of livelihood options for fishing communities, including low-technology and small-scale aquaculture.
 - vii. Innovative aquaculture development opportunities, including farming of native and low-value as well as high-value species both for food security and export.
 - viii. Explore initiatives to increase the value of seafood/aquaculture products.
 - ix. Cross-sectoral climate change impacts, implications and adaptations.
 - x. Gender and social inclusion in FAME's work.
 - xi. Bring diverse expertise across different sectors and disciplines to support more integrated policy and management options to address the complex problems faced.

Evaluation of capacity development efforts at FAME

8. The 11th Heads of Fisheries Meeting (HoF11), outcome (6.b), called for a follow-up evaluation of in-country outcomes or impacts relating to FAME's capacity development activities.

9. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. *Noted* that the independent *Evaluation of capacity development at FAME*, as requested at HoF11, is in the final stages of completion by the consultants (Allen+Clarke) and that the evaluation report will be finalised in mid-June 2021.
- b. *Acknowledged* that, while FAME is considered to be a relevant, effective and impactful provider of capacity development, the evaluation report identified 15 recommendations to strengthen the capacity development efforts at FAME.
- c. *Provided* specific feedback to the consultants for consideration in the finalisation of the evaluation report, including that online training should not be the sole methodology of delivery in future, that the impact and benefits of training are fully realised at the member level, and that gender and social inclusion concerns should continue to be integrated in capacity development efforts.
- d. *Endorsed* the 15 recommendations made in the evaluation report and *invited* FAME to incorporate the outcomes of the evaluation into its business plan over the coming year.

Policy on the governance of fisheries, aquaculture, and marine ecosystems (FAME) data [draft]

10. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. *Welcomed* the development of a draft *Policy on the governance of fisheries, aquaculture, and marine ecosystems (FAME) data*.
- b. *Agreed* to provide final feedback to FAME on the policy, with the intention of FAME seeking out-of-session endorsement from Heads of Fisheries as soon as feasible.
- c. *Further agreed* for FAME to use the policy immediately, acknowledging that it provides clearer guidance to FAME staff on ensuring that members' data are managed correctly.

RTMCF4 – Progress against actions and PICTs priorities

11. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. *Noted* the rescheduled dates (12–15 and 19 October 2021) and the proposed focus for the 4th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries (RTMCF4) and *suggested* the meeting content and duration be reviewed with the RTMCF4 Chair to fit the online format.
- b. *Further noted* the interim progress on key RTMCF actions and the preliminary PICT technical priorities and issues (Working Paper 7).

Scaling up community-based fisheries management

12. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. *Acknowledged* the extensive consultative process undertaken by FAME and partners in response to the HoF12 request to assess effective approaches for scaling-up community-based fisheries management (CBFM) and to assist members in developing approaches appropriate to member contexts.
- b. *Considered* the draft Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling-up Community-based Fisheries Management and *agreed* to provide specific feedback on the Framework to FAME by 17 June 2021.
- c. *Noted* that the Framework for Action provides regional and sub-regional guidance on scaling up CBFM for members to adapt to their circumstances, as applicable, and *emphasised* that the Framework does not represent a tool to judge performance at the member level.
- d. *Agreed* for FAME to present the revised Framework for Action to the 2nd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting for high level endorsement and emphasised the importance of this work to members.
- e. *Supported* FAME's development and circulation of the CBFM scaling-up policy brief for review by Heads of Fisheries before presentation at the 2nd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting.

Future priorities for Pacific aquaculture development

13. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. *Endorsed* the approaches proposed (Working Paper 5) for SPC to address members' ongoing and immediate needs and priorities for the aquaculture sector.
- b. *Endorsed* the proposed process for FAME to identify and prioritise the region's medium- and long-term (5-10 years) aquaculture needs in the post-COVID era, taking into account the input from the breakout session.
- c. *Supported* the development of a new regional aquaculture strategy, based on the identified medium- and long-term aquaculture needs, to guide and support members' aspirations and build upon the region's strengths and experiences.
- d. *Agreed* for a draft regional aquaculture strategy to be reviewed by RTMCF4 and presented for endorsement by HoF14.

Climate change and fisheries

14. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. *Endorsed* FAME's programme of work on climate change outlined in Working Paper 6.
- b. *Supported* the preparation of the final project documentation for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) programme *Adapting tuna-dependent Pacific Island communities and economies to climate change*.
- c. *Reviewed and approved* proposals to improve strategic scientific assets and infrastructure to deliver the information needed by members, including the potential expansion of the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (Information Paper 9) and consideration of an ocean science vessel for the Pacific (Information Paper 7).

Anchored fish aggregating devices – an update on current and proposed activities

15. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. *Invited* FAME to further explore the cost-effectiveness of e-monitoring, and GPS trackers and/or acoustic buoys attached to anchored FADs.
- b. *Requested* FAME continue to investigate and trial new fishing technologies targeting underutilised small pelagic resources.
- c. *Noted* the need for ongoing training in monitoring FAD and non-FAD fishing activities, data analysis and safety at sea.

Specific outcomes for the Second Regional Fisheries Ministers' Meeting

16. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. *Requested* the Secretariat to liaise with members to develop a concise brief for the Second Regional Fisheries Ministers' Meeting on key outcomes from Heads of Fisheries, and present that to the RFMM officials meeting.

Closing

17. Heads of Fisheries adopted the Thirteenth SPC Heads of Fisheries Outcomes document.

18. The meeting was closed by Mr Cameron Diver, Deputy Director General, SPC.