



4<sup>th</sup> SPC Regional Technical Meeting  
on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture  
12–15 October 2021 – Virtual meeting



Pacific  
Community  
Communauté  
du Pacifique

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Summary/short description/key points:

The purpose of this Information paper is to outline the purposes of the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA), provide some background and context to the format and meeting.

The RTMCFA4 brings together coastal fisheries and aquaculture scientists and technical experts in the Pacific to discuss important technical and scientific gaps, needs, challenges and opportunities.

The overarching theme of RTMCFA4 is to discuss and address some of the main technical issues affecting coastal fisheries and aquaculture in support of better science-based resource management and the equitable access to resources, by capturing lessons learned from the “response phase” of the COVID-19 pandemic, and identifying approaches and priorities as the region transitions to the ‘recovery phase’ in 2021–22 and beyond.

RTMCFA4 will be the first meeting to include the Community-based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD) session convened by and focused on civil society organisation (CSO) and other non-state actor (NSA) participation.

Outcomes and recommendations:

Participants are invited to:

1. Discuss and suggest ways to improve the effectiveness of future in-person / hybrid / virtual RTMCFA meetings
2. Discuss and suggest alternative names and acronyms for RTMCFA

# Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

## *Purpose*

1. The purpose of this Information paper is to outline the purposes of the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA), provide some background and context to the format and meeting outcomes.

## *Introduction*

2. The Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries (RTMCF)<sup>1</sup> was re-established in 2017 by Tenth Heads of Fisheries meeting, with the purpose of bringing together coastal fisheries and aquaculture scientists and technical experts in the Pacific to discuss important technical and scientific gaps, needs, challenges and opportunities. There have been three previous meetings: [RTMCF1 \(2017\)](#)<sup>2</sup>; [RTMCF2 \(2018\)](#)<sup>3</sup>; and [RTMCF3 \(2019\)](#)<sup>4</sup>.
3. For the Fourth Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture ([RTMCFA4](#))<sup>5</sup> the title has been adjusted to acknowledge that these meetings also include the aquaculture sector.
4. These four meetings have been funded by the Australian Government (DFAT), with additional support variously provided by New Zealand MFAT, FAO and the PEUMP programme (EU/Sida).
5. In 2019, RTMCF3 was the first phase of the newly established strategic direction setting framework, information flow and decision-making process for Pacific coastal fisheries and aquaculture, with a pathway for technical outcomes and recommendations of significant regional importance to flow from the RTMCFA to the Heads of Fisheries to the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM) and, where appropriate, on to the Forum Leaders. This information flow does not affect the governance of SPC's strategic direction by the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) and Conference. Two recent examples of this were the approval by HoF and the endorsement by the RFMM of the, [Regional Framework on Aquatic Biosecurity](#) (2020: HoF12 and RFMM1) and the [Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management: 2021–2025](#) (2021: HoF13 and RFMM2).

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries' was the precursor to the Heads of Fisheries meeting, with 25 RTMCF meetings between 1952 and 1994. 13 Heads of Fisheries (HoF) meetings have been held between 1999 and 2021. <https://fame1.spc.int/en/publications/meeting-documents>

<sup>2</sup> RTMCF1: <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/240> or <https://fame1.spc.int/fr/meetings/240> (French)

<sup>3</sup> RTMCF2: <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/241> or <https://fame1.spc.int/fr/meetings/241>

<sup>4</sup> RTMCF3: <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/248> or <https://fame1.spc.int/fr/meetings/248>

<sup>5</sup> RTMCFA4: <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/253> or <https://fame1.spc.int/fr/meetings/253>

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

6. The RTMCFA4 will be held as a virtual meeting from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
7. The RTMCFA4 meeting has been arranged to carry forward the work and momentum generated from the first three meetings, and aims to address some specific outcomes as agreed by representatives at the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Heads of Fisheries meetings (May 2020; June 2021) and by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Fisheries Ministers Meetings (August 2020; July 2021). It also links to the direction set out in [A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy](#), the [Future of Fisheries: Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries](#), as well as assisting with providing the much-needed information for reporting to Leaders through the annual [Coastal Fisheries Report Card](#) (see also [WP5](#)).
8. The overarching theme of RTMCFA4 is to discuss and address some of the main technical issues affecting coastal fisheries and aquaculture in support of better science-based resource management and the equitable access to resources, by capturing lessons learned from the ‘response phase’ of the COVID-19 pandemic, and identifying approaches and priorities as the region transitions to the ‘recovery phase’ in 2021–22 and beyond.
9. The RTMCFA meetings are intended to focus on specific priority issues with input from member country government and territory administrations. For the first three in-person RTMCF meetings the format of the meeting has been to maximise input through group discussions and plenary sessions. This will continue for RTMCFA4, but due to this being a virtual meeting it will be focused on a limited number of high priority issues.

#### Community-based Fisheries Dialogue

10. RTMCFA4 will be the first meeting to include the Community Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD) session convened by and focused on Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and other Non-State Actor (NSA) participation.
11. The CBF Dialogue session will be held as a virtual meeting on 13 October 2021. As this will be the first CBF Dialogue session, it is being led by an independent convenor, with the representatives of the CSO and other NSA communities invited to fully engage in plenary and breakout group discussions.
12. The purpose of the CBF Dialogue is to provide the CSO and NSA community with an opportunity to provide information, advice and key needs, through the RTMCFA, to Heads of Fisheries to assist with informing Leaders on priority issues and needs associated with the sustainable use of coastal fisheries resources. It is also to provide an opportunity to share experiences and lessons from community-based initiatives to strengthen efforts to maintain productive and healthy ecosystems and their associated fisheries resources that are critical to the wellbeing of coastal communities. The discussion supported by this dialogue will focus on issues of common regional significance to community-driven coastal fisheries generally.

13. As this will be the first CBF Dialogue session, in large part, it will focus on establishing an appropriate administrative foundation for future CBF Dialogue sessions. Participants are invited to advise and recommend future CBF Dialogue session arrangements relating to:
- Terms of Reference for the CBF Dialogue session within the RTMCFA agenda;
  - Convening arrangements for the CBF Dialogue session; and
  - The processes for the selection of participants in future CBF Dialogue sessions.
14. *Background to the CBF Dialogue session:* Regional Fisheries Ministers, at their Special Meeting in 2019, requested the Pacific Community (SPC) to commission a review to, in part, provide options and recommendations for a new mechanism for increasing the engagement of civil society and other non-state actors to give effect to the Pacific Island Forum Leaders' decision in relation to coastal fisheries (paragraph 10, 47th Leaders Communique, 2016<sup>6</sup>).
15. SPC Member Heads of Fisheries, past participants of the Coastal Fisheries Working Group, civil society representatives, SPC staff, and other stakeholders were consulted during the independent review. The final proposed mechanism (referred to as the “CBF session”) was reviewed, approved and endorsed by HoF12 (May 2020) and endorsed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (August 2020).

### *Reporting*

16. The RTMCFA4 will report to the 14<sup>th</sup> Heads of Fisheries (HoF14) meeting in early 2022. This will include the outcomes of the Community Based Fisheries Dialogue session.
17. The formal report of the meeting will consist of a summary of decisions, outcomes and recommendations identified by the Chair, and agreed by consensus, called the “Outputs and Actions” of the meeting. The Outputs and Actions report will also include the outputs of the Community Based Fisheries Dialogue session. The Outputs and Actions report will include a section focused on a limited number of specific, high priority meeting outputs that need to be presented to HoF14 for consideration and decision by the Heads of Fisheries.

### *Provisional agenda overview*

18. As RTMCFA4 will be a virtual meeting, the format and agenda have been modified to meet the constraints of this format, and at the request of HoF13, reduced to four days. The meeting will use the Zoom platform and will consist of two 2-hour sessions per day, with a break between sessions. Where appropriate, some sessions will involve breakout groups in addition to the plenary sessions. Due to time zones and the dateline, the meeting will run from Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> to Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (09:00-14:30 NOU time/GMT +11).

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<sup>6</sup> Forum Communiqué, 47th Pacific Islands Forum, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, 8-10 September, 2016. [http://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016-Forum-Communique\\_-Pohnpei\\_-FSM\\_-8-10-Sept.pdf](http://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016-Forum-Communique_-Pohnpei_-FSM_-8-10-Sept.pdf)

19. The following is an overview of the provisional draft agenda, with the latest Provisional Agenda available on the [RTMCFA4 meeting website](#)<sup>7</sup>:

Day 1 (Tue 12 Oct):

- Opening; Coastal fisheries priorities and needs summary
- *Coastal fisheries technical session 1*: Supporting the integration of e-data systems into coastal fisheries across the PICTs
- *Coastal fisheries technical session 2*: Enhancing capacity for effective coastal fisheries management

Day 2 (Wed 13 Oct):

- Community-based Fisheries Dialogue Opening
- *CBF Dialogue session 1*: CBF Dialogue Terms of reference and convening arrangements
- *CBF Dialogue session 2*: Implementing the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling-up CBFM

Day 3 (14 Oct):

- Aquaculture priorities and needs summary;
- *Aquaculture technical session 1*: Risk Planning for Pacific Aquaculture
- *Aquaculture technical session 2*: Aquaculture needs, priorities and future directions in the Pacific Islands Region

Day 4 (15 Oct):

- CBF Dialogue summary report on findings and recommendations to RTMCFA
- Coastal fisheries report card and indicator
- Discussion of future RTMCFAs and name/acronym
- *Technical session*: Scientific and technical support in a COVID-19 context – lessons
- Review and adoption of meeting Outcomes and Actions report

20. Given the restrictions of a virtual meeting, there will be no statements by observers. However, observers, other agencies, organisations, companies and individuals are invited to submit brief Information papers for circulation to all participants.

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<sup>7</sup> RTMCFA4 website: <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/253>