



Seventh SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

19–22 November 2024



Original: English

Information paper 1

Seventh Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and
Aquaculture – Purpose and format

SPC FAME

Purpose and format of RTMCFA7

Purpose

1. This Information paper outlines the purposes of the 7th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA) and provides some background and context to the format and meeting outcomes.
2. The Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries (RTMCF)¹ was re-established in 2017 by the 10th 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 six previous meetings: [RTMCF1 \(2017\)](#)²; [RTMCF2 \(2018\)](#)³; [RTMCF3 \(2019\)](#)⁴; [RTMCFA4 \(2021\)](#)⁵, [RTMCFA5 \(2022\)](#)⁶ and [RTMCFA6 \(2023\)](#)⁷.
3. From the Fourth Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries **and Aquaculture** ([RTMCFA4](#)) the title was modified to explicitly acknowledge that these meetings also include the aquaculture sector.
4. These meetings have been primarily funded by the Australian Government (DFAT), with some additional support provided by the New Zealand Government (MFAT) and the PEUMP programme (EU/Sida), and earlier meetings included supplementary support from FAO.
5. In 2019, RTMCF3 was the first phase of the newly established strategic direction setting architecture, information flow and decision-making process for Pacific coastal fisheries and aquaculture. A pathway for technical outcomes and recommendations of significant regional importance now flows from the **RTMCFA** to the **Heads of Fisheries** to the **Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM)** and, where appropriate, on to the **Forum Leaders**. Since 2021, the RTMCFA has included the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD), convened by and focused on civil society organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actors (NSAs) engaged in community-based fisheries, providing a means for the community voice on coastal fisheries matters to feed into the information flow and decision-making process noted above. It must be noted that the above information flow does not affect the governance of SPC's strategic direction by the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) and Conference.

7th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

6. The overarching theme of RTMCFA7 is to discuss and address some of the main technical issues affecting coastal fisheries and aquaculture in support of better evidence-based resource management,

¹ The original Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries was the precursor to the Heads of Fisheries meeting, with 25 RTMF meetings between 1952 and 1994. 16 Heads of Fisheries (HoF) meetings have been held between 1999 and 2024. <https://fame-archive.spc.int/en/publications/meeting-documents> or <https://fame-archive.spc.int/fr/publications/documents-de-conferences> (French)

² RTMCF1: <https://fame-archive.spc.int/en/meetings/240> or <https://fame-archive.spc.int/fr/meetings/240> (French)

³ RTMCF2: <https://fame-archive.spc.int/en/meetings/241> or <https://fame-archive.spc.int/fr/meetings/241> (French)

⁴ RTMCF3: <https://fame-archive.spc.int/en/meetings/248> or <https://fame-archive.spc.int/fr/meetings/248> (French)

⁵ RTMCFA4: <https://fame.spc.int/events/rtmcf4> or <https://fame.spc.int/fr/node/51> (French)

⁶ RTMCFA5: <https://fame.spc.int/events/RTMCFA5> or <https://fame.spc.int/fr/event/RTMCFA5> (French)

⁷ RTMCFA6: <https://fame.spc.int/events/RTMCFA6> or <https://fame.spc.int/fr/events/RTMCFA6> (French)

the equitable access to resources, and to enhance the sustainable development of aquaculture and nearshore livelihoods.

7. The RTMCFA meetings focus on specific priority issues with input from member country government and territory administrations. As with all previous RTMCFA meetings, the format of this meeting is to maximise input through breakout group discussions and plenary sessions. This will continue for RTMCFA7, however, due to RTMCFA7 being a virtual meeting, it will focus on only a limited number of high priority issues.
8. The RTMCFA is also informed and guided by several Pacific regional strategies and frameworks, including: [*A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy*](#); the [*Future of Fisheries: Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries*](#); the [*Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture*](#), the [*Regional Framework on Aquatic Biosecurity*](#); and the [*Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-Based Fisheries Management: 2021-2030*](#). It also assists with providing the much-needed information for reporting to Leaders through the annual [*Coastal Fisheries Report Card*](#). The *New Song for Coastal Fisheries*, the *Future of Fisheries Roadmap*, and the *Regional Framework on Aquatic Biosecurity*, are currently being reviewed. The [5th Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting](#) (July 2024) acknowledged the considerable progress made implementing the *Framework for Scaling up CBFM*, and endorsed the five-year extension to the *Framework* to 2030.

Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

9. Since RTMCFA4, the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD), convened by and focused on civil society organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actors (NSAs) engagement, has been convened in association with the RTMCFA. The CBF Dialogue is led by an independent Convenor, with input and guidance by the CBF Dialogue-Advisory Group, with the representatives of the community fishers' groups, community-based fisheries CSOs and other NSAs engaging in plenary and breakout group discussions.
10. The CBF Dialogue for 2024 will, for the first time, be held separately to RTMCFA as an in-person meeting on 12 and 13 November 2024, in Suva, Fiji. The outcomes and actions from CBF Dialogue 4 will be reported to RTMCFA7.
11. The purpose of the CBF Dialogue is to provide the CSO, NSA and CBF practitioner communities 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 also presents 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. SPC provides the secretariat support to the CBF Dialogue, the CBF Dialogue Convenor, Vice Convenor and the CBF Dialogue Advisory Group.

Reporting

12. The 7th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture will report to the 17th Heads of Fisheries (HoF17) meeting, provisionally scheduled for 28 April to 2 May 2025. This report will include the outcomes of the 4th Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue.

13. The formal report of RTMCFA7 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. The Outputs and Actions report will include a limited number of specific, high priority meeting outputs and recommendations that need to be presented to HoF17 for the consideration of and decision by the Heads of Fisheries.

Provisional agenda overview

14. RTMCFA7 will be an online-only meeting using the Zoom platform. There will be simultaneous English-French interpretation provided. Participants are requested to join using headphones with attached microphones to facilitate the interpretation.
15. The meeting runs from Tuesday 19 to Friday 22 November 2024, with two 2-hour sessions starting at 09:30 and ending at 14:00 Noumea time (UTC+11). The mid-session break will be from 11:30 to 12:00 (UTC+11). Several sessions will involve virtual breakout groups in addition to the plenary sessions.
16. The following is an overview of the provisional agenda, with the latest full provisional agenda available on the RTMCFA7 meeting website: <https://fame.spc.int/events/RTMCFA7>
17. At the beginning of each day of the RTMCFA7 there will an open Zoom session from 09:00 to 09:30 (UTC+11) for participants to test links, complete sound checks, interpretation checks, read papers and/or ask any questions re RTMCFA7.

Day 1 (Tue 19 Nov) – RTMCFA7

- Official opening; meeting purpose, format and procedures
- Progress update on the RTMCFA6 outcomes and actions
- Summary of PICT coastal fisheries priority technical needs, issues and challenges
- Cbfd4 Report to RTMCFA7
- Coastal fisheries technical session 1: Enhancing Data-Limited Coastal Fisheries Health Assessments in Pacific SIDS

Day 2 (Wed 20 Nov) – RTMCFA7

- Coastal fisheries technical session 2: Navigating the coastal fisheries and aquaculture monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement future
- Coastal fisheries technical session 3: Coastal fisheries activity updates:
 - Aquarium fish and CITES
 - Green Climate Fund anchored FAD project
 - Support to Pacific SIDS during negotiations for a treaty on plastic pollution including fishing gear
- Coastal fisheries technical session 4: CFAP Fisheries Development and Livelihoods: Highly instrumented fish aggregating devices

Day 3 (Thu 21 Nov) – RTMCFA7

- Summary of PICT aquaculture priority technical needs, issues and challenges
- Aquaculture technical session 1: Update on the development of the Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy (PRAS)
- Aquaculture technical session 2: Aquaculture updates:
 - Economic comparison of mangrove oyster longline grow out system vs traditional homemade plastic basket system
 - Preliminary findings on closed-system grow-out cultivation of Pacific freshwater eel
- Aquaculture technical session 3: Developing a regional aquaculture database: key insights from PICTs

Day 4 (Fri 22 Nov) – RTMCFA7

- Aquaculture technical session 4: Further potential of spat collection in the Pacific Islands region
- Cross-cutting technical session 1: Pacific regional assessment of climate change implications for fisheries and aquaculture – 10-year update
- Cross-cutting technical session 2: Socio-economic community of practice (SECoP Pasifika): What is it and how can it be useful for fisheries authorities?
- Clearing the RTMCFA7 Outcomes and Actions Report
- Closing