



Second Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

13 October 2022

Original: English

Outcomes and Actions Report from the 2nd Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

Hybrid Meeting – 13 October 2022



Outcomes and Actions Report from the 2nd Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

Background

1. The First Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM1) in August 2020 endorsed a mechanism for increasing the engagement of civil society organisations¹ (CSOs) and other non-state actors² (NSAs) to give effect to the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders decision in September 2016 in relation to coastal fisheries (paragraph 10, 47th Leaders Communiqué)³.
2. The new mechanism involves convening a two-day⁴ dialogue dedicated to community-based fisheries (CBF) within the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA) and is called the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD).
3. The Dialogue provides CSOs and other NSAs the opportunity to share experiences and lessons-learned on community-based fisheries initiatives to strengthen efforts in maintaining a productive and healthy ecosystem, and their associated fisheries resources, which are critical to the well-being of coastal communities. It is also an opportunity for CSOs and other NSAs to provide advice on key needs and issues associated with the sustainable access and use of coastal fisheries resources across the Pacific islands' region.
4. The first CBFD in 2021 (CBFD1) focussed on establishing an appropriate administrative foundation for future dialogues through the consideration of the provisional CBFD Terms of Reference (ToR). The Pacific Community (SPC) 14th Heads of Fisheries meeting (HoF 14) considered and endorsed⁵ the agreed ToR, which include the appointment of a Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Convenor and Vice-Convenor to work with the Pacific Community's (SPC) Division of Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) and the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Advisory Group (CBFD-AG) in organising logistics for future CBFDs and the facilitation of CBFDs.
5. The 2nd Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD2) was held on 13 October 2022 at the SPC Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, with the dialogue being held in association with the 5th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA5).
6. The meeting was hosted using a hybrid format where CSOs and other NSAs who are actively involved in community-based fisheries in the Pacific, participated in the meeting either in-person or virtually via the online Zoom platform. The dialogue also included representatives of government agencies and other observers.

¹ "A civil society organisation (CSO) is a group of people that operates in the community in a way that is distinct from both government and business." Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_society_organization)

² "A Non-State Actor (NSA) is a legal entity that represents the interests of civil society including the private sector, academia and the media. NSAs are not established of, nor do they belong to, a structure or institution of the state." Pacific Islands Forum (<https://www.forumsec.org/civil-society-4/>)

³ [Forum Communiqué, 47th Pacific Islands Forum, Pohnpei, FSM: 8-10-Sept, 2016](#)

⁴ The 2-day CBFD duration is based on a full in-person 5-day RTMCFA at SPC. The CBFD2 were reduced to 1-day due to the hybrid meeting format of the RTMCFA5 which requires much shorter and more focused sessions over a maximum duration of 4 days.

⁵ [Outcomes of the Fourteenth SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting](#)



7. The dialogue was chaired by an independent Convenor, Mr Afelee Pita from Tuvalu, with at least 24 (11 in-person and 13 online) representatives of CSO and other NSA groups actively engaged in plenary and breakout group discussions.
8. The Cbfd2 focused on engaging and hearing the voices of NSAs through identification of important community-based fisheries issues that are common across the region or sub-regions and discussed ways to address or enhance them.
9. This report outlines the outcomes and action points of consensus among Cbfd2 participants, highlighting priority issues and needs to be actioned by CSOs and other NSAs, SPC members, provide guidance to SPC's Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (CFAP), and identify key recommendations to be taken to the 15th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting in late March 2023.

Session 1: Community-Based Fisheries: Engaging the Voices of Non-State Actors

10. The Cbfd Convenor opened the Dialogue, welcomed participants, and requested SPC FAME to present the purpose of the Cbfd and provide an overview of the focus of the Cbfd2.
11. The Cbfd noted the establishment of the interim Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Advisory Group (Cbfd-AG) and acknowledged the work carried-out by the advisory group in directing SPC, as the secretariat, on:
 - a. The identification and selection of the Cbfd2 participants;
 - b. The development of the Cbfd2 agenda; and
 - c. The development of the Convenor and Vice-Convenor ToR and the appointment of the Cbfd2 Convenor.
12. The CSO/NSA participants proposed CBF issues of importance or interest that are common across the region or sub-regions, and worked to identify the top three priority issues to discuss later in Breakout Groups. In brief, that main issues proposed were:
 - a. Lack of engagement of the private sector;
 - b. Lack of Cbfd national selection processes;
 - c. Need of funding for National level selection processes;
 - d. The rapid expansion of Special Management Areas/CBFM efforts throughout the region, but no equivalent expansion of financial and technical resources (funding and capacity) to support CBFM actions at the community level, which would enable communities to adapt;
 - e. Need for better co-management, e.g. around coastal fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) incorporating traditional management systems;
 - f. How Cbfd can enhance our systems to help raise awareness of coastal fisheries management;
 - g. Small communities struggle to adopt and/or adapt to government led CBF initiatives;



- h. Communities need to be better informed on potential impacts of deep-sea mining on coastal fisheries;
 - i. Incorporating traditional/local knowledge into coastal fisheries management;
 - j. More behavioural change campaigns supporting CBFM;
 - k. Recognising local leadership in CBFM;
 - l. Document existing examples of effective CBFM;
 - m. Better management of bêche-de-mer and maximisation of benefits to communities;
 - n. Lack of recognition and action on fisheries offences by the judicial system.
13. From the listed issues of importance, the CBFD participants identified three common CBF issues across the region for further discussion:
- a. The need for CSO/NSA representation through transparent national processes led by CSO and NSA for selecting participants for the CBFD and other national level dialogues on coastal fisheries;
 - b. The need to accurately inform and build capacity of CSOs and NSAs on CBFM; and
 - c. Better integration of traditional/local knowledge with modern/conventional science for effective coastal fisheries management.
14. The participants of CBFD2 expressed their hopes and expectations for the CBFD process, which included:
- a. Increased collaboration and support between communities and government agencies, both regionally and nationally, involved with CBFM;
 - b. Effective integration of youth and technology into CBFM activities;
 - c. Inclusion of small-scale fishers from the private sector along with other CSO/NSAs in the Dialogue;
 - d. CBFD recommendations will genuinely reflect the voices, opinions and perspectives of CSOs and other NSAs and will be considered for adoption by higher-level decision-makers both nationally and regionally;
 - e. Genuine and representative 2-way communication process that includes:
 - a process to be led by civil society with real financial support;
 - community feedback and issues must not be censored or modified;
 - report should reach Ministers and Leaders;



- resources and design should be focused on meaningfully engaging the grassroots communities in countries through national processes that respects the principles of Free Prior and Informed Consent and other key social safeguards

15. The CBFD noted the CBFD-related provisional ToR agreed to by CBFD1 and recommended that:

- The CBFD Advisory Group ToR provide for the CBFD-AG Chair to be rotated around the different PICTs and CBF sectors, and for SPC to be the permanent Secretariat for the Advisory Group.
- The ToR for both the Convenor/Vice-Convenor required the roles to also be rotated.
- Improved guidelines and criteria be developed for CBFD participant selection.

16. The Convenor requested that CBFD2 participants provide their written feedback and suggestions on the various CBFD Terms of Reference to SPC FAME, as the secretariat, by the 14th of November 2022 (in one month).

Session 2: Hearing the Voices: Community-Based Fisheries Priorities

17. CBFD participants considered the following three common CBF issues identified earlier for discussion in breakout groups. The main points from those breakout groups were:

- What are the needs of CSO/NSA representation for transparent national processes for selecting participants for CBFD and other national level dialogues on coastal fisheries?*
 - Need to select several focal points responsible for facilitating the selection process, noting there are some large PICTs.
 - Prior to meetings, need to provide support on speaking, making interventions, which will require funding support for such in-country meetings, and to provide capacity-building for participants to engage in high-level dialogues.
 - Need to involve communities in defining who are “suitable participants” and what are the principles for diversity and good representation; consider whether a sub-committee of CSOs/NSAs should be set up in each PICT to identify “suitable participants”.
 - Need to enable communities to define the issues that science needs to address.
- What are the needs to accurately inform and build capacity of CSO/NSA on CBFM?*
 - Need to learn from great successes in CBFM in Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa.
 - Need for access to better means of communication and support, and sustainable finance mechanisms for CBFM activities.
 - Alternative livelihoods are needed to compensate for time spent on CBFM activities.



- Need an appropriate and useable framework for CBFM monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) at the community level.
- c. *How can traditional/local knowledge be better integrated with modern/conventional science for effective CBFM?*
- Incorporate traditional/local knowledge and practices into CBFM, including by documenting them in plans, so knowledge is not eroded or lost.
 - Fisheries agencies need to build trust with traditional/local knowledge bearers and community leaders, but it takes time to obtain their trust to elicit knowledge and their input.
 - Involving fisher's traditional/local knowledge in evidence-based management is key.
 - Fish may be totems for particular cultural practices and may be fished, despite fisheries regulations, so an exemption for cultural practices should be considered.

18. The CBFD proposed the following actions:

- a. SPC FAME, as secretariat, should initiate CBFD3 planning with the Convenor and the CBFD-AG as soon as possible after CBFD2 to enable enough time for inclusive and effective participant engagement at the national/sub-national levels.
- b. CBFD2 participants provide their written feedback and suggestions on the four⁶ CBFD ToR to SPC FAME, as the secretariat, by the 14th of November 2022 (in 1 month).
- c. CBFD2 participants, with the support of regional and national partners, engage with national/sub-national authorities to improve the recognition of coastal fisheries offences as a priority.

The 15th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting

19. Recommendations to the Heads of Fisheries:

- a. The CBFD2 requests HoF15 to encourage SPC member governments to initiate national community-based fisheries dialogues to improve communication with CSOs/NSAs and better address their needs and concerns related to coastal fisheries management.
- b. The CBFD2 requests HoF15 to recognise the emerging issue of deep seabed mining and its potential consequences for coastal fisheries, and requests governments to facilitate more

⁶ SPC FAME RTMCFA5 & CBFD2 website <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/261>:

- CBFD.BP1 Outcomes Report from the 1st Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue. Refer to Appendix 1: Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Provisional Terms of Reference (ToR)
- CBFD.BP3: Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Convenor Provisional Terms of Reference (ToR)
- CBFD.BP4: Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Vice-Convenor Provisional Terms of Reference (ToR)
- CBFD.BP5: Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue - Advisory Group (CBFD-AG) Provisional Terms of Reference (ToR)



independent research on deep sea ecosystems before consideration is given to commercial deep seabed mining.

- c. The CBFD2 requests HoF15 to encourage SPC members to increase operational budgets for CBFM within national and sub-national government agencies, and to develop appropriate financial mechanisms to directly support communities to more effectively manage their coastal resources.