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Title:	Summary of PICT coastal fisheries technical issues, challenges and priority needs
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Summary/short description/key points:

The Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA) focuses on the main technical issues affecting coastal fisheries and aquaculture in support of better science-based resource management and the equitable access to resources. Since RTMCF3 SPC Pacific Island Country and Territory (PICT) members' have been asked to identify their immediate coastal fisheries and aquaculture technical issues, challenges and priority needs.

For RTMCFA4 all PICT fisheries agency participants were sent a brief questionnaire on their national coastal fisheries and aquaculture technical issues, challenges and priority needs. This Information Paper summarises the submissions received by SPC member PICTs into common themes across the region for, a) priority technical needs; and b) technical issues or challenges. The submissions from March (postponed RTMCFA4) have been considered along with those from September/October. All the submissions received have been captured in full in the summary table, provided as [Information Paper 6](#).

Recommendations:

1. Participants are invited to note the coastal fisheries technical issues, challenges and priority needs identified by members across the region.
2. Use this information as background to discussions during RTMCFA4.

Summary of PICT coastal fisheries technical issues, challenges and priority needs

Introduction

1. The overarching theme of the 4th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (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.
2. The RTMCFA meetings focus on specific priority issues with input from member country government and territory administrations. For the 3rd Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries, which was an in-person meeting in Noumea in November 2019, each member presented their top coastal fisheries and aquaculture priorities, issues and challenges, and reported actions taken since the previous RTMCFA.
3. For RTMCFA4, we want to continue capturing the SPC Pacific Island Country and Territory (PICT) members’ current coastal fisheries and aquaculture technical issues, challenges and priority needs to help inform the FAME Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (CFAP) work priorities, but also to encourage PICT to PICT sharing of experiences and information.
4. Due to the time and format constraints of Zoom meetings, for RTMCFA4 we sent all the member nominated PICT fisheries agency participants a brief questionnaire on their national coastal fisheries and aquaculture issues, challenges and priority needs. SPC then compiled the responses received from members and present a summary here for coastal fisheries.
5. The questions asked were:
 - a. Provide a *very brief* description of your two highest coastal fisheries priority technical needs.
 - b. *Briefly* outline 2–3 of your main technical issues or challenges in coastal fisheries over the last year.
 - c. *Briefly* outline 2–3 follow-up actions that your agency has taken related to the [Nov. 2019] [RTMCF3 Outcomes and Agreed Action Plan](#)¹
6. These questions were also asked in February 2021, prior to the planned RTMCFA4 in March 2021, which was postponed at short notice due to COVID lockdown being imposed in New Caledonia just before the scheduled meeting. Where responses were received from members, they have been included together with the responses from PICTs in September/October 2021.

¹ <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/asggs>

Summary of the results for coastal fisheries

7. The following summarises the submissions received by SPC member PICTs into common themes across the region for, a) priority technical needs; and b) technical issues or challenges.
8. All the submissions received have been captured in full in the summary table, provided as [Information Paper 6](#). Due to the timing of receiving submissions, they could not be translated before the meeting.

Coastal fisheries priority technical needs

9. The following table summarises the coastal fisheries priority technical needs in descending order of the number of PICTs identifying subject areas and specific fields. The number of SPC PICTs that identified these subject areas as priorities are also shown.

Priority technical needs	No. of PICTs
1. Subject area ➤ Specific fields	[n = 15]
1. Robust data for use in management: ➤ Science for stock assessments – fish and invertebrates – multi-species ➤ Survey and monitoring ➤ Data management ➤ Data analysis ➤ Databases ➤ Socioeconomic surveys and data	14
2. Qualified technical staff: ➤ Wide range of skills – science; practical technical; communications; facilitation; etc. ➤ Understanding of traditional/cultural knowledge	7
3. Legislation, policy, strategies and regulations – review and update: ➤ National level ➤ State / Provincial levels ➤ Fisheries legislation review and update ➤ Coastal fisheries strategies – national and sub-national ➤ Developing and revising strategic plans	7
4. Management plans: ➤ Evidence-/science-based ➤ Drafting; reviewing ➤ To maximise: food security; economic returns; species protection	7
5. Community-based fisheries management: ➤ Planning ➤ Implementation ➤ MCS ➤ Community facilitation	5

Priority technical needs	No. of PICTs
1. Subject area ➤ Specific fields	[n = 15]
6. Livelihoods and food security: ➤ Engaging the private sector ➤ FADs ➤ Post-harvest ➤ Fishing technique training ➤ Sea safety training	6
7. MCS&E and compliance: ➤ Capacity building, training ➤ Awareness, behavioural change ➤ Monitoring IUU ➤ MCS tools and equipment ➤ Spatial mapping for patrolling hotspots	5
8. Bêche-de-mer fisheries: ➤ Management ➤ MCS&E ➤ Stock assessments – low cost ➤ Non-detriment findings assistance	5
9. Awareness and communications: ➤ To support MCS ➤ Increase compliance ➤ Communities	4
10. Application and adapting to e-technology: ➤ For fisheries officers' use ➤ For fishers use	4

Coastal fisheries technical issues and challenges

10. The following table summarises the identified coastal fisheries technical issues and challenges. The number of SPC PICTs that identified similar issues or challenges are also shown in descending order.

Technical issues and challenges	No. of PICTs
	[n = 15]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited staff capacity, qualifications and experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High-skill areas (e.g. pearls) ○ Local expertise in research, monitoring, legal and policy support ○ Academically qualified staff ○ Data analysts ○ Lack of motivation to get higher qualifications ○ Capacity to absorb in-house training ○ Communication and facilitation skills ○ COVID-19 related travel restrictions preventing staff study/training externally 	7

Technical issues and challenges	No. of PICTs
	[n = 15]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of data for developing management measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For species of interest ○ Species specific biological data ○ On small-scale fisheries ○ Need for extension services ○ Need for stock assessments ○ Poor data, analysis and verification of data ○ Data and database management support (local vs regional) 	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For mariculture ○ Space limitations ○ Inter-island transport ○ FAD maintenance 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Travel (internally and externally) ○ Marketing 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation and policy frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outdated legislation ○ Lack of policy frameworks ○ Need to formally recognise CBFM 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CITES requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Especially NDF – science and stock assessments ○ Sea cucumbers / bêche-de-mer 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited alternative livelihoods apart from fishing 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-compliance of commercial fishers 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge and data for developing new fisheries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cost-benefit analyses ○ Knowledge and data for potential target species 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple jurisdictional levels ○ Multiple agencies – overlapping 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of licensing systems 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCS&E <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple landing sites ○ Equipment for MCS&E officers 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of fish handling and processing skills 	1