

Working Paper 6

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Heads of Fisheries Meeting – purpose, priorities and direction

FAME Secretariat



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

11th SPC Heads of fisheries Meeting, 11–15 March 2019, Noumea, New Caledonia

11^e Conférence des Directeurs des pêches de la CPS, 11–15 mars 2019, Nouméa, Nouvelle-Calédonie



Session purpose

1. The SPC FAME Heads of Fisheries (HoF) Meeting is currently held every two years (funding permitting), usually in March. This year marks the 11th HoF meeting. Given the increasing focus and recognition of the importance of fisheries, both in the region and internationally, along with the increasingly crowded regional fisheries meeting calendar, an expanding oceans agenda and the Blue Pacific narrative (that includes fisheries issues), it is timely to re-examine the purpose, priorities and direction of the Heads of Fisheries meeting to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.
2. This WP outlines three separate, but interrelated, matters for members' consideration and direction concerning the Heads of Fisheries Meetings:
 - The purpose of HoF: the context and current situation; key issues; the role of HoF; timing and duration.
 - HoF consideration and input on options for constituting and managing the new "Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting", to be convened on the margins of the FFC Ministerial Meeting, and suggestions on HoF's potential input to such a meeting.
 - A refined governance approach for Pacific coastal fisheries and the role of HoF.
3. These matters will be considered in breakout group discussions and provide guidance to FAME on the way forward to ensure HoF's continued relevance and effectiveness.

Purpose and direction of the Heads of Fisheries Meeting

Context

4. The Heads of Fisheries Meeting is currently held every two years, usually in March. It is now a three-day meeting, with at least two days of side meetings, usually related to specific donor project steering committee meetings.
5. HoF is currently the key forum for Member and stakeholders in driving the strategic direction of FAME with all SPC member countries and territories participating, and most regional partners, donors and other key stakeholders in attendance.
6. HoF provides an important opportunity for FAME staff and stakeholders to engage in planning and developing regional strategic approaches to Pacific fisheries.
7. HoF is currently the only forum for oceanic and coastal fisheries (including aquaculture) to be discussed jointly.
8. HoF is the primary forum to holistically present, and receive guidance, from members on the FAME Oceanic Fisheries Programme in respect of its provision of scientific support for the management of tuna fisheries at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.
9. The HoF is the only forum to present, and receive guidance, from members on the FAME Coastal Fisheries Programme, in the areas of Pacific fisheries and aquaculture science, policy, planning, development/livelihoods and management.

10. There is an increasing number of regional fisheries-related fora and governance processes. Annex 1 provides an overview of the regional frameworks for coastal fisheries governance, and the key regional oceanic fisheries meetings and processes in which FAME engages.

Key issues:

11. With the HoF currently meeting every two years to discuss FAME's strategic direction, work programme and issues of regional importance to fisheries and aquaculture, these issues are only reviewed and discussed every two years by the HoF meaning that the capacity to be proactive rather than reactive is limited.
12. With the increasingly crowded regional fisheries meeting calendar, compounded by an expanding oceans meeting calendar (that includes fisheries issues), it is becoming progressively difficult to find windows where there are no other fisheries related meetings or workshops scheduled.
13. The Heads of Fisheries do not consistently attend the HoF, being represented by designees instead. This is due to a range of reasons including competing fisheries meetings and/or due to the perceived relevance or importance of the HoF Meeting.
14. Securing funding for HoF participation by all members (countries and territories) is challenging.
15. The FAME Performance Review (2017) also notes:
 - “In terms of work planning within FAME, member countries endorsement of FAME work plans and identification of priority areas are only set every two years during HoF. This was noted to impact negatively on work planning with government fisheries agencies, with the way in which FAME responds to country requests sometimes having a negative effect on the fisheries agencies ability to plan and implement their activities.” (p44)
 - “Some member country stakeholders also reported that the HoF structure can make it difficult for delegates to fully participate due to the lack of clarity in the process for discussion and time allocated to dialogue and debate. These factors result in some PICTs feeling that their voices aren't being heard during HoF and decisions are simply 'rubber stamped'.” (p44)
16. The increasing number of side meetings scheduled around the HoF Meeting has contributed to the reduction in the number of days for the HoF, resulting in a more compressed agenda and meeting process.

Role of the Heads of Fisheries

17. The following table sets out some of the options for consideration of the members on the purpose, priorities and direction for future Heads of Fisheries meetings. These options are provided as a guide, and alternative options, or combinations of options should be considered.

HoF Options for Consideration	Notes
Roles and Priorities:	
a. To review FAME results achieved against the FAME Business Plan	FAME results reports presented to HoF. FAME OFP and CFP present on work undertaken. Report cards.
b. To review, prioritise and endorse FAME future priority work areas	FAME OFP and CFP present future work plans and priorities
c. To provide strategic direction to FAME	Focus on FAME’s strategic direction, e.g. through the Business Plan
d. To engage in planning and developing regional strategic approaches to Pacific fisheries	
e. To provide members with a forum in which concerns can be raised, issues debated and priorities set by member countries	
f. To consider oceanic and coastal fisheries (including aquaculture) jointly	Consideration of more integrated approaches to fisheries issues
g. To examine region-wide fisheries issues of concern	Issues affecting a majority of member countries and territories. FAME Review (2017) “The HoF provides delegates with a forum in which concerns can be raised, issues debated and priorities set by member countries.”
h. To examine sub-regional issues of concern	Issues affecting a sub-region, or can be more effectively addressed at a sub-regional level
i. To discuss and provide guidance on fisheries-related input to the Pacific Oceans related issues (including SDG14)	
j. To bring together member governments, donors, non-government, civil society and other stakeholders to focus on Pacific regional fisheries issues of concern	

Structure - Timing

k. Keep as every second year	Issue of being more reactive, than proactive.
l. Change to annual meetings	See “Governance Approach for Pacific Coastal Fisheries” section below. Increased costs and burden on FAME staff and members resulting from increased meeting load.
m. Schedule remains in March	Feeds into CRGA and also ‘Regional Fisheries Ministers’ meeting at FFC. Limited time for FAME staff and delegates to prepare due to Christmas breaks. RTMCF (currently in November) able to feed into HoF. Can conflict with other fisheries meetings, as it does this year with the PNA Annual Session.
n. Reschedule to another time in the year	Need to consider other regional meetings

Structure - Duration:

o. Retain the 3-day format, with 2-days for side-meetings	
p. Increase to 4-day format, with 1-day for side-meetings	
q. Increase to 5-days, with 1 day a mini-workshop on a topic of regional importance	This was the original format of the Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries (RTMF) (which changed to the HoF).

Structure - Format:

r. Keep current HoF11 format of presentations and increase the number of break-out group discussions	HoF11 includes more breakout sessions in response to FAME Review (2017) feedback “...member country stakeholders also reported that the HoF structure can make it difficult for delegates to fully participate due to the lack of clarity in the process for discussion and time allocated to dialogue and debate. These factors result in some PICTs feeling that their voices aren’t being heard during HoF and decisions are simply ‘rubber stamped’.”
s. Less topics covered, but in more detail, during HoF, as trialled in HoF11.	

t. Concurrent sessions for key fisheries issues.	This would mean that more topics can be discussed, however, not all participants / Members could participate in all sessions.
u. Reduced plenary sessions and more break-out group sessions	
v. Include mini-workshops (1 day) on key regional issues	Would need to agree a process for selecting such issues.
w. One day for concurrent sub-regional meetings/workshops	FAME Review (2017) “Assessing the value of a sub-regional focus to HoF where separate sessions focus on the individual needs of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia should also be considered.”

Pacific Regional Fisheries Ministers’ Meeting

Forum Fisheries Committee Ministers communique

18. The Statement of Outcomes from the 15th Annual Session of the Forum Fisheries Committee Ministers Meeting (FFC Min15) communique noted:

Forum Leaders Standing Item on Fisheries

31. Ministers agreed that it would be useful to convene on the margins of their annual FFC Ministerial Meeting as “Regional Fisheries Ministers” to consider issues across the whole spectrum of fisheries and to identify high priority matters to refer to Forum Leaders. Ministers agreed that there are practical, mandate and governance reasons for such a meeting to be separate to their formalised role as members of the Ministerial Forum Fisheries Committee.

32. Ministers tasked officials, FFA, SPC and PIFS to consider options as to how such a meeting could be constituted and managed, and to produce recommendations for Ministers to consider at their 2019 meeting.

19. In response to the request in paragraph 32. of the Communique, FAME requests that HoF consider options as to how such a meeting could be constituted and managed – these will be one of the tasks for the break-out groups. These options will be considered in the FFA, PIFS and SPC recommendations for Ministers to consider at their 2019 meeting.

Governance approach for Pacific coastal fisheries

Context

20. A new coastal fisheries governance approach is needed in order to proactively achieve a strong and coordinated approach to coastal fisheries management in the Pacific region.

21. [*The New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy*](#) represents a shared vision of coastal fisheries management. As well as guiding FAME’s work, the strategy improves regional coordination. This includes examples of projects, policy and planning documents of other agencies referencing and aligning with the ‘New Song’.
22. At national and sub-national levels, it has facilitated political recognition of the value of coastal fisheries to food security, nutrition supply, and community livelihoods. The Strategy provides a coordinated regional direction as well as resourcing opportunities.
23. Its ‘Pathways to change framework’ outlines agreed-upon actions needed from member governments and other stakeholders to provide substantial support for this community-driven approach. The active involvement from members mean the regional strategy reflects their development priorities.
24. Members’ use it to help strengthen and direct their work in coastal fisheries, including community-based management and engagement.
25. Connections and a shared vision built between members, donors, researchers and NGOs has led to increased strength of bilateral arrangements and funding opportunities.

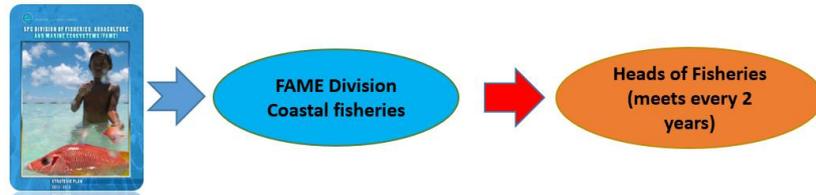
New coastal fisheries governance approach – the big picture

26. While the ‘New Song’ is galvanising increased support for coastal fisheries, and especially community-based coastal fisheries management, there are still limited pathways at the regional level to proactively engage in building a strong and coordinated approach to addressing coastal fisheries management challenges, gaps and priority areas.
27. The evolution of historical coastal fisheries governance approaches is shown diagrammatically in Figure 1 (a. b. c.) below.
28. Despite the gradual improvement in these governance approaches, the challenge remains that the HoF is held every two years, while the FFC Ministerial Meeting, and the PI Forum Leaders Meetings are held every year. Coastal fisheries issues are therefore still being addressed every two years, resulting in a reactive approach and not proactive one.
29. In order to proactively engage in building a strong and coordinated approach to addressing coastal fisheries management challenges and priority areas to strengthen management, it is important for coastal fisheries that the HoF meets annually. This enables HoF to provide:
 - Adequate attention to addressing important coastal fisheries management priorities and adequate monitoring of the implementation of the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change* framework
 - Adequate attention to discussing the *Coastal Fisheries Report Card* before it is discussed by the Coastal Fisheries Working Group (CFWG) and presented to the Pacific Fisheries Ministers for consideration and endorsement to tabling at the PI Forum Leaders meeting
 - Relevant attention to the [RTMCF outcomes](#) needing support and approval

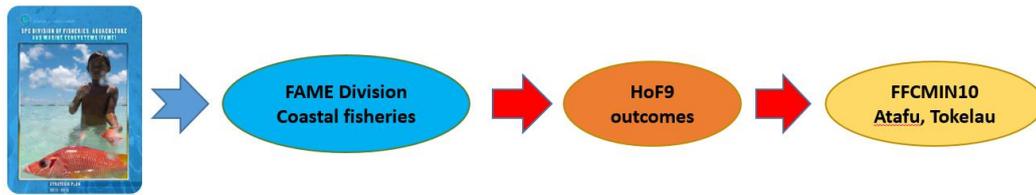
- Guidance to the CFWG on coastal fisheries issues needing funding support from regional initiatives and stakeholders' coordination and collaboration, and
 - Adequate attention on important coastal fisheries issues needing political support from the Pacific Fisheries Ministers and PI Forum Leaders.
30. The new Coastal Fisheries Governance Approach – *the Big Picture*, is shown diagrammatically in Figure 1 d. below.
31. The HoF members are invited to consider the new Coastal Fisheries Governance Approach during the break-out groups.

Figure 1: FAME and governance approaches to Pacific Coastal Fisheries

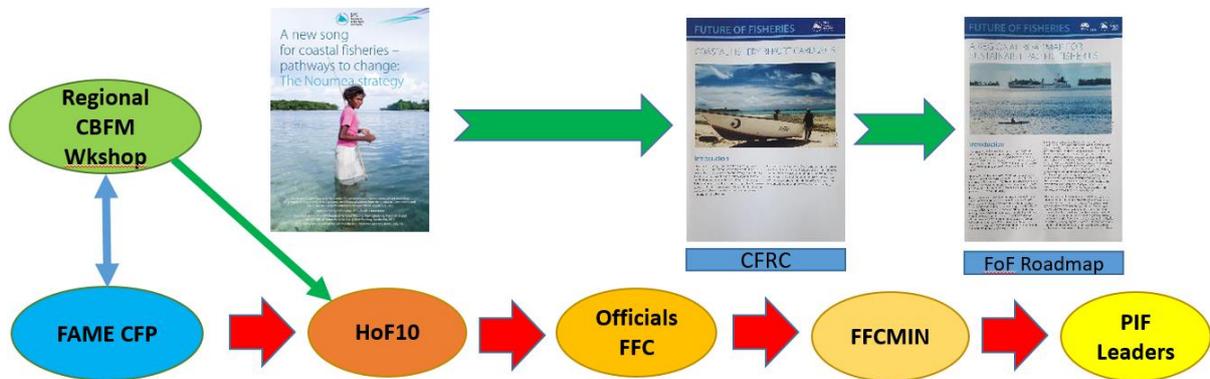
a) Coastal Fisheries Governance Approach up to 2013



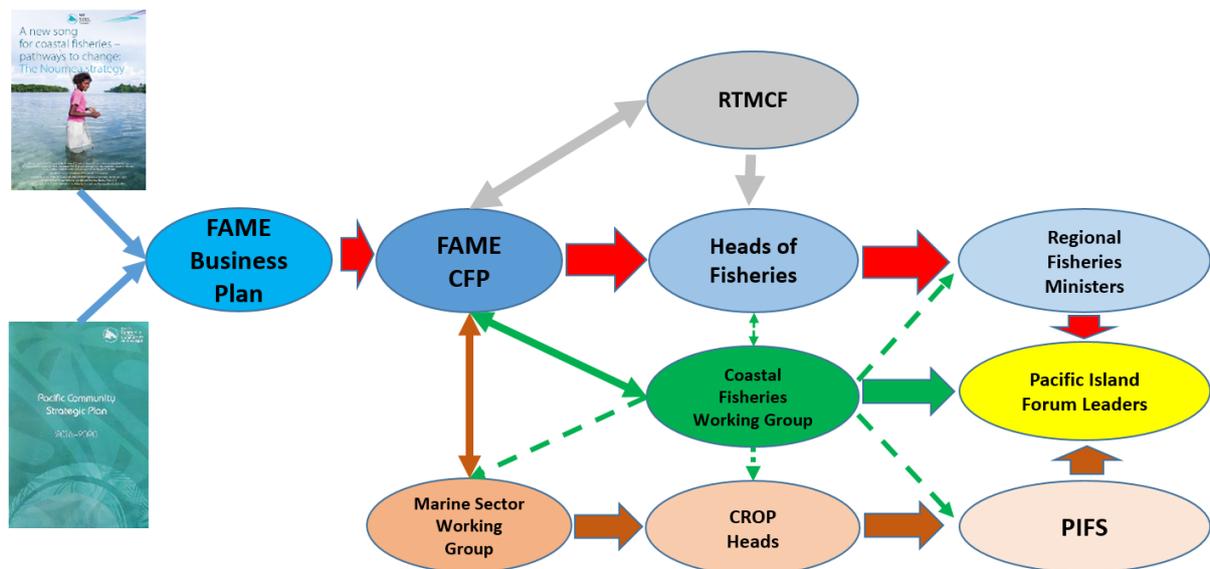
b) Small improvement made to old Coastal Fisheries Governance Approach in 2014



c) Coastal Fisheries Governance 2015 - 2017



d) The new Coastal Fisheries Governance Approach – the Big Picture



Annex 1: Regional fisheries meetings and governance processes

Coastal fisheries:

[RTMCF2 Information Paper 1](#) “A strong and coordinated approach to coastal fisheries management – the big picture (RTMCF2)” provides an overview of the regional frameworks for coastal fisheries governance, including:

- [The New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy](#). It calls for an enhanced focus on coastal fisheries regionally and nationally; and greater support for a community-based ecosystems approach to fisheries management. With a vision for sustainable well-managed inshore fisheries, underpinned by community-based approaches that provide food security, and long-term economic, social and ecological benefits to our communities.
- [The Future of Fisheries – A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries](#) (coastal fisheries component); and the *Coastal Fisheries Report Card*. The coastal fisheries component of the ‘Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries’ sets clear goals, indicators and strategies, based on the *New Song*, to measure our progress regionally. The focus is on: Empowerment; Resilience; and Livelihoods.
- *Coastal Fisheries Working Group (CFWG)*. Was formed following a Pacific Island Leaders decision in 2016 to bring together a small standalone stakeholder group of representatives of communities, Civil Society Organisations (CSO), National and Regional Agencies and Institutions. The CFWG allows a forum for discussion on how to coordinate the implementation of activities to avoid duplicate on of work, look at the current and potential coastal fisheries initiatives to assess the level of support, resources, services that are directed towards assisting national fisheries agencies and local communities implement management of their coastal fisheries resources through a community-based approach. The CFWG reports directly to the PI Forum Leaders.
- *Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries (RTMCF)*. Was revived to fill a need for a regional technical meeting on coastal fisheries, to bring together coastal fisheries scientists, managers and technical experts to discuss important technical, management and scientific gaps and challenges.
- *Pacific Fisheries Ministers Meeting* (see below). Ministers agreed to convene a Regional Fisheries Ministers meeting, on the margins of their annual FFC Ministerial Meeting, to consider issues across the whole spectrum of fisheries and to identify high priority matters to refer to Forum Leaders.

Oceanic fisheries:

The key regional oceanic fisheries meetings and processes in which the OFP engages include:

- Meetings of the WCPFC and its subsidiary bodies (Scientific Committee and Technical and Compliance Committee), in OFP’s role of Scientific Services Provider to WCPFC.

- Annual meetings of the Forum Fisheries Committee, both at Officials and Ministerial, at which OFP provides updates on the status of key tuna stocks and advice on other technical issues under consideration by FFC, including scientific inputs into the Tuna Fisheries Report Card as part of the ‘Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries’.
- The Annual Session of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement and its various technical meetings, to which the OFP provides routine support in such areas as data summaries for and inputs to the administration of the Vessel Days Schemes, advice on the status of key stocks, the implementation of harvest strategies and the scientific analysis of data on fish aggregation devices in the purse seine fishery.
- Associated meetings of other sub-regional bodies such as those of the ‘Tokelau Arrangement’, where scientific advice is provided on issues of concern.
- The annual Management Options Consultation, convened by FFA, at which OFP provides briefing to members on the work it is carrying out in its role as Scientific Services Provider to WCPFC and, in particular, work that is scheduled for presentation at the WCPFC Annual Session shortly thereafter.