

Information Paper 6

Original: English

## Scaling-up community-based fisheries management

The Third Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries is supported  
by the Australian Government and implemented by SPC



## Purpose

### 1. The purpose of this Information Paper is to:

- Highlight the *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy*, as a framework for Community-Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) to be implemented at the national level in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs); and
- To stimulate discussion on the challenges faced and ways forward for scaling-up of CBFM in the Pacific region.

## Introduction

2. Coastal fisheries are important at the community level, providing food security and livelihoods for small-scale fishers households in the Pacific region and among rural populations. Between 50-90% of the animal-sourced protein consumed comes from fish.<sup>1</sup> This is further supported by the per capita fish consumption rates in many PICTs which exceeds the global average of 16.5 kg per person<sup>2</sup>. This level of dependence demonstrates the importance of coastal fisheries resources to local communities. However, their over-exploitation for subsistence, artisanal and commercial purposes, pose threats to their sustainability and the health and livelihood of local communities<sup>3</sup>.
3. The population of many PICTs is growing but coastal fisheries resources are declining in many countries, therefore resulting in an increasing gap between the amounts of fish required for food security and sustainable harvests from coastal fisheries. CBFM approaches have been identified as a viable tool that could contribute to reducing this gap.

## Regional framework supporting CBFM

4. In 2015, the Pacific Region developed and adopted a regional framework on coastal fisheries, *A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea Strategy*. The key emphasis as set out in the vision of the framework is promoting community-based approaches to achieve sustainable, well-manage inshore fisheries that provide food security and long-term economic, social and ecological benefits to communities. The framework was designed to provide direction and encourage coordination, cooperation and effective use of regional and other support services in the development of coastal fisheries management.
5. At the regional level, what is needed most is to bring together disconnected initiatives and stakeholders into a strong, coordinated approach with a shared vision of coastal fisheries management. At the national and sub-national levels, greater political recognition of the value of coastal fisheries to food security and rural development and a commitment to resourcing the sector are required.

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<sup>1</sup> Bell JD, Johnson JE and Hobday AJ (2011). Vulnerability of Tropical Pacific Fisheries and Aquaculture to Climate Change. Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia

<sup>2</sup> Gillett, R. (2016). Fisheries in the Economies of Pacific Island Countries and Territories. Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea.

<sup>3</sup> Veitayaki J, Esaroma L, Hong H, Han P, Moon S, Breckwoldt A. (2018). Future Use of Past Practices: Policy Implications of Insights from Two Community-based Marine Resource Management Initiatives in Fiji. Ocean Yearbook. 32.

## National initiative on CBFM

6. PICTs have made great strides in establishing CBFM in a number of local communities, including the adoption of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. While these initiatives continue to progress, there is still room for improvement. The increased pressure on coastal ecosystems is causing a growing need for better planning, management and sustainable use of marine resources at both local and national levels. Coastal ecosystems need to be protected for the benefit of all, and local communities should be involved in decision-making to ensure that the various management arrangements are acceptable which is fundamental to their success.
7. Since 2015, several countries such as Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati have adopted coastal fisheries policies with key emphasis on CBFM. These policies promote and recognise the management of coastal resources by local communities with the support from government agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as well as resulting in increasing support from donor agencies to a range of projects.
8. Several PICTs, such as American Samoa, Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau and Tuvalu, already have legislation in place empowering local communities to actively participate in managing their coastal fisheries resources. Others such as Kiribati or Nauru are in the process of adopting coastal fisheries legislation that either improves or establishes a national CBFM framework.

## Key challenges

9. It is estimated that 90% of coastal communities do not have viable CBFM systems in place and large coastal fisheries areas are not under effective management<sup>4</sup>.
10. In areas where viable systems are in place, it seems that there are only small pockets of effective coastal fisheries management. This patchy approach to CBFM is not sufficient to address wider national problems of coastal fisheries resource decline, therefore ways must be found to build on successes and expand them to meaningful proportions of coastal environments.
11. While acknowledging and recognising the efforts in implementing CBFM, there is still more effort needed in providing adequate legal or regulatory frameworks that recognise community empowerment, even where legislation is already partly in place to that effect. This is a crucial steppingstone in the endeavour to scale-up successful CBFM experiences at national and sub-national level.
12. Inadequate resources (financial/staffing) and capacity to support implementation of CBFM at national and sub-national levels is another key challenge.
13. CBFM can be costly and difficult to implement adequately for countries with long coastlines (above 100 km) or scattered islands or reef systems.
14. Sustainability of CBFM efforts after ceasing of externally funded projects must be ensured for both governments and communities to keep up the momentum.
15. Weak governance at local community level to support and sustain CBFM

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<sup>4</sup> A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea Strategy

## Way forward

16. Through an online survey, member countries identified scaling-up of CBFM as one of the key topics for discussion at this 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries. Sharing experiences, what has and has not worked, success stories and lessons learnt with sustainably implementing and scaling-up of CBFM will ensure wider impact of the CBFM approaches.

## Recommendations

17. To note the implementation of the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries* as a broad regional framework for the implementation of CBFM at the national level by SPC members.
18. To note the efforts taken by various partners including national fisheries and environment agencies, NGOs, CSOs and local communities in implementing CBFM projects in the region.
19. To note the increasing support by donors in CBFM; and
20. To discuss the challenges and barriers faced and to identify effective approaches to scaling-up of CBFM.