



Third Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

14-15 November 2023

Original: English

Information paper

Supporting National Community-based Fisheries Management Programs in the Pacific “Pathways-2 Project”

Dirk Steenbergen

*(on behalf of the Pathways-2 teams and partners in KIR, SLB, VUT, SPC, WorldFish and
ANCORS-UOW)*

Purpose of Brief

1. This paper follows from the initial profile of the ‘Pathways-2’ project, presented at the RTMCF-5 (Oct-22). We hereby present an implementation update, with the intent of informing CBFM stakeholders. We do so by invitation of The Pacific Community (SPC), so as to contribute to cultivating a broader understanding of what is being done, where and by whom in the Pacific coastal fisheries space.

Project profile

Full Title:	Coalitions for change in sustainable national Community Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) programs in the Pacific (ACIAR project FIS/2020/172)
Key partners:	- <u>Kiribati</u> : Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development (MFMRD), - <u>Solomon Islands</u> : Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) and WorldFish - <u>Vanuatu</u> : Vanuatu Fisheries Department (VFD) and Wan Smolbag, - The Pacific Community (SPC)
Funding agency:	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
Duration:	2021-2025
Contact:	Dirk Steenbergen, University of Wollongong - dirks@uow.edu.au

Project summary

2. Securing the sustainable supply of coastal fish is a development priority for Pacific countries and their regional organisations. Community Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) is a proven vehicle by which to deliver improved fisheries in rural communities. CBFM is a set of principles and concepts that increase the likelihood of sustainable coastal fishery systems providing human benefits and ecosystem services over the long term.
3. The project seeks to **support the scaling up of inclusive CBFM in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to self-sustaining national CBFM programs** that support resilient coastal communities and drive the further spread of CBFM in the Pacific region. The project builds on lessons learned and extensive networks of partnerships in these countries and in the region more broadly, and in so doing contributes to the ongoing evolution of CBFM.
4. The project strengthens both national agencies and community-based organisations across five main objectives A critical partnership with SPC-FAME allows for implementation to be integrated with regional SPC-led CBFM scaling initiatives so as to inform and strengthen CBFM across the Pacific.
 - I. **Informing coastal communities** on effective CBFM for food and nutrition security
 - II. **Sustaining adaptive CBFM practice** by engaging with coastal communities to scale CBFM innovations and support adaptation
 - III. **Amplifying CBFM in the non-government sector** by mobilising national agencies and non-government stakeholders to support and enable CBFM nationally

- IV. Encouraging **institutional change for CBFM in the government** sector by strengthening national and provincial fisheries agencies
- V. Energising **regional CBFM networks** by contributing to bodies of knowledge that will inform and influence CBFM

Implementation status

- 5. The four-year project is approaching its half-way point and while it has had to adapt to various disruptions (e.g. natural disasters, political unrest), implementation continues across several key areas of work that find home in the project objectives. Below we present selected highlights:

Scaling CBFM in KIR, SLB and VUT (Obj 1-4) & Regionally (Obj 5)

- 6. The project has focused on measures to strengthen the enabling environment for CBFM in KIR, SLB and VUT. It forms the core support to CBFM units at the respective national agencies, engaging as primary coordinating units between government divisions and as conduits to aligning other incoming bilateral initiatives. Targeted policy support has been provided to, for example, national scaling strategies (SLB and VUT, and in development in KIR), reviewing coastal fisheries roadmaps (KIR and VUT), strengthening subnational staff work planning and implementation (SLB), CBFM-based recovery efforts including co-development of mechanisms and tools guiding post disaster response (VUT), and ongoing training of (sub)national staff following capacity needs assessments (KIR, SLB and VUT).
- 7. Direct support to communities continues through implementing scaled approaches to co-developing CBFM plans (i.e. involving clusters of communities), reviews of existing CBFM plans (enabling adaptation in management), targeted CBFM research that feeds into CBFM management (e.g. freshwater prawn), and ongoing technical guidance to communities to apply and acquire findings through for CBFM. The project has responded to dynamic in-country needs, including in-community and national efforts in disasters preparedness, response and recovery (TC Kevin, Judy and Lola in VUT).
- 8. Regionally, we are supporting SPC-FAME in coordinating coherent CBFM scaling, by for example feeding CBFM information, -awareness and -training material developed in country into the online information portal ('Echoes of Oceania'), and by co-developing of National scaling strategies in other PICTs. In addition, the project continues to support the growth of the CBFM community-of-practice named 'FishSMARD', a Pacifica network of CBFM practitioners that seeks enhance information exchange, and peer-to-peer support in technical implementation of CBFM and capacity development.

Tracking Change and Monitoring CBFM (Obj 2&4)

- 9. We are supporting monitoring and data collection to feed into evidence-based decision-making and policy development. To do so we use data of different resolutions – with large-scale snap shot surveys (low-resolution) of CBFM status across provinces (SLB and VUT) or islands (KIR), complemented by more in-depth (high-resolution) ongoing CBFM monitoring in selected sites. The latter applies a co-designed (VUT, KIR, SPC-FAME and ANCORS) module for CBFM monitoring on the IkaSavea platform. We also collaborate with research sections at the respective National Agencies (KIR, SLB and VUT) to develop tracking systems that can monitor CBFM status, explicitly drawing in subnational fisheries staff. This also involves supporting the development of communication plans and strategies, and hereby work with other bilateral programs (under leadership of national agencies).

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) (Obj 1-5)

10. In this cross-cutting component, we work with SPC gender and social inclusion experts (to integrate GESI principles and approaches in CBFM scaling processes) and with national partner agencies (to mainstream GESI via country gender assessments and development of gender-specific policies / action plans at (sub)national levels). We have supported exchanges of lessons learned about innovative strategies used to increase inclusion of marginalised groups in CBFM processes during national (stakeholder meetings) and regional meetings (CBF Dialogue).
11. To ensure diverse community groups are reached, we are finalising gender-sensitive regional communication and outreach guidelines targeted at communication and fisheries staff as well as co-developing national fisheries communication strategies informed by GESI considerations. At the community level, we continue to support the establishment of women associations, networks, and assists in the delivery of trainings and activities (e.g. financial literacy). We are conducting targeted research including examining (i) barriers and opportunities for involvement of marginalised groups in CBFM scaling efforts (KIR,SLB and VUT), (ii) governance contexts in matrilineal societies (SLB and VUT) to understand how CBFM best fits and functions in these contexts, and (iii) representation in CBFM committee members to understand inclusion and participation in local decision-making processes (SLB and VUT).
12. We have expanded our GESI focus to include youth and people with disability in CBFM. In SLB we are partnering with youth representatives to increase capacities and deliver tailored needs to this community group. In moving from GESI to a GEDSI approach we liaised with regional and national organisations for people with disability to co-develop guidance for disability inclusive community engagement, tailored outreach material and to understand involvement of people with disability in community fisheries and management.

Integrating Food and Nutrition Security Perspectives into CBFM Scaling (Obj 2)

13. We continue to assemble datasets of Pacific foodfishes (many fisheries officers have engaged with this process) and will put the finalized list on the SPC-FAME website. Working with SPC-SDD we are completing analyses of fish acquisition and consumption and also other food such as chicken that ‘compete’ with fish as a source of protein in the region.

Civil Society Engagements (Obj 3)

14. The project partners directly with civil society organisation to implement and expand CBFM reach. This happens through utilising existing social networks like the Malaita Youth Council in SLB and the Vanuatai network in Vanuatu. Both cases, are providing alternate channels by which to disseminate information and awareness, and to integrate community voices in national CBFM planning and decision making. Regionally, we provide technical support towards strengthening civil society engagement through the community-based fisheries dialogue (CBFD), facilitated through SPC-FAME.