



## FOURTH REGIONAL FISHERIES MINISTERIAL MEETING

5 July 2023

<b>Agenda Item:</b>	8
<b>Paper No:</b>	RFMM4.WP05
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Update on member support to review regional policies: Fisheries Roadmap and New Song for Coastal Fisheries</b>

### Summary:

In 2022, the Pacific Fisheries Ministers at their 3rd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting in Tarawa, Kiribati, tasked their fisheries officials, supported by FFA and SPC, to review existing regional fisheries policies including the Regional Roadmap and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries to ensure close alignment with implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

This paper outlines a proposed process and timeline for the review of the Regional Roadmap and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries, which was discussed during the 15th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting and FFC126. The paper seeks endorsement from Fisheries Ministers on the proposed review process and timeline, as well as the composition of the review committee responsible for overseeing the implementation of the review.

### Recommendations

Ministers are invited to:

- i. **note** the scope and objectives of the review;
- ii. **endorse**, as appropriate, the proposed process, elements, and timeline for the review; and
- iii. **endorse** nominations for the review committee.

## **Introduction and Background**

The Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries: Pathways to Changes – Noumea Strategy were developed to promote sustainable management of fisheries, enhance livelihoods, increase economic growth, and address food security from fisheries in the region. These strategies are approaching the end of their respective timeframes.

Pacific Forum leaders endorsed the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries in 2015, with the aim of achieving 7 goals by 2025 for the sustainable management, increased economic returns, and conservation of oceanic and coastal fisheries. The New Song for Coastal Fisheries, developed and adopted the same year, aims to achieve sustainable, well-managed coastal fisheries that provide food security and long-term economic, social, and ecological benefits to communities, with a strong, community-driven approach and collaboration among stakeholders.

After the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders decided on the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (2050 Strategy) in 2022, the focus has shifted towards developing an implementation plan. This plan will detail the specific actions to be taken under each thematic area, along with the timeframes, implementation arrangements, partners involved, and the necessary resources. The initial plan is projected to span five years, and member countries will remain at the forefront of its development. The process will include active participation from CROP agencies, non-state actors, and various stakeholders to ensure comprehensive engagement and collaboration.

Ministers at the 3rd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting in Tarawa, Kiribati, held in 2022, assigned their fisheries officials, with the assistance of FFA and SPC, the responsibility of reviewing regional fisheries policies. This review would specifically focus on aligning the existing Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries with the implementation of the 2050 Strategy. The objective was to ensure a close integration between these policies and the broader goals of the 2050 Strategy.

Furthermore, in addition to the assigned review, Ministers encouraged each other and the officials to engage in discussions that aimed to achieve seamless integration between the existing efforts under the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries, and the implementation plan for the Resources and Economic Development, as well as the Ocean and Environment thematic areas of the 2050 Strategy. The purpose of these discussions was to ensure a cohesive and coordinated approach towards the implementation of the 2050 Strategy, with all relevant regional fisheries policies working in harmony towards its goals.

## **Purpose**

This paper discusses progress made by the fisheries officials, supported by SPC and FFA, on the review of the two regional fisheries policies – *Regional Roadmap and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries*. It also seeks guidance from Ministers on the scope, process and timeline of the review.

It is assumed the review would include assessing the effectiveness and relevance of these policies in achieving their goals to date and identifying opportunities for collaboration and integration with the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan.

## **Scope of the review**

At the 15th SPC Heads of Fisheries meeting and FFC126, the scope of the review of regional fisheries policies were discussed. While the current work on reviewing indicators for both policies was deemed out of scope, it was acknowledged that they could still be useful in formulating review questions related to effectiveness, impact, and relevance.

The review, which will include the Regional Roadmap and New Song for Coastal Fisheries, as directed by Ministers, may also consider including other regional fisheries policies with guidance from members. While the scope of the review focused primarily on fisheries, there is a question as to whether aquaculture should also be included. While the Regional Roadmap and New Song for Coastal Fisheries do not explicitly cover aquaculture, the potential contribution of aquaculture to fisheries production warrants its inclusion in the review.

## **Objectives of the review**

During the 15th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting and FFC126, officials noted that the review should assess the effectiveness of the policies implemented so far and explore how to update and adapt them to support sustainable fisheries, enhance livelihoods, promote sustainable economic growth, address food security, build resilience, and respond to external pressures such as climate change and natural disasters.

The objectives of the review of regional fisheries policies identified by officials are:

- i. to assess the effectiveness of the policies in achieving their goals;
- ii. to assess the policy elements and their ongoing relevance in the region;
- iii. to identify gaps and challenges in the implementation of the policies;
- iv. to identify opportunities for collaboration and integration with the 2050 Strategy; and
- v. to propose recommendations for the alignment of the future policies with the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan.

## **Proposed process and elements for the review**

The proposed process and elements for the review were discussed during SPC HoF15 and FFC126. It was recorded that a Review Committee be established with a defined terms of reference. The committee would then appoint consultant(s) to provide technical support for the review and prepare a report(s). A consultative process would be undertaken with members through FFA and SPC to gather advice and the revised regional policy(ies) is taken to the Fisheries Ministers for approval. Additionally, the timeframe has been aligned with the development of the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan.

The proposed process for the review involves:

- i. establishing a Review Committee – it was discussed at the SPC HoF15 and FFC126 to identify membership of a review committee from the members;
- ii. develop Terms of Reference (TOR) – a terms of reference is needed to guide the review. Based on officials' input from SPC HoF15 and FFC126, FFA and SPC will develop a draft ToR for the consideration of the Review Committee. The ToR will

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include the scope of work, methodology, and criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the strategies and their relevance in the region;

- iii. endorsement of Terms of Reference – The Review Committee will distribute the Terms of Reference for an intersessional endorsement by the members;
- iv. engagement of external consultant(s) – the review will need resources outside current SPC and FFA staff and funding to complete in a timely manner. It is suggested that after the endorsement of the TOR, the Review Committee would engage a reputable external consultant(s) to carry out the review. The first deliverable would be an inception report and work plan. These would be drafted by the consultant and outline how the review would be carried out, the review methodology and proposed timeline. To facilitate progress of the review it is suggested that the inception report and work plan would be approved by the Review Committee;
- v. interviews, analysis and report – it is proposed that the consultant(s) would conduct detailed interviews with key stakeholders, guided by the Review Committee, and conduct analysis of the policies and their successes, shortcomings, and analysis of the alignment with the 2050 Strategy. A draft report summarising the findings of the review, including recommendations for improvement, alignments and their relevance would be prepared and presented to SPC Heads of Fisheries and FFC meetings. It is envisaged that after the review and revision a final report with recommendations would then go to the Fisheries Ministers for endorsement.

### **Timeline for the review**

It was agreed by officials that the timeline for the review would need to be flexible, and progress would need to balance other processes and requests from Ministers.

The timeline for the review to date has been:

- i. March 20-25, 2023, 15th SPC HoF: Discussed the review process and timeline, agreed for further feedback from members. SPC would distribute a revised proposal, after FFC126, on the review to members for intersessional consideration; and
- ii. May 22-26, 2023, FFC126: Noted that a draft proposal on a review of regional fisheries policies, including the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries*, is being prepared for consideration at the FFCMIN20 and RFMM4.

The proposed timeline for the review is:

- i. July 3-7, 2023, FFCMIN20 and RFMM4: Nominations for the Review Committee proposed by the FFC127 and RFMM4 Officials endorsed by the Ministers, including endorsement of the proposed approach, and timeline for the review;
- ii. August – September 2023: Drafting of Terms of Reference led by SPC and FFA, supported by the Review Committee;
- iii. October – November 2023: The Review Committee to distribute Terms of Reference to members for intersessional endorsement;
- iv. December 2023 – February 2024: External consultant(s) engaged to carry out the review;

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- v. February 2024 – March 2025: External consultant(s), FFA and SPC work with the Review Committee and fisheries officials to draft and finalise the review and recommendations;
- vi. April 2024 16<sup>th</sup> SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting: Draft Review update and consultations;
- vii. May 2024 FFC127: Draft Review update and consultations;
- viii. July 2024: FFCMIN21 and RFMM5 Draft Review update and consultations;
- ix. October 2024: Draft report to the Review Committee;
- x. April – May 2025: Draft final report to the 17<sup>th</sup> SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting and FFC128; and
- xi. July 2025 – FFCMIN22 and RFMM6: Draft Final Report presented for Endorsement.

### Support for members in the review

The work required to conduct this review is substantial. The review itself will require a consultancy to complete within the proposed timelines. It will be particularly important that broad consultation is undertaken with members during all stages of the review. The consultancy and the consultation will require resources from SPC and FFA to support.

It is also likely that some technical analyses may be required from SPC and FFA staff during the consultancy to support comparative analyses of the regional policies. Staff and resources will also be required to support the work of the Review Committee.

The other key area of FFA and SPC support will be the inclusion of this work in annual workplans and in the agendas and supporting documents for the meetings in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

### Recommendations:

Ministers are invited to:

- i. **Note** the scope and objectives of the review;
- ii. **Endorse**, as appropriate, the proposed process, elements, and timeline for the review; and
- iii. **Endorse** nominations for the review committee.