



Sixth SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

13–17 November 2023



Original: English

Information paper 1

Sixth Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture – Purpose and format

SPC FAME

Purpose and format of RTMCFA6

Purpose

1. This Information paper outlines the purposes of the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA) and provides some background and context to the format and meeting outcomes.
2. The Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries (RTMCF)¹ was re-established in 2017 by the Tenth Heads of Fisheries meeting, with the purpose of bringing together coastal fisheries and aquaculture scientists and technical experts in the Pacific to discuss important technical and scientific gaps, needs, challenges and opportunities. There have been five previous meetings: [RTMCF1 \(2017\)](#)²; [RTMCF2 \(2018\)](#)³; [RTMCF3 \(2019\)](#)⁴; [RTMCFA4 \(2021\)](#)⁵, and [RTMCFA5 \(2022\)](#)⁶.
3. From the Fourth Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries *and Aquaculture* (RTMCFA4) the title was modified to explicitly acknowledge that these meetings also include the aquaculture sector.
4. These meetings have been primarily funded by Australian Government Aid (DFAT), with some additional support provided by New Zealand (MFAT) and the PEUMP programme (EU/Sida), and earlier meetings included supplementary support from FAO.
5. In 2019, RTMCF3 was the first phase of the newly established strategic direction setting architecture, information flow and decision-making process for Pacific coastal fisheries and aquaculture, with a pathway for technical outcomes and recommendations of significant regional importance to flow from the **RTMCFA** to the **Heads of Fisheries** to the **Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM)** and, where appropriate, on to the **Forum Leaders**. Since 2021, the RTMCFA has included the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD), convened by and focused on civil society organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actors (NSAs) engaged in community-based fisheries, providing a means for the community voice on coastal fisheries matters to feed into the information flow and decision-making process noted above. Three examples of this were the approval by HoF and the endorsement by the RFMM of the [Regional Framework on Aquatic Biosecurity](#) (2020: HoF12 and RFMM1), the [Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management: 2021–2025](#) (2021: HoF13 and RFMM2), and the transmittal of three recommendations from the CBFD2, through [RTMCFA5](#) (2022) and [HoF15](#) (2023) to the Ministers at [RFMM4](#) (2023). It must be noted that the above

¹ The original Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries was the precursor to the Heads of Fisheries meeting, with 25 RTMF meetings between 1952 and 1994. 15 Heads of Fisheries (HoF) meetings have been held between 1999 and 2023. <https://fame1.spc.int/en/publications/meeting-documents> or <https://fame-archive.spc.int/fr/publications/documents-de-conferences>

² RTMCF1: <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/240> or <https://fame1.spc.int/fr/meetings/240> (French)

³ RTMCF2: <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/241> or <https://fame1.spc.int/fr/meetings/241> (French)

⁴ RTMCF3: <https://fame1.spc.int/en/meetings/248> or <https://fame1.spc.int/fr/meetings/248> (French)

⁵ RTMCFA4: <https://fame.spc.int/events/rtmcf4> or <https://fame1.spc.int/fr/meetings/253> (French)

⁶ RTMCFA5: <https://fame.spc.int/events/RTMCFA5> or <https://fame.spc.int/fr/event/RTMCFA5> (French)

information flow does not affect the governance of SPC's strategic direction by the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) and Conference.

6th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

6. The overarching theme of RTMCFA6 is to discuss and address some of the main technical issues affecting coastal fisheries and aquaculture in support of better evidence-based resource management, the equitable access to resources, and to enhance the sustainable development of aquaculture and nearshore livelihoods.
7. The RTMCFA meetings focus on specific priority issues with input from member country government and territory administrations. As with all previous RTMCFA meetings, the format of this meeting is to maximise input through breakout group discussions and plenary sessions. For RTMCFA6 there will be a return to members presenting in plenary their priority issues and needs, and progress against previous RTMCFA agreed actions.
8. The RTMCFA is also informed and guided by several Pacific regional strategies and frameworks, including: [*A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy*](#); the [*Future of Fisheries: Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries*](#); the [*Regional Framework on Aquatic Biosecurity*](#); and the [*Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-Based Fisheries Management*](#). It also assists with providing the much-needed information for reporting to Leaders through the annual [*Coastal Fisheries Report Card*](#).

Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

9. RTMCFA6 will be the third meeting to include the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD), convened by and focused on civil society organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actors (NSAs) engagement, and will be the first for the CBFD to convene over two days.
10. The CBF Dialogue will, for the first time, be held as an in-person meeting on 15 and 16 November 2023. For the first day, 15 November, the CBFD participants will meet separately to the main RTMCFA6 participants. Then on 16 November, the CBFD will convene in the main SPC Conference Room. The CBF Dialogue is led by an independent Convenor, with input and guidance by the CBFD-Advisory Group, with the representatives of the community fishers' groups, community-based fisheries CSOs and other NSAs invited to fully engage in plenary and breakout group discussions. In the CBF Dialogue the SPC member fisheries and aquaculture agency participants and observers are invited to observe the CBF Dialogue plenary sessions and engage in the CBF Dialogue breakout sessions.
11. The purpose of the CBF Dialogue is to provide the CSO, NSA and CBF practitioner communities with an opportunity to provide information, advice and key needs, through the RTMCFA, to Heads of Fisheries to assist with informing Leaders on priority issues and needs associated with the sustainable use of coastal fisheries resources. It also presents an opportunity to share experiences and lessons from community-based initiatives to strengthen efforts to maintain productive and healthy ecosystems and their associated fisheries resources that are critical to the wellbeing of coastal communities. The discussion supported by this dialogue will focus on issues of common regional significance to community-driven coastal fisheries generally. SPC provides the secretariat support to the CBF Dialogue, the CBFD Convenor, Vice Convener and the CBFD Advisory Group.

12. The CBFD3 will primarily focus on engaging and hearing the voices of the CSO, NSA and CBF practitioner community representatives on identifying and discussing priority community-based fisheries issues of concern, CBFD governance matters, scaling-up community-based-fisheries management (strategic information and awareness for all; and casting nets of inclusion on CBFM), discuss the Small-Scale Fisheries Summit 2024 – the Pacific Voice, and consider the core CBFD4 agenda. CBFD participants are invited to continue to advise and make recommendations for future CBF Dialogue arrangements.

Reporting

13. The 6th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture will report to the 16th Heads of Fisheries (HoF16) meeting, provisionally scheduled for 22-26 April 2024. This will include the outcomes of the 3rd Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue.
14. The formal report of the meeting will consist of a summary of decisions, outcomes and recommendations identified by the Chair, and agreed by consensus, called the “Outputs and Actions” of the meeting. The Outputs and Actions report will also include the outputs of the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue. The Outputs and Actions report will include a limited number of specific, high priority meeting outputs and recommendations that need to be presented to HoF16 for the consideration and decision by the Heads of Fisheries.

Provisional agenda overview

15. The RTMCFA6 is an in-person meeting, with an option for online participants to listen-in through Zoom to the plenary sessions, but there will be no interaction possible with online participants.
16. The meeting runs from Monday 13 to Friday 17 November 2023, with sessions starting at 08:30 and ending at 16:30 Noumea time (UTC+11). The lunch break will be from 12:00 to 13:30. A number of sessions will involve breakout groups in addition to the plenary sessions.
17. The following is an overview of the *provisional* agenda, with the latest full provisional agenda available on the [RTMCFA6 meeting website](#)⁷:

Day 1 (Mon 13 Nov) – RTMCFA6

- Opening; meeting purpose, format and procedures
- Progress update on the RTMCFA5 outcomes and actions
- Member presentations on coastal fisheries and aquaculture priority needs, issues and concerns
- Coastal fisheries climate change vulnerability assessment update
- Introduction to accessing information and knowledge products on the new SPC FAME website

Cocktails – Launch of:

- ‘Echoes of Oceania’
- ‘Nearshore Fishing Techniques: A Manual for Community Fishers in the Pacific Islands’

⁷ RTMCFA5 website – English: [Sixth SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture \(RTMCFA6\) | FAME](#) or French: [Sixième Conférence technique régionale de la CPS sur les pêches côtières et l’aquaculture | FAME \(spc.int\)](#)

- ‘Fisheries in the economies of Pacific Island countries and territories’

Day 2 (Tue 14 Nov) – Parallel sessions: RTMCFA6 and CBFD3

- Aquaculture technical sessions:
 - Update on progress of the Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy
 - Assessing aquaculture feasibility: technical, economic, and social factors
 - Review of aquaculture and biosecurity legislation: findings and recommendations
 - Increased effectiveness of mariculture hatchery systems
 - Challenges to aquaculture development: technical, economic, and social factors
- Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (Day 1):
 - Opening
 - Hearing the voices of the community-based fisheries CSOs/NSAs
 - CBFD governance

Day 3 (Wed 15 Nov) – CBFD3

- Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (Day 2)
 - Scaling-up Community-Based-Fisheries Management – Strategic information and awareness for all
 - Scaling-up Community-Cased-Fisheries Management - Casting nets of inclusion on CBFM
 - Small-Scale Fisheries Summit 2024 – The Pacific Voice
 - CBFD4 Agenda

Day 4 (Thu 16 Nov) – RTMCFA6

- Coastal fisheries technical sessions:
 - How technology is supporting the delivery of robust data for management of coastal fisheries resources
 - Update coastal fisheries legislation and policy
 - Coastal fisheries livelihoods – diversification and food security
 - Coastal fisheries livelihoods – Anchored FADs and Nearshore small-scale fisheries

Day 5 (Fri 17 Nov) – RTMCFA6 and CBFD3

- Cross-cutting technical session
 - The value of understanding economics and socioeconomics in coastal fisheries and aquaculture
- 3rd Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue report to RTMCFA6
- Observer statements
- Review and clearance of RTMCFA6 outcomes and actions report
- Closing of RTMCFA6 and CBFD3