

Preliminary draft Policy Brief

Sustainable coastal fisheries: The need to scale up community-based fisheries management.

Purpose

This policy brief is to:

- reiterate the importance of coastal fisheries management underpinned by community-based fisheries management (CBFM);
- emphasise the role of the *Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up CBFM: 2021-2025* (Framework for Action) that is regionally appropriate and nationally relevant; and
- propose key actions for decision makers and development partners to take or support in order to scale-up CBFM at national and subnational level.

Key messages

- Less than 10% of coastal communities in the Pacific have received some level of support for CBFM and large areas are not under effective management.
- Effective support and empowerment of coastal communities is vital to achieving the vision of the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries* and the Leaders' ambition on the *Future of Fisheries*.
- The very limited resources and staffing of national and subnational fisheries agencies and the fact that the needs of communities vary widely, mean an inclusive yet strategic approach that recognises constraints and opportunities is vital for sustainable coastal fisheries management in the region.
- The *Framework for Action* provides regional and subregional guidance for Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) to adapt to their CBFM context as applicable and fisheries ministers, decision makers and development partners are encouraged to support its implementation at regional, national and subnational level.

CBFM context in the region

The regional context for CBFM in the Pacific islands is provided by three main policy documents adopted in 2015, namely *A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy*, the *Future of Fisheries: A regional roadmap for sustainable Pacific fisheries* endorsed by Leaders and the *Melanesian Spearhead Group Regional Roadmap on Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development*. Overall, these reflect the FAO's global *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (2015)*. The combined aims of these policies can be summarised as follows:

Communities are empowered to drive local management regimes that secure or improve coastal fisheries, marine ecosystems and associated livelihoods, underpinned by community-based approaches and supported by national controls, policy and legislation.

With the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries*, PICTs agree to scale-up coastal fisheries management incorporating CBFM approaches. Scaling-up consists of moving from small pockets of effective coastal fisheries management to meaningful proportions of the coastal environment to achieve healthy coastal fisheries that can feed local populations and support national development aspirations, with appropriate national and regional support.

Based on the *New Song for Coastal Fisheries*, CBFM means:

Fisheries management approaches that are community-driven and encompass an ecosystem approach that will sustain livelihoods and ensure resilient island communities.

Pacific coastal fisheries challenge

Coastal fisheries resources are declining through overfishing and degradation of coastal ecosystems. Poor water or land management, logging and mining are some of the threats from outside the fisheries sector. All these threats are further exacerbated by external shocks such as natural disasters, climate change and pandemics (Figure 1 – 1).

At the institutional and governance level more investment (staff and budget) into coastal fisheries management including CBFM is required at national and subnational level. Most coastal communities in the Pacific region have not received adequate support for CBFM, and large areas are not under effective management. Continuing working with a small number of CBFM sites, or even a series of sites, leaves most of the coastal waters under-managed and thousands of community livelihoods at risk.

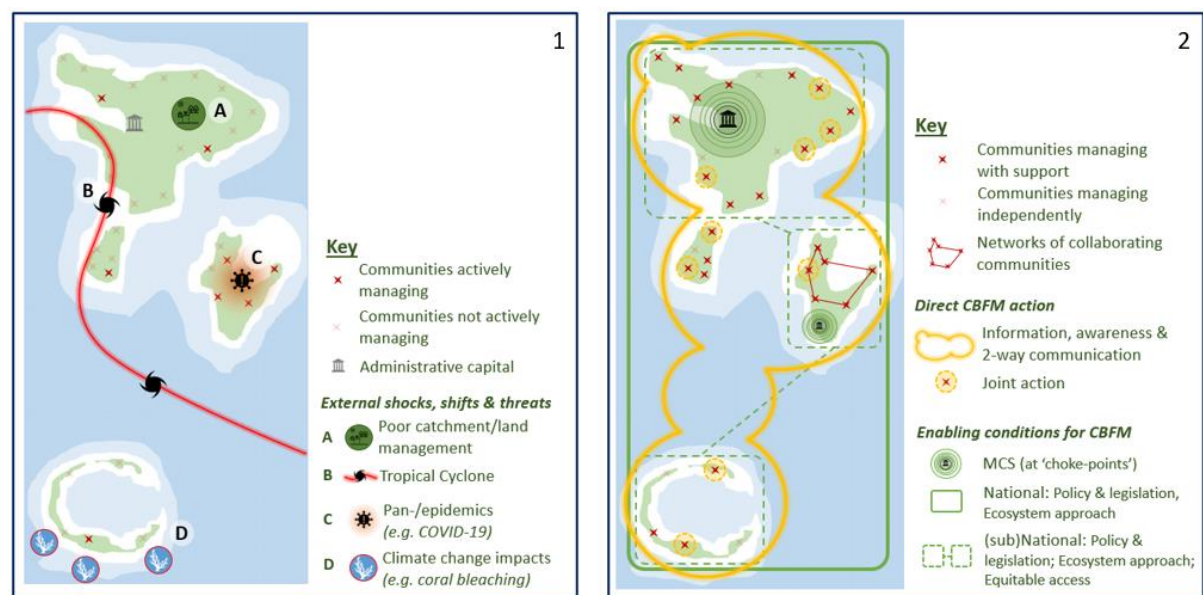


Figure 1. CBFM challenges (1) and strategic approach to scale-up (2).

The need to scale-up

Depending on the geographical isolation of communities, the existing CBFM approaches and available resources, in some PICTs it will be possible to engage a major proportion of coastal communities. However, in many others, a strategic approach will be needed to tailor support to a meaningful proportion of coastal communities to achieve an impact on sustainability of coastal resources. Given the inadequate budget and staffing of fisheries agencies for coastal fisheries management, especially for CBFM, and the fact that different communities have different needs, a strategic scaling up approach (Figure 1 – 2) is required to balance the available resourcing with provision of adequate though varied levels of support for different communities.

Framework for Action on Scaling up CBFM

[Text to be adjusted after RFMM2: *To achieve the vision of the New Song for Coastal Fisheries and to realize the Leaders' ambition for the Future of Fisheries, the Second Regional Fisheries Ministerial meeting in 2021 endorsed the Framework for Action. It acknowledges the diversity of contexts and progress made in CBFM implementation among PICTs and provides regional and subregional guidance for PICTs as they adapt actions and policies for scaling CBFM to their national contexts in support of communities to achieve their management goals and achieving national and regional policy goals*].

Recommended priority actions

Regional level

- Fisheries ministers and decision makers continue to promote support for the implementation of the *Framework for Action* and find ways to reaffirm support in re-focusing and adequately resourcing fisheries agencies to ensure effective coastal fisheries management, including CBFM.
- Donors and other development partners are encouraged to support the implementation of the *Framework for Action*
- SPC to support implementation of the *Framework for Action* by promoting collaboration and coordination of government agencies and development partners and continue to support members on CBFM

National level

- National fisheries agencies to implement/adopt/adapt the suggested actions in the *Framework for Action*:
 1. Assess and finalise national CBFM scaling-up status reports through inclusive national CBFM prioritisation processes
 2. Identify top 3 actions that are most likely to achieve the objectives of scaling up CBFM
 3. Incorporate actions into agency operational budgets and workplans
 4. Implement and monitor actions

Further Reading

SPC. 2021. Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management. Noumea, New Caledonia. [Link to be provided]

SPC, LMMA and UOW. 2021. Scaling-up Community-Based Fisheries Management in the Pacific region [Information paper]. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 4p [Link to be provided]