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## Draft action plan (final version)

SPC's Second Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries has been organised  
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## Second SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries – Draft action plan (final version)

1. The second SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries RTMCF-2 took place at SPC Headquarters in Noumea on 12–14 November 2018. The following constitutes the agreed Plan of Action from the meeting for SPC, member countries and territories, and collaborating stakeholders<sup>1</sup>.
2. The agenda for RTMCF-2 was developed in consultation with countries, administrations and non-state actors through the Coastal Fisheries Working Group CFWG process. Key issues identified to be addressed at the RTMCF-2 include: progress on the RTMCF-1 Action Plan; gender and human rights-based approaches in coastal fisheries and aquaculture; safety at sea; managing sea cucumber fisheries, and; identification of issues and priorities for the next RTMCF meeting.

### Progress on addressing the RTMCF-1 Action Plan

3. **The meeting recognised** progress in coastal fisheries governance at regional, national and local levels since the 2015 publication of ‘A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to Change: The Noumea Strategy’, which emphasises:
  - a. stronger and more coordinated new regional arrangements, such as establishment of the annual RTMCF event itself, that now provide for coastal fisheries issues to be discussed at all levels from officials to Ministerial and PIF Leaders level;
  - b. an increase in adoption at country level of stronger institutional arrangements in coastal fisheries, for example, institutional restructures and policy/legislation reviews by governments and administrations, and:
  - c. increased engagement in coastal fisheries management at community and local levels.
4. **The meeting advocated** that, notwithstanding this progress, effort be made to address some significant limitations and gaps in data that constrain the region’s ability to report progress against several of the output areas of the Report Card in coastal fisheries that is made annually to Ministers and PIF Leaders under the new regional coastal fisheries governance arrangements.
5. **The meeting noted with appreciation** the comments by Vanuatu about the efficacy of Vatu-ika FADs, and their offer to share with other PICTs their knowledge and experience in deployment of Vatu-ika FADs in coastal waters.

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<sup>1</sup> Collaborating stakeholders in coastal fisheries include development partners, research and educational institutions, civil society and non-state actors.

6. **The meeting acknowledged** the perspectives provided by CSO representatives, which highlighted a need to:
  - a. establish formal statutory mechanisms for fisher/fishing community participation, dialogue and input into the formulation of coastal fisheries priorities, policy and legislation;
  - b. develop strategies, approaches and tools to mainstream gender and social inclusion into coastal fisheries planning, management and governance;
  - c. ensure transparency and accountability of government agencies and decision-making processes, and;
  - d. increase government budgets for coastal fisheries, with special emphasis on community-based resource management.
  
7. **The meeting noted** that more countries now conduct market surveys in addition to catch and effort landing data for coastal fisheries management, **recommended that** a number of issues be addressed, such as:
  - a. Separation of enforcement and research (survey) roles of fisheries officers
  - b. Bias in market data vs actual landings
  - c. Absence of central locations where fish is sold
  - d. Inconvenience to vendors of data collection
  - e. Standardised statistical methods are needed to collect the data
  - f. Appropriate tools that can feed into a central system for standardised collection and storage of data
  - g. Increased capacity and training in collection, storage and analysis of fisheries data.
  
8. **The meeting recommended** the acquisition and use of length data for target species in coastal fisheries management, while mindful that data for other parameters are also needed for coastal fisheries management (such as size at maturity).
  
9. **The meeting recommended** the sharing of data with other countries, subject to data use agreements, and data aggregation to protect privacy of survey respondents and locations of vulnerable fishing resources.
  
10. **The meeting expressed interest** in a coastal fisheries law, policies and regulations database, for reasons of information and comparison purposes between jurisdictions. However, the **meeting requested** more information about the practicalities of utilising such a database,

and **recommended** that it be user-friendly and include legal analysis about the application context of the documents and regulations.

11. **The meeting noted** with interest the results of social research presented by civil-society organisations which highlighted challenging perceptions about coastal fisheries management processes in selected countries, and the learnings they reveal about the need to further strengthen meaningful consultation and dialogue at community level.

## Gender and human rights based approaches

12. **The meeting recognised** that a People Centred Approach to coastal fisheries:

- a) derives from SPC's commitment to the defence of human rights and promotion of gender equality and social inclusion, to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are at the forefront of SPC's work;
- b) has two main components: a rights based component, and a gender equality and social inclusion component;
- c) offers a conceptual framework to promote and encourage the pursuit of initiatives to ensure the attainment of equitable outcomes through the progressive realisation of rights, which then resonates with the key guiding principles reflected in the current governance framework for coastal fisheries under the New Song; and
- d) will leverage the achievement of developmental goals framed under the New Song, such as the improvement of food security and livelihood rural development.

13. **The meeting highlighted** the need for:

- a) consistency across the use of terminologies when applying a People Centred Approach in coastal fisheries;
- b) ongoing education and awareness at all levels on gender and human rights dimensions relating to coastal fisheries work; and
- c) research and gender-disaggregated data analysis to inform policy and programmatic interventions.

14. **The meeting strongly encouraged** SPC and member countries to work with development partners to secure additional support for applying a People Centred Approach to coastal fisheries.

## Saving lives: safety at sea

15. **The meeting took note** of the reported success stories about lives saved at sea which are directly attributable to relatively inexpensive regional initiatives in sea safety such as the Safety Grab Bags promoted by SPC that include a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB).

16. **The meeting recommended** expanded and longer-term sea safety initiatives, with better coordination that spans other marine sectors and agencies (such as island councils) in addition to fisheries authorities. Elements of future regional safety-at-sea work should include creation of a Small-boat Safety Officer position, further procurement and distribution of Safety Grab Bags, provision of small boat safety training using a Train-the-Trainer approach, knowledge products in a range of languages, development of sea accident data collection systems at the national level to monitor incidents, and transfer of useful technologies and initiatives from other regions such as the Caribbean.
17. The meeting **proposed** that sea safety capacity development be an integral part of post-cyclone recovery efforts for coastal fishing communities in impacted areas.

## Managing sea cucumber fisheries

18. **The meeting reaffirmed** the high importance of sea cucumber fisheries to the region, **emphasised** the need to reverse the decline in sea cucumber stocks, and **noted** the lack of examples at the national level to demonstrate successful management of sea cucumber resources.
19. **The meeting recommended** an assessment of approaches and management options to maximise the economic benefits and social values for SPC members of sea cucumber fisheries (such as auctions, one-desk selling, and so on).
20. **The meeting acknowledged** its support for SPC's work to provide members with advice and capacity-building in legislation and MCS for management of sea cucumber fisheries and **recommended** that this work be on-going.
21. **The meeting noted** that political interference in governance of sea cucumber fisheries represents a major hurdle to effective management of this very important fishery.
22. **The meeting proposed** that SPC raise the issue of governance, transparency and accountability with PIF Leaders.
23. **The meeting urged** that the best possible science-based information and advice be provided to decision-makers that make visible the implications of their management decisions upon the sustainability of sea cucumber resources.
24. SPC, its members, and other stakeholders are **encouraged** to fully utilise the opportunities afforded by the newly evolving regional institutional arrangements for coastal fisheries, in which Fisheries Ministers and PIF Leaders now annually consider coastal fisheries issues including sea cucumber.
25. The meeting further **advocated** that science-based information about environmental impacts of sea cucumber depletion be reviewed and disseminated to increase awareness and modify behaviour of fishers and communities engaged in sea cucumber fisheries.

26. **The meeting recognised** the importance of social inclusion for effective management of sea cucumber fisheries, and **urged** continued efforts to ensure meaningful participation in policy or management processes by disadvantaged or marginalised groups, including women and youth.
27. **The meeting considered** the rights vs responsibilities of fishers and exporters to gain access to sea cucumber fisheries resources, and **advocated** that access be limited to those in compliance with management measures. To this end it is **recommended** that criteria be developed for access, and intelligence be shared between governments and administrations about the track records of those operating across multiple jurisdictions.
28. **The meeting advocated** that alternative livelihoods (for example: FADs, aquaculture, terrestrial economic activities, etc.) be considered to offset any impacts upon the food security and livelihoods opportunities of people and communities caused by introduction of sea cucumber fisheries management measures.
29. **The meeting noted** the call by Vanuatu for a review of survey methods in sea cucumber fisheries, and a review of sea cucumber survey data and training activities, in order to address scientific needs (stock status such as biomass estimates, stock assessment methods, etc.) to underpin management.
30. The meeting **encouraged** representatives from national fisheries agencies to liaise with the national agency/council responsible to CITES to formulate a national position about proposed listing of sea cucumber species.

## Other issues, and priorities for next RTMCF meeting

### *Aquaculture and Aquatic Biosecurity*

31. **The meeting recognised** the increasing importance of the roles and contributions that sustainable aquaculture is making in the region, either toward national fish production or as alternative livelihoods to fishing activity, and **encouraged** SPC to continue to provide capacity-building and advice to members in aquaculture and in aquatic biosecurity.

### *Future RTMCF meetings*

32. **SPC members agreed** that future RTMCF meetings will be chaired by members rather than by SPC, on an annually rotating basis.
33. **The meeting agreed** that future meetings shall be of more than three days in duration, subject to the size of agenda and possibility of back-to-back meetings, and supported that the meeting format shall consider multiple topics in coastal fisheries. Sessions shall each be at least one day long, with more time allocated for group discussions. Participants will be given advance notice of topics and any relevant materials to be considered. SPC will determine the most cost-effective venue to hold future RTMCF meetings.