

Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue – 13 Oct. 2021

Original: English

Outcomes Report from the 1st Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue
Virtual Meeting – 13 October 2021

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Background

1. The Regional Fisheries Ministers, at their Special Meeting¹ in 2019, requested the Pacific Community (SPC) to commission a review of the Coastal Fisheries Working Group (CFWG) to, in part, provide options and recommendations for a new mechanism for increasing the engagement of civil society and other non-state actors to give effect to the Pacific Island Forum Leaders' decision in relation to coastal fisheries (paragraph 10, 47th Leaders Communique, 2016²).
2. SPC Member Heads of Fisheries, past participants in the CFWG, civil society representatives, SPC staff, and other stakeholders were consulted during the independent review. The final proposed mechanism (referred to as the "CBF session") was reviewed, approved and endorsed by the 12th Heads of Fisheries meeting (May 2020) and endorsed by the 1st Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (August 2020).
3. The 4th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA4) was the first meeting to include the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD) session convened by and focused on Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and other Non-State Actor (NSA) participation.
4. The CBFD was held as a virtual meeting on 13 October 2021. As the first CBFD session, it was facilitated by an independent convenor, Kesaia Tabunakawai from Fiji, with at least 38 representatives of the CSO and other NSA groups engaged in plenary and breakout group discussions. There were over 105 participants in the CBFD session, including representatives of government agencies and other observers.
5. The purpose of the CBFD was to provide the CSO and NSA community 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 provided 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.
6. This first CBFD focused on laying the foundation for future Dialogues through consideration of the CBFD Terms of Reference³, and discussion of CSO/NSA contributions to the implementation of the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up CBFM.

¹ Special Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting Outcomes: <https://www.ffa.int/node/2296>

² Forum Communiqué, 47th Pacific Islands Forum, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, 8-10 September, 2016.

http://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016-Forum-Communique_-Pohnpei_-FSM_-8-10-Sept.pdf

³ *Convenor's note*: The CBFD process has been initiated by SPC FAME, as mandated by the RFMM. As a new engagement process, it is expected to evolve with each Dialogue as the CSO and other NSA participants embrace the leadership and ownership of the process and outcomes, and its role in contributing the CSO/NSA voice to coastal fisheries discussions at the regional level. This is intended to be a long-term initiative, and SPC FAME's role is to facilitate and support the CBFD.

7. This report outlines the outcomes and points of consensus among CBFD participants highlighting priority issues and needs to be actioned by CSOs and other NSAs, SPC members, provide guidance to SPC's Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (CFAP), and identify key recommendations to be taken to the 14th Heads of Fisheries Meeting in early 2022 via the RTMCFA4, and then transmitted to the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting in mid-2022.

Session 1: CBF Dialogue Terms of reference and convening arrangements

8. As this was the first CBFD, it focused on establishing an appropriate administrative foundation for future CBFD sessions. Through plenary and breakout group discussions, participants reviewed and agreed⁴ on the future CBFD session arrangements relating to:
 - a. Terms of Reference for the CBFD session within the RTMCFA agenda, inclusive of
 - b. Convening arrangements for the CBFD session; and
 - c. The processes for the selection of participants to future CBFD sessions.
9. Recognising this is the start of a process that may be refined as CBFD experience increases, four breakout groups met to review the Draft ToR for the CBFD.
10. The CBFD agreed that the following are among the key issues identified for further consideration, noting that:
 - a. **Membership.** The RTMCFA should include members of CSOs and NSAs that are actively engaged in CBFM in PICTs.
 - b. **Purpose.** The purpose of the CBFD should be expanded beyond CBFM to include ecosystem-based fisheries management.
 - c. **Preparatory work.**
 - i. To increase value of the overall process, adequate resources should be assigned to preparatory time at the national level in the lead up to the CBFD.
 - ii. The role of national focal point needs to be clearly defined and adequately resourced.
 - d. **Selection of Convenor/Vice-convenor.**
 - i. The establishment of a Technical Advisory Group to work with FAME, Convenor and Vice-convenor on agenda, report, etc., should be considered. The role, procedure for selection, period of appointment should be described for future consideration.
 - e. **Convenor and Vice-Convenor.**
 - i. SPC is encouraged to secure funding support for these two posts.
 - ii. Each Vice-convenor would be involved for two years – one year as Vice-convenor and a second year as Convenor- to assist with developing familiarity with the process and building capacity.

⁴ *Convenor's note:* It is acknowledged that not all participants were in full agreement with all the arrangements. It is anticipated that it will take several Dialogues to ensure an effective and generally accepted processes are in place.

- iii. Consideration should also be given to regional or international organisations that are working on CBFM within countries or territories, not just national groups.
 - iv. Consideration should be given to the option of rotating the role of convenor and vice-convenor between the three sub-regions of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia and, that within each region, alphabetical rotation be encouraged.
- f. **Selection of participants.**
- i. The number of people involved in preparatory consultations should be increased.
 - ii. The national selection process would be led by CSO/NSAs, being sensitive to domestic considerations such as geography and other factors.
 - iii. Effective community representation is needed through representatives who are engaged in CBF and can speak confidently on behalf of their constituents.
- g. **Reporting.**
- i. Cbfd outcomes should be reported back, in simple language, to CSOs/NSAs and community groups between the RTMCFA, Heads of Fisheries and RFMM.
 - ii. The Convenor and Vice-convenor will accompany the Chair of the RTMCFA to report to Heads of Fisheries and will be present at the time the HoF outcomes document to the RFMM is adopted by HoF.
 - iii. There is a need to provide for CSO/NSA minority/majority views when consensus is difficult to achieve.

11. The Cbfd agreed on the following on the Terms of Reference:

- a. The Cbfd *acknowledged* development of the revised provisional Terms of Reference included at Appendix 1.
- b. The Cbfd CSO/NSA participants will provide feedback on the revised provisional Terms of Reference within 4 weeks. The final provisional Terms of Reference will be used to prepare for and run the next Cbfd in late 2022.

Session 2: Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling-up CBFM

12. SPC presented the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up CBFM endorsed by the 2nd Regional Fisheries Ministers' Meeting in August 2021 to the Cbfd participants.

13. In an effort to contribute to the implementation of the Framework for Action, the Cbfd:

- I. *Noted* that the endorsed Framework for Action is a broad regional framework that provides guidance in implementing the scaling up of CBFM that supports and empowers local communities; and
- II. *Discussed* how Non-State Actors regional or national programmes contribute and/or may further align to achieving the outcomes in the Framework for Action.

14. The Cbfd and other RTMCFA participants *highlighted* broader activities being implemented to support the implementation of the Framework for Action and *raised* some key needs to support / strengthen future implementation. Key needs include:
- a. Evidenced-based management information to support communities;
 - b. Government support in developing national and subnational CBFM scaling-up strategies to guide CBFM implementation in each PICT;
 - c. Government and donors funding support to sustain CBFM programmes at national and subnational levels;
 - d. CBFM capacity building at national and subnational level;
 - e. Strengthening of legal frameworks and MCS&E to support implementation and scaling-up of CBFM.

*Specific outcomes and key recommendations from the Cbfd for the 14th SPC
Heads of Fisheries meeting*

15. The Cbfd agreed that the revised provisional Terms of Reference included in Appendix 1 will be used to prepare and run the next Cbfd in 2022.

Appendix 1:

[Provisional] Terms of Reference – Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

The Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA) includes a standing agenda item that establishes a dialogue for members inclusive of civil society organizations (CSO) and other Non-State Actors (NSA) that are engaged in community-based coastal fisheries (CBF).

Purpose: The purpose of the CBF Dialogue is to provide the CSO/NSA community engaged in CBF and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management with an opportunity to exchange information, advice and key needs through the RTMCFA, to Heads of Fisheries to assist with informing Leaders on priority issues associated with the sustainable use and management of coastal fisheries resources. It is also to provide an opportunity to share experience 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.

Discussion supported by this dialogue will focus on issues of common regional significance to community-driven coastal fisheries generally.

Time assignment: The CBF Dialogue will occupy eight consecutive meeting sessions across two days or, in the event the RTMCFA is less than a 5-day meeting, 40% of the total time available for the RTMCFA. For virtual RTMCFA of less than 5 days, the time allocation may need to be adjusted, but will not be less than 1 full day's sessions.

Convening: The CBF Dialogue will be convened by a representative from the CSO/NSA community selected utilising the process described below.

FAME will provide administrative support to the process to select a convenor and a vice-convenor. The process will be undertaken in consultation with the chair of forthcoming RTMCFAs.

A convenor will serve in that role for one RTMCFA meeting.⁵

The convenor of the CBF Dialogue will also accompany the Chair of that RTMCFA to the following HoF where the RTMCFA Report will be presented and discussed.

A vice-convenor will serve in that role at one RTMCFA meeting. The vice-convenor may assume the role of convenor at the following RTMCFA.

Process for the selection of convenor and vice-convenor:

The selection process for a convenor and for a vice-convenor for RTMCFAs will commence immediately after RTMCFA4. The selection process may broadly involve:

- a. FAME establishing and maintaining a register or list of affiliations and contact details for CSOs and other NSAs associated with CBF initiatives among PICTs to assist with communications;

⁵ This will mean that the convenor will serve as vice-convenor for the CBF Dialogue at their first RTMCFA/CBFD and convenor for their second.

- b. national CSOs and other NSAs will be encouraged to select a focal point for communications with FAME. SPC is unlikely to have financial resources to assist with the support of this role but, with the appointment of an SPC CBF Adviser, FAME will be in a position to advise on logistical and other elements of a national coordinating role;
- c. at least six (6) months in advance of RTMCFA5, utilising the FAME-maintained contact list, FAME will issue an invitation to representatives of CSOs/NSAs across all PICTs to formally nominate candidates for convenor and candidates for a vice-convenor for the CBF Dialogue in RTMCFA5 to FAME;
- d. at least three (3) months prior to RTMCFA5, FAME will provide a summary of the CBF experience and background and a statement of interest from the candidates nominated to assume the roles of convenor and vice-convenor for the CBF Dialogue to all official and technical contacts and CSOs and other NSAs representatives registered with FAME;
- e. CSO and other NSA representatives will be invited to propose their preferred candidate, with responses required at least eight (8) weeks prior to RTMCFA5. FAME will review the responses received and advise the successful candidate for each position; and
- f. FAME will engage the selected convenor and vice-convenor in preparations for RTMCFA5.

It is proposed that the vice-convenor for RTMCFA5 assume responsibilities for convenor of RTMCFA6 at the conclusion of RTMCFA5.

If the vice-convenor accepts the nomination to convenor, the selection of a new vice-convenor would commence six (6) months in advance of RTMCFA6 applying the process described at c. to f above. If the vice-convenor declines the opportunity, the process described in c. to f. would apply to the selection of both a new convenor and a new vice-convenor.

Unless there are no alternatives, the convenor, the vice-convenor and the chair of the RTMCFA should be from different PICTs. It also is recommended that the role of convenor and vice-convenor be rotated around the three sub-regions of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia and, that within each region, alphabetical rotation be encouraged.

The selection process will also promote gender balance with the positions of convenor and vice-convenor.

Technical Advisory Group

A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) will be convened to support administrative processes for the CBF Dialogue facilitated by FAME.

The TAG will include the Convenor, Vice-convenor, FAME representatives and representatives from the CSO/NSA community engaged in CBF.

One CSO/NSA community representative will be selected from Polynesia, one from Melanesia and one from Micronesia.

The TAG will be convened and co-chaired by a representative from FAME, a CSO/NSA representative from a different sub-region to the Convenor and Vice-Convenor, so all three sub-regions are represented.

The role of the TAG will be to:

- assist with the development of the agenda for the next CBF Dialogue,
- identify potential participants, and
- advise on engagement and reporting actions to support the CBF Dialogue.

The same process for the selection of a convenor and a vice-convenor, including time frames, will be applied to TAG participation.

TAG CSO/NSA representatives will serve for a period of up to three (3) years.

Role of the convenor: The responsibility of the convenor, with support from the vice-convenor, includes to:

- liaise with the chair of the RTMCFA and FAME staff on the development of the provisional agenda and associated schedule for the CBF Dialogue session in the forthcoming RTMCFA;
- support responsible FAME staff and CSO/NSA representatives on the selection of participants;
- work with FAME staff to identify resource personnel/subject matter experts/presenters to support the CBF Dialogue in the RTMCFA;
- monitor outcomes from the RTMCFA and HoF that directly relate to the mandate of the CBF Dialogue for possible future consideration and provision of advice;
- liaise with FAME staff on the preparation and timely circulation of CBF Dialogue resource materials (such as working and information papers);
- convene the CBF Dialogue in the RTMCFA;
- present the report, advice and recommendations of the CBF Dialogue to the RTMCFA;
- liaise with the chair of the RTMCFA and FAME staff on the CBF Dialogue report by the RTMCFA to HoF;
- participate in the HoF in support of the chair of the RTMCFA to present the RTMCFA report and recommendations; and
- provide the vice-convenor with a summary of the outcomes of the HoF meeting following the presentation of the RTMCFA report.

Role of vice-convenor: The role of a vice-convenor will include:

- providing support to the convenor in all aspects of preparing for the next CBF Dialogue in the RTMCFA including:
 - a. liaising with key stakeholders;
 - b. identifying potential participants;
 - c. formulating the draft agenda;

- d. drafting and reviewing meeting documents;
- e. facilitating small group brainstorming sessions; and
- g. assuming the role of convenor in the event the convenor is not available.

Unless there are no alternatives, the convenor, the vice-convenor and the chair of the RTMCFA will be from different PICTs, and the roles rotated between the three sub-regions of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia.

The selection process will promote gender balance with the positions of convenor and vice-convenor.

SPC FAME is encouraged to secure financial support for convenors and vice-convenors and CSO/NSA TAG members.

In an endeavour to optimise efficiency, maintain transparency and engender confidence, the selection process for convenor and vice-convenor may be refined from time to time.

Participation: Participation in the CBF Dialogue will be **led** by representatives of regional and national community groups (civil society organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actors (NSAs)) actively engaged in CBF consistent with the purpose of the CBF Dialogue (above)⁶.

Participation is **open** to representatives of SPC member governments. Representatives from the donor and development assistance community will be invited to observe the dialogue.

Representatives of the CSO/NSAO community will be invited to sit at the main table during in-person CBF Dialogue sessions.

Process for the selection of participants:

Participation in the CBF Dialogue, whether in-person or virtually, will be supported by a transparent and equitable selection or nomination process that includes:

- a. opportunities for participation and engagement that is open to all CSO/NSAs that fit the criteria;
- b. an endeavour to secure representation from each PICT;
- c. an invitation issued by FAME at least four (5) months in advance of the next RTMCFA for CSO/NSAs to nominate their representative(s) for the CBF Dialogue at that RTMCFA. A deadline will be imposed for a response;
- d. CSO/NSA focal points will coordinate the selection process at the national level and submit nomination(s) to FAME no later than twelve (12) weeks in advance of the RTMCFA;

⁶ A “Civil Society Organisation” (CSO) is a group of people that operates in the community in a way that is distinct from both government and business.” Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_society_organization)

“A Non-State Actor (NSA) is a legal entity that represents the interests of civil society including the private sector, academia and the media. NSAs are not established of, nor do they belong to, a structure or institution of the state.” PacificIslands Forum (<https://www.forumsec.org/civil-society-4/>)

- e. FAME, in consultation with CSO/NSA representatives, may develop criteria for guiding representative selection from nominations received. Nominations may be assessed against such criteria;
- f. FAME and nominated CSO/NSA representatives will assess nominations against agreed criteria and select participants to fill specific representative roles (i.e. at least one representative from each PICT);
- g. to promote equity and regional representativeness, numbers of representatives from specific interest groups may be offered limited places;
- h. selected nominations and their affiliate CSO/NSA will be advised by FAME at least eight (8)⁷ weeks in advance of the RTMCFA regarding their participation;
- i. CSO/NSA nominations for participation in the CBF Dialogue do not need to be approved by government; and
- j. SPC official contacts will be kept informed of CBF CSO/NSA engagement arrangements for the RTMCFA and they will be notified of the outcomes of nominations.

SPC FAME and the CSO/NSA community will widely publicise the nomination and selection process for NSA/CSO participation for the CBF Dialogue session in the RTMCFA.

SPC FAME is encouraged to secure financial support for national focal points to support their engagement in this process.

Report: At the conclusion of the CBF Dialogue, the convenor will present a summary of key outcomes, advice, recommendations and requests agreed at the Dialogue to the RTMCFA. The report may reflect majority and minority views. Together with a summary of any issues arising during the subsequent RTMCFA discussion, this report will be incorporated into the report of the RTMCFA to be forwarded to HoF.

SPC FAME will provide support for the preparation and distribution of the Report, in an appropriate format, including to national and regional CSO/NSA and community groups.

Review: These ToR may be reviewed and revised by the CBF Dialogue from time to time.

Agenda: The 2-day CBF Dialogue may include a range of agenda topics. The convenor, vice-convenor and FAME will be responsible for preparing a Provisional Agenda. The Provisional Agenda will be circulated to SPC member administrations and the CSO/NSA constituency at least 90 days in advance of the next RTMCFA⁸.

Agenda topics, and the number of topics to be addressed, may change from one meeting to the next. Time allocations to each topic may also vary. Examples of candidate topics include:

⁷ At least eight weeks will allow time for the selected nominees to prepare for the dialogue.

⁸ This will provide adequate time for the identification and selection of appropriate resource personnel and participants with relevant experience to prepare to engage in the agenda items proposed for the Dialogue.

- **Progress on implementing the Pacific Framework for Action on scaling up CBFM: 2021-2025**
The Framework for Action has been approved by the 13th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting and endorsed by the 2nd Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting, and is recognised as providing guidance to PICTs to assist in the sustainable management of coastal fisheries from the CBFM perspective. The CBF Dialogue could: review the progress on implementing the Framework for Action; support mobilising regional coordination of CBFM; contribute to regional coordination on the M&E of the Framework for Action; and consider means to improve/strengthen national level coordination between members and local CSO/NSA in implementing CBF programmes/projects in-country.
- **Lessons learned from CBF initiatives**
Experience and lessons learned in [x] community-based fisheries initiatives. Presentations under this item will describe: the context in which the initiative was implemented, a summary of threats to coastal fisheries resources that were identified to be addressed through the initiative, responses including achievements and challenges, and on-going needs. The Meeting will summarise the outcomes of discussion with a focus on issues arising of potential regional application and benefit. Particularly attention will be given to experience with scaling up initiatives for wider implementation.
- **Capacity building gaps and needs**
This item could include presentations from practitioners, including from national fisheries administrations and NSA/CSO representatives, that profile capacity building needs, responses and outcomes. The Meeting could discuss the development of capacity in CBF and identify priorities for on-going capacity building.
- **Partnerships and relationships**
Presentations from practitioners, including from national fisheries administrations and CBO representatives, to describe the process, and corresponding outcomes, associated with establishing partnerships and relationships. The dialogue could discuss key features of relationships and partnerships that are successful in addressing threats to coastal fisheries and which establish enduring outcomes for community-based fisheries.
- **Supporting sustainable livelihoods**
The CBF Dialogue could receive presentations from [x] community-based fisheries initiatives that addressed issues relating to the promotion of sustainable livelihoods.
- **Measuring success and addressing challenges**
Each session will discuss measures of success for CBF initiatives in terms of social, economic and ecological outcomes. What makes, and what breaks, CBF initiatives?
- **Sustainable financing**
Given the emerging interest and activities at the provincial level/landscape/seascape level, financing and success in Micronesia, for example, presentation on how SF is unfolding and what this means to communities will be discussed.
- **Gender and human rights-based approach**
The CBF Dialogue will discuss CBF-related issues relating to human rights-based approach, the participation of marginalised groups and gender-related considerations. Particular consideration will be devoted to successes and challenges associated with the meaningful engagement of these marginalised groups in CBF initiatives.