

COASTAL FISHERY REPORT CARD 2022



Image: ©Baptiste Jaugeon

Introduction

The *Coastal Fishery Report Card* provides annual regional reporting on the current status of Pacific coastal fisheries in relation to the goals, indicators and strategies adopted by Pacific Leaders in both the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries and A New Song for Coastal Fisheries Strategy. This is the fifth Report Card produced since first initiated in 2015. It provides a snapshot to enable fisheries stakeholders and political leaders to monitor progress on implementing regional commitments relating to Coastal Fisheries

Context

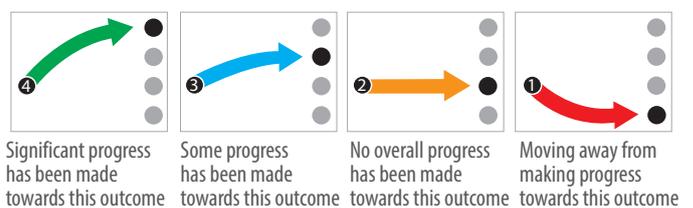
There are over 30,000 islands scattered across the Pacific Ocean, inhabited by over 10 million people. These islands are divided among 22 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) characterised by vast areas of ocean much greater than their land area. Coastal fisheries are fundamental to food security and livelihoods across the region, representing significant economic, social and cultural benefits for communities. The region has extensive coral reefs, consisting of 70 coral genera, over 4,000 fish/invertebrate species and 30 mangrove species. These coastal resources are under increasing threat and in many places either fully- or over-exploited.

Method used to compile card information

The intentional alignment between the Regional Roadmap and *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries Strategy* has enabled one single monitoring mechanism for both commitments. The indicators utilised in the Report Card were identified in consultation with partners and endorsed by the 10th SPC Heads of Fisheries and the 102nd FFC Officials Meeting.

Given the nature of coastal fisheries, reporting on progress itself remains a key challenge in implementing and monitoring regional commitments. Limitations in data availability, resource constraints, data variability and validation mean there is a lack of data for most outcome areas.

Information gaps are noted in the Report Card with a question mark symbol. For outcomes where progress has been noted the following ranges have been used:



Goal 1 – Empowerment



Informed, empowered coastal communities with clearly defined user-rights



User rights defined in 15 PICTs

User rights and tenure systems in PICTs are most commonly recognised through constitutional arrangements, or national or sub-national legislation such as Island/Village Councils Acts, Provincial Acts or Island State Acts.



Access rights & empowerment

The ability of rights holders to claim / control the use of their rights is unknown at the regional level, as is level of community awareness and community action to manage coastal resources.



- Defined user-rights
- Not defined
- Uncertain

Adequate and relevant information to inform management and policy



Ratio of extension officers to fishing households

The role of fisheries extension officers is varied, but commonly includes dissemination of information, development activities and providing advice to communities. Data from eight PICTs showed a total ratio of one extension officer to 658 households participating in fisheries.



Extent to which information informs management & policy

The extent to which coastal fisheries management measures are informed by scientific evidence across the region is unknown at this time, as is the adequacy and accessibility of information being provided to communities.

Recognition of, and strong political commitment and support for, coastal fisheries management at a national and sub-national scale



Increasing national resource allocation

The governments' financial commitment to coastal fisheries as a proportion of the total national budget increased* from 0.2% in 2017 from 5 PICTs to 0.27% in 2022 from 17 PICTs (range 0.05% to 2.6%, n = 17 PICTs).

The proportion of fisheries budgets allocated to coastal fisheries increased from 34% in 2017 to 36% in 2022 (range 0.6% to 74%, n = 17).

The proportion of fisheries staff working in coastal fisheries is 42% (range 10% to 91%, n = 17).

Increasing regional commitment

In 2016 Pacific Leaders agreed to expand "fisheries" to include coastal fisheries. In the 2020 Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting, the ministers endorse the proposed mechanism for increasing the engagement of non-state actors in the regional coastal fisheries management dialogue.



Re-focused fisheries agencies that are transparent, accountable, and adequately resourced, supporting coastal fisheries management and sustainable development, underpinned by CEA FM



17 PICTs

annually publish financial statements for their national fisheries budget.



USD 43

is the total coastal fisheries' government budget per household participating in fisheries across 14 PICTs (total sum).



13 PICTs

have a current national coastal fisheries roadmap or strategy in place.



* Note: There is no evidence to conclude that proportion of increase in overall national allocation to coastal fisheries included recurrent budget and staff to support coastal fisheries management underpinned by community-based fisheries management.

Goal 2 – Resilience



Strong and up-to-date management policy, legislation and planning



14 PICTs

have enacted new coastal fisheries management legislation since 2015.



13 PICTs

have current coastal fisheries management policies. Ten have policies in need of drafting or revision.



15 PICTs

have evidence of monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement of coastal fisheries management measures.

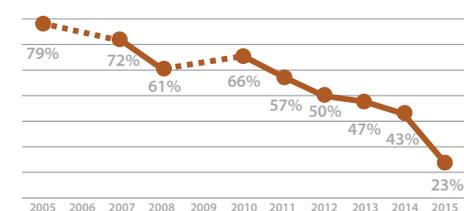


Effective collaboration and coordination between stakeholders and key sectors of influence



Projects implemented in partnership

Marine and coastal projects implemented in partnership (i.e. more than 1 agency) has reduced over time:



* Source: msp.csiro.au Notes: Project start year. Insufficient data for 2006 & 2009



Level of effectiveness of partnerships

Three PICTs reported increased effectiveness in partnerships, collaboration, and coordination with NGOs, CSOs, Non-state actors and other stakeholders.

More equitable access to benefits and decision-making within communities, including women, youth and marginalised groups

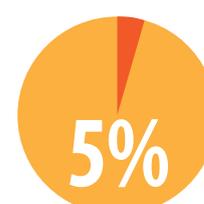
BENEFITS



of households participate in fishing
Median across PICTs, range 6% to 75% (n = 14)



of households sell fish
Median across PICTs, range 3% to 30% (n = 14)



of the labour force is in fisheries
Median across PICTs, range 0% to 23% (n = 14)

SHARING



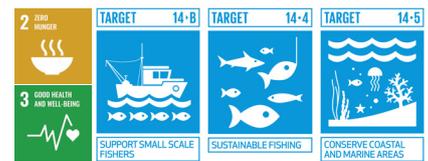
Access to benefits and decision-making relating to household fishing and selling fish among women, young people and marginalised groups is unknown from HIES data



Women's participation in fisheries is underestimated by HIES, which indicates that women are only 6% of the formal fisheries labour force, with one country estimate being that no women are employed in fisheries (range 0% to 12%).

Data source: Above data is based on current HIES available for 14 PICTs (2012–2020). The median value across the PICTs is used.

Goal 3 – Livelihoods & food security



Keep harvests within sustainable limits and ensure coastal developments do not damage fish habitats



Key indicatives species

Giant clams: Generally considered overfished region-wide.

Sea cucumbers: While most sea cucumber fisheries are now closed due to overfishing, some PICTs have opened their fisheries in this reporting period.



Finfish indicator species: Monitoring of five indicator species (*Naso lituratus*, *Naso unicornis*, *Lutjanus gibbus*, *Lethrinus obsoletus* and *Ctenochaetus striatus*) indicate mixed results across seven regional sites, where some locations show overexploitation, others appropriate exploitation, with most species data deficient with sites not assessed.



Reefs and ecosystems

In 2011, 48% of reefs in the Pacific were considered threatened (Source: Chin et al. 2011). Since then, reefs in multiple PICTs have been severely affected by coral bleaching and tropical cyclones.



A case study in Solomon Islands found 5% of coastal villages/communities practice community-based fisheries management (Source: Govan et al. 2015).

Enhanced food security from sustainable fisheries, including the supply of tuna for domestic consumption



Per capita fresh fish consumption

of households consume fish or seafood weekly (median range 53% to 97%). Source: HIES data from 14 PICTs (2012–2020).

58 kg of fresh fish is consumed per person per annum (regional population weighted average, range 16 kg to 102 kg). Source: HIES data 14 PICTs (2012-2020).



Enhanced contribution to food security is unclear from available data, including food safety elements (i.e. levels fish poisoning and contaminants).

Diversify the supply of fish, primarily through nearshore fish aggregating devices (FADs) and sustainable aquaculture



Using HIES data, the locations used by fishing households were: inshore (77% of households), nearshore (47%), and offshore (29%). 2% of households indicated they used FADs (median from 11 PICTs).



6% of household food consumption expenditure is spent on marine products (median, range 2% to 10%, n = 14 PICTs HIES).

Data notes

For further information on the regional coastal fisheries indicators utilised in this Report Card, including data sources and how figures were calculated, contact terryo@spc.int. Data from HIES were available for 14 PICTs (Cook Islands, FSM, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati, RMI, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna). Figures presented are the median across these PICTs unless otherwise stated. Data from National Fisheries Offices on staff numbers and budget information were received from seven PICTs (Fiji, French Polynesia, PNG, Tonga, RMI, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna), with some missing data. The inclusion of data from additional PICTs each year means that figures are not directly comparable with previous Report Cards. It is hoped that in future Report Cards data coverage across PICTs and data quality will continue to improve. with previous Report Cards. It is hoped that in future Report Cards data coverage across PICTs and data quality will continue to improve.