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HoF11 outcomes

(27 March 2019)



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

11th SPC Heads of fisheries Meeting, 11–15 March 2019, Noumea, New Caledonia
11^e Conférence des Directeurs des pêches de la CPS, 11–15 mars 2019, Nouméa, Nouvelle-Calédonie



1. The 11th Heads of Fisheries (HoF) Meeting was held at SPC Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, from the 11th–13th March 2019, chaired by Dr Tu'ikolongahau Halafihi, Chief Executive Officer of Ministry of Fisheries, Kingdom of Tonga.
2. HoF is a regional meeting of the heads of SPC member country and territory fishery agencies, or their appointed deputies, covering the entire range of interests for which they have responsibility and on which the SPC Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) provides advice and assistance. The HoF meeting plays a unique role in providing strategic guidance to the Director's Office, the Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP) and the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) of FAME.
3. SPC acknowledges the financial support of the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for the 11th Heads of Fisheries (HoF) Meeting.
4. The following outcomes constitute the main points of consensus among delegates that the meeting felt necessary to document, to guide the management of the FAME work programme, to draw to the attention of other regional agencies and development partners, to signal agreement on issues that require attention by members themselves, and to inform the Forum Fisheries Committee, planned regional Forum Fisheries Ministers' meeting, SPC CRGA and the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting.
5. The meeting was officially opened by Cameron Diver, Deputy Director General, SPC. The agenda of the 11th HoF was adopted with no changes.

FAME results reporting 2017-2018

6. Heads of Fisheries:
 - a. Noted the results achieved by FAME in 2017 and 2018 as reported against the FAME Business Plan, as well as the results from the FAME Performance Review¹ and the actions taken to respond to review recommendations to ensure FAME's fitness for purpose into the future.
 - b. Thanked FAME for their transparency and commitment to ongoing improvement in responding to the FAME review and annual results reporting.
 - c. Called for: follow-up evaluation of in-country outcomes or impacts relating to FAME's capacity development activities (e.g. application of learning); further analysis of training data to better understand reasons behind imbalances by gender and by country/territory; and the inclusion of timeliness in responding to country requests to be considered by FAME in analysis of results / success.
 - d. Tasked SPC to explore various mechanisms to better prioritise country requests, including country service agreements, or similar models, and report to HoF12.

¹ CIRCA, 2017, 'Performance Review of the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division of SPC', Available online: <http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Get/7shzr>

- e. Supported revisions made to the FAME Business Plan as a result of feedback from HoF10 and the FAME Performance Review, and suggested further revisions be made to the FAME management arrangements diagram to further clarify treatment of regional strategies and the inputs of other regional organisations into FAME’s work.

Coastal fisheries and aquaculture

7. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. Recognised the importance of coastal fisheries and aquaculture to members, and generally endorsed the key existing CFP priorities, as well as the new directions proposed in WP5.
- b. Identified the following areas of priority for coastal fisheries in PICTs to help guide CFP work priorities:
 - i. Empowering communities; community-based fisheries management.
 - ii. Information, knowledge and data collection, storage, analysis and sharing.
 - iii. Evidence-based management.
 - iv. Regionally important cross-cutting issues.
 - v. Economic analyses.
 - vi. Marine-based livelihood initiatives.
- c. Recognised that requests to CFP from Members should be national priorities in support of national strategies or plans.
- d. Recognised the need for more standardised survey designs and related data as well as ongoing support around developing survey tools, data collection, storage and analysis, but noted the limitations for ongoing CFP support for isolated in-country databases.
- e. Urged CFP to continue its efforts to strengthen and improve coastal fisheries and aquaculture science.
- f. Urged CFP to explore opportunities for strengthening its capacity in the area of marine-based livelihoods including post-harvest and value-adding.
- g. Supported the commitment made by SPC to re-evaluate the provision of FAD-related support within the context of the broader sustainable livelihoods services to Members.
- h. Recommended CFP provide increased support for developing national-level FAD programmes and provide ‘train-the-trainers’ capacity building based on appropriate ‘FAD best-practice’ knowledge and experience.

- i. Noted the need for a regional strategy for aquatic biosecurity, and tasked SPC to develop a draft strategy inter-sessionally, in consultation with members, and present the outcomes to HoF12.

Oceanic fisheries

8. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. Generally endorsed the key existing OFP priorities, as well as the new directions proposed in WP5. Additionally, HoF11 expressed its appreciation for the quality of OFP's work in Pacific tuna fisheries science.
- b. Welcomed the progress made by OFP in implementing TUFMAN2, DORADO Reporting and associated e-reporting platforms. HoF11 requested that the OFP develop a web-based reporting system that provides national fisheries agencies with more flexibility to select from a range of data fields and data aggregation levels from different types of tuna fishery data, taking into account user-based requirements (similar to the philosophy used in the legacy CES software).
- c. Also welcomed the important progress made in the roll-out of the logsheet e-reporting platform *OnBoard* in the southern longline fishery, and indicated that the development and roll-out of associated e-reporting software for port sampling (*OnShore*) and observers (*OLLO*) is a key priority.
- d. Recognised the evolution of OFP's role in the Pacific Islands Regional Fisheries Observer (PIRFO) programme, from direct delivery of observer training to an increased focus on trainer development, training standards, certification and quality assurance. HoF11 requested that SPC work with national training institutions to enable those institutions to play a stronger role in observer training delivery. HoF11 also requested that SPC provide training for French-speaking observer trainers, as well as French translations of PIRFO teaching documents.
- e. Endorsed the further development of Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (PMSB), building on the WCPFC Tuna Tissue Bank as currently implemented by SPC. This development should expand the coverage of species to important coastal, nearshore pelagic and deep bottom species that are important for food security and livelihoods in PICTs, to begin to address important knowledge gaps in the biology of these species, and to provide a reference against which to monitor future environmental change. The PMSB should also provide research opportunities for Pacific Island scientists pursuing postgraduate studies.
- f. Endorsed research aimed at better understanding the stock structure of tuna in the Pacific, noting the important implications that this could have on stock assessments, management strategies and the allocation of fishing rights/opportunities.
- g. Requested that OFP continue to support PICTs in their use of video-based e-monitoring for longline fisheries. This support should include the provision of scientific advice and technical support for the development of EM policy and

implementation, including data standards, sub-sampling for data review and uploading of data into data systems to support national management.

- h. Noted the progress made by OFF, in collaboration with the PNA, in the analysis of data on drifting fish aggregation devices (dFADs), and requested that future work on these data include an evaluation of the impacts of increased dFAD use and dFAD density on the availability of tuna in nearshore areas.
- i. Noted with concern the emerging issue of environmental contamination in fisheries resources (micro/nano-plastics, methyl mercury, cadmium, polychlorinated biphenyls, and others) and encouraged SPC to work with competent agencies in better understanding the effects of such contaminants on the marine environment, fish populations and human health. HoF11 noted this work would be supported by the expanded PMSB.
- j. Requested that work on understanding the effects of environmental variation, including climate change, on the distribution and abundance of tuna stocks in the Pacific continue, be further developed to cover other species of importance, particularly those important for food security, and be made available to members to inform management decision making.

Capacity building

9. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. Recognised the important role that FAME plays in capacity development in PICT fisheries agencies. HoF11 requested that FAME continue to provide capacity development opportunities to PICT fisheries personnel through specific training workshops, short-term attachments, the Pacific Islands Fisheries Professional programme and in-country training events. HoF11 also requested an increased focus on 'train-the-trainers', with the aim to facilitate 'south-south' exchanges that link Members.

Gender and social inclusion

10. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. Welcomed the launch of the first edition of the *Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in small-scale fisheries and aquaculture* and its role in further enhancing the visibility of women in this sector. HOF11 recognised the efforts of all contributors, and acknowledged FAME's continued work in this area including the upcoming second edition with additional modules.
- b. Recognised that the Handbook could be useful for internal policies and human resources, as well as designing fisheries management and aquaculture activities, and noted that building awareness is an important first step and that incremental use over time is more likely than fast and sudden change.

- c. Suggested entry points for training, such as discussion on the ways in which gender equity and social inclusion are relevant for coastal fisheries management and aquaculture (or not) and understanding that gender equity does not mean focusing on women but is about improving outcomes for everyone.
- d. Requested that in revising the Handbook it is important to make sure all PICTs be included to the extent possible, and suggested training materials could include facilitated discussions on different perspectives on gender – e.g. differences between urban and rural areas.
- e. Considered that it is vital for any work in this area to be culturally appropriate and acknowledge existing cultural structures.

Climate change and fisheries

11. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. Welcomed the announcement of SPC's accreditation by the Board of the Global Climate Fund (GCF) at their meeting on 26-28 February 2019, whereby SPC is accredited to engage with the GCF and to submit climate change adaptation and mitigation projects of small size and up to Environmental and Social risk level B (medium), on behalf of its member countries.
- b. Requested SPC FAME to keep Members informed as SPC supports its Member countries in preparing and submitting fisheries-related climate projects to the GCF.
- c. Recognised the progress on the development of the official Concept Note to GCF for the regional tuna adaptation project with Conservation International as the Accredited Entity, SPC and FFA as Executing Entities, and FAO as an implementing partner (as discussed at HoF10).
 - i. Noted that the proposed regional tuna adaptation project could provide some mechanisms for small-scale and industrial tuna fisheries to adapt to climate change, in line with recommendations made in the comprehensive vulnerability assessment conducted by SPC.
 - ii. Noted the eight countries involved directly in the proposal will continue to champion the project and request that their national designated authorities include the project in their respective GCF country programmes for the benefit of the region.

Sea cucumber fisheries

12. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. Encourage consultations on the option of Pacific Island countries forming a united position on the proposed CITES listing of sea cucumbers species such as blackteat (*Holothuria whitmaei*) and whiteteat (*Holothuria fuscogilva*).

- b. Explore the potential for providing regional support for PICTs to meet the non-detriment findings (NDF) requirements of CITES to minimise administrative burden on PICTs .
- c. Recommend that a regional approach to MCS be developed that draws upon common governance practices to optimise the utilisation of fisheries resources, such as sharing a blacklist of buyers and exporters, methods of IUU, and surveillance strategies.
- d. Support the promotion of regional intelligence-sharing about sea cucumber value, pricing and markets across PICTs. This information can be publicised and shared annually via the SPC BDM Information Bulletin.
- e. Recommend that NDFs and sea cucumber catch quotas be established under resource management plans.
- f. Urges National Authorities (Fisheries and Environment) to establish management measures consistent with CITES obligations.

Harmonised collection of fisheries data

13. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. Adopted the report of the 11th Tuna Fishery Data Collection Committee (DCC11).
- b. In relation to the Coastal Fisheries Report card:
 - i. Agreed that in-country focal points should be established to facilitate data collection for the annual Coastal Fisheries Report Card. Countries are requested are to clarify who these focal points are and inform SPC. Focal points would include the person who endorses the data going out and the person who will compile data to send. HoF11 participants will also be copied in 2019 to follow through with their relevant Ministries.
 - ii. Suggested national level report cards would serve national level needs, with these having indicators that align to country specific needs and goals, rather than reporting everything. These national report cards would be the responsibility of the country and forwarded to input to the regional report card.
 - iii. Suggested SPC audit what systems are in place at the national level relating to Report Card data, including approval processes within countries to provide data from countries.
- c. In relation to re-booting approaches to data poor fisheries:
 - i. Agreed that data collection is an area that needs to be reviewed with a view to simplifying processes. While countries will still have specific requirements, there are nevertheless generalities in core data to be collected that will favour regional agreement and cooperation.

- ii. Recommended investigation of e-data possibilities and capabilities as a natural complement to simplifying data collection and reporting. Application of innovative approaches like e-data should be looked at more generally as a way to boost capacity.
- iii. Recommended a review of national-level survey mechanisms such as the Household Income and Expenditure Surveys (HIES) to see how they can be better utilised to get national-level data on fisheries.

Heads of Fisheries Meeting – Purpose, priorities and direction

14. Heads of Fisheries:

- a. Agreed that the Heads of Fisheries Meeting is the only regional forum for discussion and priority-setting for coastal fisheries and aquaculture; for the joint consideration of oceanic and coastal fisheries; and where all SPC Members participate.
- b. Recommended that the HoF Meeting continue to focus on guiding FAME's strategic direction and work-plan priorities, to be reflected in SPC FAME Business Plan updates, and consider strategic regional policy and governance issues to be transmitted to the newly established Regional Fisheries Ministers' meeting and, where appropriate, to the PIF Leaders' meetings.
- c. Agreed that coastal fisheries and aquaculture technical issues be dealt with by the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries (RTMCF), with its outcomes forwarded to the HoF Meeting for consideration.
- d. Agreed that Figure 1 is an appropriate indicative schematic of information flow and advice for the consideration of coastal fisheries issues at the regional level.
- e. Reached a consensus that:
 - i. The HoF Meeting be convened annually at SPC Headquarters, on a two-year trial basis. The HoF agreed that this recommendation should be examined by CRGA, taking into account the additional financial commitment and human resources required by the Secretariat to manage an annual HoF meeting.
 - ii. The HoF Meeting duration can be tailored to the meeting agenda, but should be no more than three days. The meeting agenda should focus on decision points, and would normally include consideration of FAME results and future priorities, regional coastal fisheries governance and policy matters, and emerging issues of concern.
 - iii. March is the most appropriate month to hold the HoF Meeting to facilitate outcomes being transmitted, where appropriate, to the newly established Regional Fisheries Ministers' meeting for consideration.

- f. Requested that SPC raise the issues of reporting lines and member government and other representation on the Coastal Fisheries Working Group (CFWG) at the next CFWG meeting.²
- g. Agreed that SPC FAME will utilise the guidance provided by the HoF breakout groups on the terms of reference for the proposed 'Regional Fisheries Ministers' meeting (Annex 1), and feed that into the recommendations being developed by the Officials, FFA, SPC and PIFS, for Ministers to consider at their 2019 meeting.

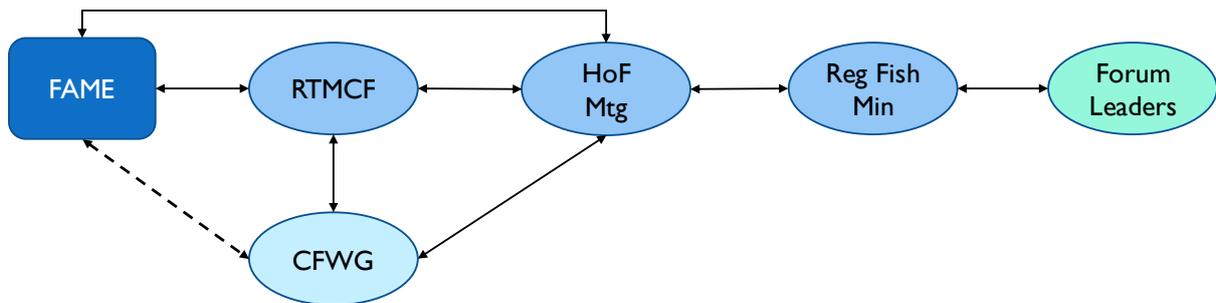


Figure 1. Indicative schematic of the regional flow of information and advice on coastal fisheries.

² The issue of the CFWG membership and reporting lines were raised and discussed in the 4th CFWG meeting (14 March 2019) immediately after HoF11. The CFWG agreed to undertake a review of the ToR, including membership. The CFWG also noted, however, that the CFWG was established at the request of HoF10, and the membership was reviewed and amended by the FFC Officials and endorsed by the FFC Ministerial Meeting.

Annex 1 – HoF11 discussion group feedback on Regional Fisheries Ministerial

Meeting content and focus³

- The following suggestions were provided on the overall meeting focus:
 - Issues having regional implications [groups 1,4,6], both coastal and oceanic
 - Specific issues that require Ministerial decision making / actions [4,5,6].
 - HOF outcomes that may need Ministerial clearance [4,5,6]
 - Broader fisheries issues [3,4,6], high level strategic thematic areas [5]
 - Raising the profile of coastal fisheries [multiple].
- Suggested specific content areas:
 - Report Cards - Coastal [2,4,5] and Oceanic [4]
 - Outcomes from HOF that need decisions at regional level [multiple] – e.g. BDM
 - Sea Cucumber [2,4,5]
 - Coastal fisheries data standardisation, strengthening [4,5]
 - BBNJ [4,6]
 - Issues involving both SPC or FFA – e.g. Blue Boat from the past, MCS [4,6]
 - Issues relating Blue Pacific engagement strategy (PIFS) [4]
 - Food security, climate change and livelihoods in fisheries [5]. Coastal fisheries links to overall health of countries [2]
 - MPAs [6]
 - Regional frameworks for implementation at the national level [2]
 - Coastal Fisheries Working Group (structure, governance and functions) [5]
 - Oceanic issues not covered elsewhere [3,6] – e.g. specific national issues [6]
 - Cross-cutting issues between coastal and oceanic fisheries [3]
 - Links to global fora that our countries are involved in (e.g. UN Ocean conferences, CITES) to get consensus on Pacific position for a more unified Pacific voice [4].

Additional points for TORs:

- Membership specified in TORs (i.e. Forum Sec Fisheries Ministers, i.e. inclusive of NC & FP?)
- Broader participation than FFC so need to clarify who chairs the meeting [3]
- Clarify relationship between Regional Ministerial and HOF [5,6]
- Compare TORs of Forum Economic Ministers meeting as an effective model [3]
- Clarify which CROPs are involved. SPC and FFA should control the agenda, agenda needs a prioritisation process [3]
- HOF11 representatives (SPC members) should get an opportunity to review and comment on the TORs [6].

Meeting preparation:

- Ministers Meeting will need good technical preparation – e.g. prepare draft papers [1,6]

³ The groups feedback was received from is indicated in square brackets

- If papers go out at the same time as FFC Ministerial there should not be a problem to go to Ministers without a full officials meeting in 2019 – perhaps there could be an hour at the end of FFC Officials meeting to go through what Ministers will see at the Ministerial [4]
- In order to make the meeting attractive for Ministers, the invitation should contain the agenda, key themes and the major decisions to be made [1]. Avoid packed agenda / too many topics [1].

Additional comments:

- Important that the meeting focuses on coastal issues and does not get taken over by oceans or maritime issues [2]
- Fisheries ministers must be able to link the strategic aspects defined at HOF with the more technical aspects - each minister should be accompanied by a technician [1]. If the Minister cannot participate, his or her representative must have the authority to make the required decisions [1].