

COASTAL FISHERY REPORT CARD 2020



Abemama Island, Kiribati - Pauline Bosselle, ©SPC

Introduction

The Coastal Fishery Report Card (the Report Card) provides annual regional reporting on the current status of Pacific coastal fisheries in relation to the goals, indicators and strategies that have been adopted by Pacific leaders from both the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries*¹ and *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries Strategy*². The Report Card, which was initiated in 2015 and first produced in 2017, provides a snapshot that will enable fisheries stakeholders and political leaders to monitor progress on the implementing of regional commitments that relate to coastal fisheries.

Context

There are over 30,000 islands scattered across the Pacific Ocean, which are inhabited by over 10 million people. These islands are divided among 22 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs), which are characterised by vast areas of ocean much greater than their land area. Coastal fisheries are fundamental to food security and livelihoods across the region, and represent significant economic, social and cultural benefits for communities. The region has extensive coral reefs that consist of 70 coral genera, over 4000 fish/invertebrate species and 30 mangrove species. These coastal resources are under increasing threat and, in many places, they are either fully- or over-exploited.

Method used to compile card information

The intentional alignment between the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries Strategy* has enabled one single monitoring mechanism for both commitments. The publication of the 2017 Report Card was the first time that a single reporting mechanism was adopted for coastal fisheries in the region.

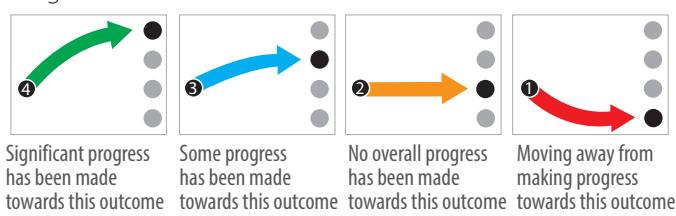
The indicators utilised in the Report Card were identified in consultation with partners, and feedback from the 10th SPC Heads of Fisheries and the 102nd FFC Officials Meeting.

Given the nature of coastal fisheries, reporting on progress itself remains a key challenge for implementing regional commitments. The limitations in data availability, resource constraints, data variability and validation mean that 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:



Abbreviations: CEA FM - community-based ecosystem approach to fisheries management; FFC – Forum Fisheries Committee; HIES – household income and expenditure survey; SPC – Pacific Community.

¹<http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/xnc9f>

²<http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/b8hvs>

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 council acts, provincial acts or island state acts.



Access rights and empowerment

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

Adequate and relevant information to inform management and policy makers



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 that participate in fisheries.



Extent to which information informs management and 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 that is being provided to communities.

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



National resource allocation

The median level of governments' financial commitment to coastal fisheries as a proportion of the total national budget was 0.3% (range 0.01% to 1.4%, n = 14 PICTs).

The median proportion of fisheries budgets allocated to coastal fisheries was 48% (range 15% to 100%, n = 20). The median proportion of fisheries staff working in coastal fisheries is 67% (range 12% to 100%, n = 18).

The average ratio of coastal fisheries staff members to households participating in fisheries was 1:354 (n = 8).



Increasing regional commitment

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

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



12 PICTs

reported that they annually publish financial statements for their national fisheries budget.

USD 43

is the total coastal fisheries' government budget per household that participate in fisheries across eight PICTs (total sum).

12 PICTs

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



Goal 2 – Resilience



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



7 PICTs

have enacted new coastal fisheries management legislation since 2015.



9 PICTs

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



14 PICTs

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

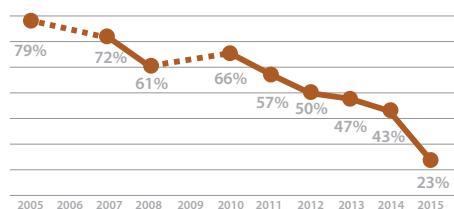


Effective collaboration and coordination between stakeholders and key sectors of influence



Projects implemented in partnership

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



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



Level of effectiveness of partnerships

The level of effectiveness of partnerships, collaboration and coordination is unknown.

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 12% to 80%



of households sell fish.
Median across PICTs, range 3% to 30%

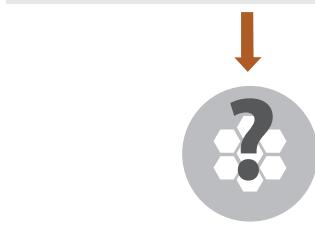


of the labour force is in fisheries.
Median across PICTs, range 1% to 21%

SHARING



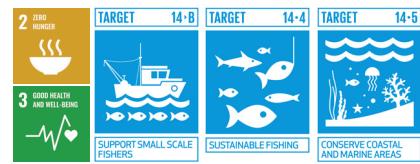
Access to benefits and decision-making relating to household fishing and selling fish among women, young people and marginalised groups is unknown from HIES data.



Women's participation in fisheries is underestimated by HIES, which indicates that women are only 8% of the formal fisheries labour force, with one country estimate being that no women are employed in fisheries (range 0–30%).

Data source: Above data are based on current HIES that were available for 12 PICTs. The median value across the PICTs is used.

Goal 3 – Livelihoods and food security



Value added to GDP from coastal catch

Melanesia USD 167,845,755

Polynesia USD 81,646,533

Micronesia USD 55,505,021

Total USD 304,997,309

Coastal catch (estimated commercial and subsistence) added over USD 300 million to GDP in 2014.³

This suggests that the value to the region of coastal catches is comparable with local offshore catch, which added USD 323 million, and income from foreign license fees, which were valued at USD 325 million in 2014.

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

Key indicator species



Giant clams:

Generally considered overfished region wide.

Sea cucumbers:

Most sea cucumber fisheries now closed due to overfishing.



Finfish indicator species:

Monitoring of five indicator species (*Naso lituratus*, *Naso unicornis*, *Lutjanus gibbus*, *Lethrinus oboletus* and *Ctenochaetus striatus*) indicated mixed results across seven regional sites, where some locations showed overexploitation, while others showed appropriate exploitation. Data on most species are deficient as sites are not assessed.



Reefs and ecosystems

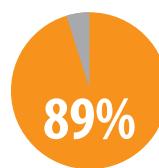
In 2011, 48% of reefs in the Pacific region were considered threatened.⁴ Since then, reefs in multiple PICTs have been severely affected by coral bleaching and tropical cyclones.



A case study in Solomon Islands found that 5% of coastal villages/communities practiced CEA FM.⁵

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

Per capita fresh fish consumption



89% of households consume fish or seafood weekly (median range 59% to 98%).

Source: HIES data from 10 PICTs (2010–2016)

37 kg of fresh fish is consumed per person per annum (regional population weighted average, range 16 kg to 102 kg).
Source: Older HIES data from 15 PICTs



Enhanced contribution to food security is unclear from available data, including food safety elements (i.e. levels of 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 as follows: inshore (66% of households), nearshore (62%), and offshore (33%). 6% of households reported using FADs (median values from seven PICTs).

7% of household food expenditure is on fish (median, range 2% to 8%, n = 10 PICTs, source: 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, please [contact Terry Opa \(terryo@spc.int\)](mailto:terryo@spc.int). Data from HIES were available for 10 PICTs (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau and Tuvalu). 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 13 PICTs in 2020 (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Palau, Pitcairn Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna), with some missing data. Earlier figures were used for other PICTs. The inclusion of data from additional PICTs each year means that figures are not directly comparable with previous Report Cards. It is hoped that data coverage across PICTs and data quality will continue to improve.

³ <http://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/pvyuo>

⁴ https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/24292/2/24292_Chin_et_al_2011_front_pgs.pdf

⁵ <http://bit.ly/budgetstudy2015>