

COASTAL FISHERY REPORT CARD 2021



Papua New Guinea - © Elodie Van Lierde

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 adopted by Pacific leaders in both the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and *A new song for coastal fisheries: The Noumea strategy*. The Report Card, which was initiated in 2015, provides a snapshot that enables fisheries stakeholders and political leaders to monitor progress on the implementing of regional commitments related 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 4000 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 Report Card information

The intentional alignment between the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and *A new song for coastal fisheries: The Noumea strategy* has enabled one single monitoring mechanism for both commitments. The 2017 Report Card was the first time a single reporting mechanism was adopted for coastal fisheries in the region.

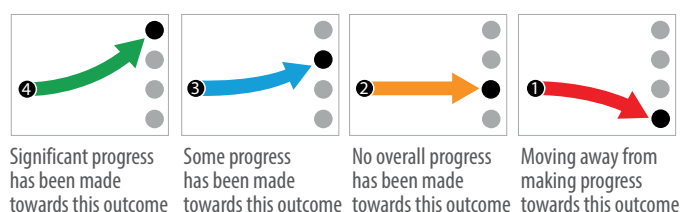
The indicators used in the Report Card were identified in consultation with partners and feedback from the 10th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting and the 102nd FFC Officials Meeting.

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.

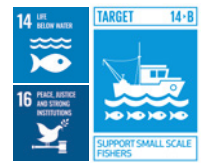
Information gaps are noted in the Report Card with a question mark symbol.



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 recognised through constitutional arrangements, or national or subnational legislation such as island/village councils 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 participating 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 being provided to communities.

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



National resource allocation

The median level of governments' financial commitment to coastal fisheries as a proportion of the total national budget was 0.2% (range 0.05% to 2.6%, n= 17 PICTs).

The median proportion of fisheries budgets allocated to coastal fisheries was 34% (range 0.6% to 97%, n= 17). The median proportion of fisheries staff working in coastal fisheries was 57% (range 10% to 91%, n= 17).

The average ratio of coastal fisheries staff members to households participating in fisheries was 1:354 (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 endorsed 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 CEAFM



16 PICTs

annually publish financial statements for their national fisheries budget.



USD 92

is the coastal fisheries' government budget per household participating in fisheries across 13 PICTs.



16 PICTs

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



Goal 2 – Resilience



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



14 PICTs

have enacted new coastal fisheries management legislation since 2015.



10 PICTs

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



13 PICTs

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

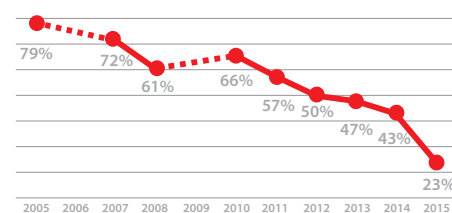


Effective collaboration and coordination between stakeholders and key sectors of influence



Projects implemented in partnership

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



* Source: <https://research.csiro.au/ncmi-idx/>
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

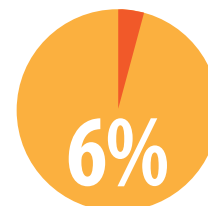
BENEFITS



of households participate in fishing. Median across PICTs, range 7% to 75% (n = 13)



of households sell fish. Median across PICTs, range 3% to 30% (n = 13)



of the labour force is in fisheries. Median across PICTs, range 1% to 23% (n = 13)

SHARING



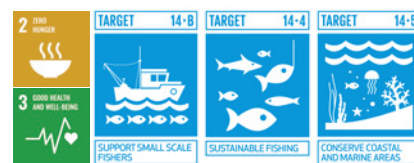
Access to benefits and decision-making relating to household fishing and selling fish among women, young people and marginalised groups is unknown from HIES data.



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

Data source: Above data are based on current HIES available for 13 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 (Gillett 2016). This suggests that the value to the region of coastal catches is comparable to 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 indicative species

Giant clams:

Generally considered overfished region wide.

Sea cucumbers:

While most sea cucumber fisheries are closed due to overfishing, four 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 over-exploitation, others appropriate exploitation, while data on most species are deficient as sites are not assessed.



Reefs and ecosystems

In 2011, 48% of reefs in the Pacific were considered threatened (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 practiced CEAQM (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 59% to 97%).

Source: HIES data from 13 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 from 13 PICTs (2012–2020).



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: inshore (76% of households), nearshore (51%), and offshore (31%). 4% of households indicated they used FADs (median from seven PICTs).



6% of household food expenditure is spent on fisheries (median, range 2% to 10%).

Source: HIES data from 13 PICTs (2012–2020).

Data notes

For further information on the regional coastal fisheries indicators used in this Report Card, including data sources and how figures were calculated, contact terryo@spc.int. Data from HIES were available for 13 PICTs (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu). Figures presented were 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, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Wallis and 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 data coverage across PICTs and data quality will continue to improve.