

## COASTAL FISHERY REPORT CARD 2023



Olal village, Ambrym Island, Vanuatu © Laszlo Mate

### 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 *A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries* and *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries*. The Report Card, launched in 2015, provides a snapshot enabling 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, divided among 22 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs), 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, 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 the Report Card

The intentional alignment between the *Regional Roadmap* and *A New Song for Coastal Fisheries* 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.

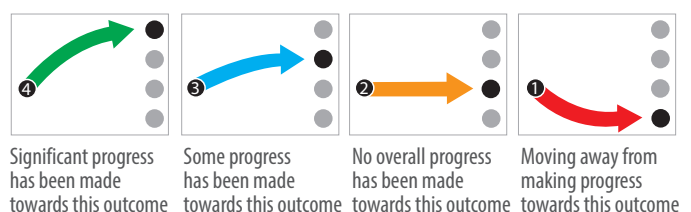
The indicators used in the Report Card were identified in consultation with partners and feedback from the 10th SPC Heads of Fisheries and the 102nd FFC Officials meetings.

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 means there is a lack of data for some outcome areas.

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



For outcomes where progress has been noted, the following icons have been used:



# Goal 1 – Empowerment

## Informed, empowered coastal communities with clearly defined user-rights



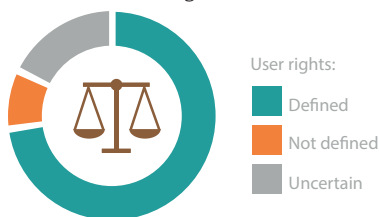
### User rights defined in 15 PICTs

User rights and tenure systems in PICTs are most recognised through constitutional arrangements, or national/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 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 roles of fisheries extension officers vary, but commonly include disseminating information, engaging in development activities and providing advice to communities. Data from eight PICTs showed an average 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 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 national and sub-national scales



### Increasing national resource allocations

Governments' financial commitments to coastal fisheries as a proportion of their total national budgets increased\* from 0.27% in 2022 from 5 PICTs to 0.37% in 2023 from 17 PICTs (range 0.05% to 2.6%, n=17 PICTs).

The proportion of fisheries budgets allocated to coastal fisheries increased from 36% in 2017 to 47% in 2022 (range 0.6% to 74%, n=17).

The proportion of fisheries staff working in coastal fisheries is 37% (range 10% to 91%, n=17).



### Increasing regional commitment

In 2016 Pacific Leaders agreed to expand "fisheries" to include coastal fisheries. At the 2020 Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting, 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 community-based fisheries management (CBFM)



**18** PICTs

annually publish financial statements for their national fisheries budgets.



**USD 43**

is the coastal fisheries' government budget per household participating in fisheries, across 13 PICTs (total sum).



**15** PICTs

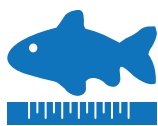
have a current national coastal fisheries roadmap or strategy in place.



\* Note: There is no evidence to conclude that the proportion of increase in overall national allocations to coastal fisheries included recurrent budget and staff to support coastal fisheries management underpinned by CBFM.

## Goal 2 – Resilience

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



**14** PICTs

have enacted new coastal fisheries management legislation since 2015 and eight have legislations in need of drafting.



**13** PICTs

have up-to-date and comprehensive coastal fisheries and aquaculture policies. Nine have policies in need of drafting or revision.



**16** PICTs

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

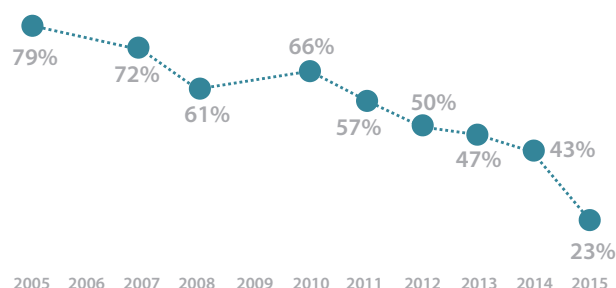


### Effective collaboration and coordination between stakeholders and key sectors of influence



#### Projects implemented in partnership

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



#### Level of effectiveness of partnerships

Five 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

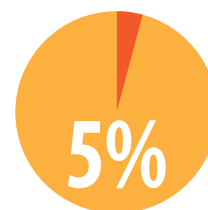
**BENEFITS**



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.

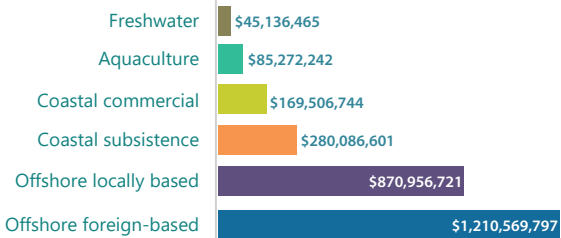


Women's participation in fisheries is underestimated by HIES, which indicates only 6% representation of the formal fisheries labour force, with one country estimate stating that no women are employed in fisheries (range 0% to 12%).

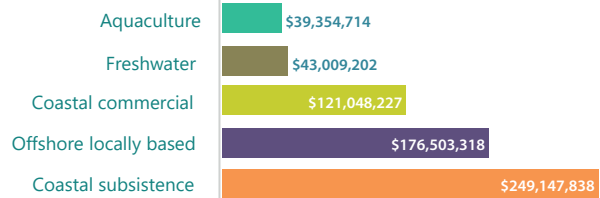
Data source: Above data are based on current HIES available for 14 PICTs. The median value across the PICTs is used.

# Goal 3 – Livelihoods and food security

## Value of production in 2021 (USD)



## Fishing contributions to the regional GDP in 2021 (USD)



Source: Gillett and Fong 2023. Benefish Study 4, 2021 data

## Diversify the supply of fish, primarily through FADs and sustainable aquaculture



### Fishing methods used by households

64% of the households use hook and line, 35% use net, 25% use gathering and 22% use spear. (Source: HIES from 7 PICTs).



### Location fished by fishing households

66% of households fish inshore, 62% nearshore, 33% offshore and 5% of households indicated that they use FADs. (Source: HIES from 7 PICTs).

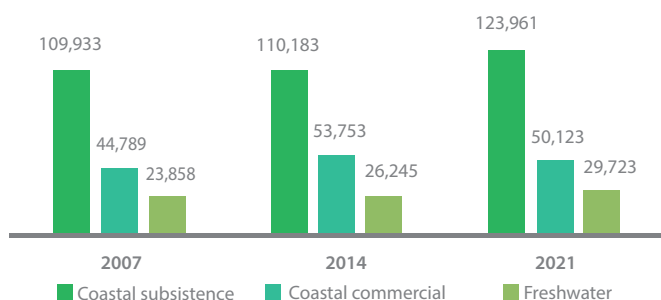


### Aquaculture production in the region

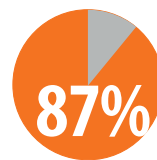
7573 tonnes of aquaculture products contributed USD 85.3 million to the region in 2021. (Source: Gillett and Fong, 2021).



### Volume of fishery production (t)



## 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 (2010–2020)).

**53 kg** of fresh fish is consumed per person per annum (regional population weighted average, range 35 kg to 89 kg). (Source: HIES data from 14 PICTs (2012–2021)).



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

## Monitor catches to keep harvests within sustainable limits



### Active community-based fisheries management

**661** active CBFM sites were reported in 15 PICTs serving 1,032 communities. A further 193 sites are in progress in 2022. (Source: Govan and Lalavanua, 2022)

## Data notes

For further information on the regional coastal fisheries indicators used in this Report Card, including data sources and rationale for calculations, contact [terry@spc.int](mailto:terry@spc.int). Data from HIES were available for 14 PICTs\*. 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 17 PICTs\*\*, with some missing data. The inclusion of data from additional PICTs each year means that figures are not directly comparable with previous Report Cards. Future Report Cards will hopefully reflect improved data coverage and quality across PICTs. Data from the study *Fisheries in the economies of Pacific Island countries and territories (Benefish Study 4)* are used in this report.

\* Cook Islands, FSM, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, RMI, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna

\*\* American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati, RMI, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna