



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme



AMBASSADE
DE FRANCE
EN AUSTRALIE
*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



UNSW
Centre for
Sustainable
Development Reform

7. Promoting the role of sustainable food from the ocean for poverty eradication and food security.

This theme examines how ocean resources can better contribute to global food security and poverty reduction. It encompasses sustainable fisheries management, aquaculture development, and improvements in seafood value chains.

Additional considerations, as raised through the UN's stakeholder consultation on panel themes, include reforming international fisheries agreements for greater equity, developing Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture systems, improving post-harvest processing capabilities, and strengthening local market access.

Pacific Context

The Pacific region demonstrates a uniquely high dependence on marine resources for food security, with 88% of households consuming fish or seafood weekly and up to 26% engaging in fishing activities¹. This reliance is reflected in national fish consumption rates ranging from 55 kg to 110 kg per person annually - nearly 36 times the global average of less than 20 kg per person². In rural areas across Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), fish provides 50-90% of dietary animal protein, underpinning both cultural traditions and nutrition security³.

Coastal fisheries provide the primary source of fish consumed by PICT residents, contributing 13.8 kg per capita annually as of 2021, though this represents a concerning 14% decline since 2007⁴. Current patterns show that 90% of tuna catches are exported outside the region, limiting local food security benefits⁵. This alongside a reduction of per capita coastal fisheries production indicates that by 2030, 16 of the 22 Pacific Island countries will be unable to meet their current per capita fish consumption needs⁶.

Traditional diets based on fish, coconuts and root vegetables are increasingly being replaced by imported foods such as rice, canned meats, and processed foods. This dietary shift, coupled with supply chain vulnerabilities, threatens both nutrition security and self-sufficiency⁷. Transportation between islands remains a key impediment, with many regions struggling to move fish from abundant outer islands to populous urban centres. Cold chain management presents difficulties, with limited storage facilities and high ice costs affecting both food safety and distribution. These challenges were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, when shipping costs rose more than 6.5-fold between December 2019 and September 2021⁸.

Climate change poses a fundamental threat to regional food security. Under climate scenarios through to 2050, western Pacific nations face significant impacts as tuna stocks are projected to shift eastward, affecting both food security and national economies⁹. This shift particularly threatens countries dependent on licence revenue from fishing operations. Additionally, climate change impacts are expected to cause substantial loss of marine ecosystems and fish stocks thus greatly impacting the food security dependent on coastal and subsistence fisheries¹⁰.

Rising operational costs further threaten food security, with fuel prices in some nations nearly doubling - for example, Nauru saw an increase from AU\$1.15-1.20/litre prior to the pandemic to AU\$2.20/litre in 2022. These cost increases have driven up local fish prices, with tuna prices in some markets rising from AU\$7-8/kg to AU\$12-15/kg over the same period¹¹.

Aquaculture shows promise for supporting regional food security, though current production remains modest. In 2021, aquaculture production reached US\$85.2 million, representing approximately 3% of all fisheries production value in the region¹². Regional leaders have recognised the need to enhance local fish protein supply, pledging to increase regional tuna consumption to 40,000 tons by 2024¹³.

Regional Instruments

- [2015 Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries](#)
- [2015 "A New Song for Coastal Fisheries" \(Noumea Strategy\)](#)
- [Pacific Regional Aquaculture Strategy \(PRAS\)](#) – is being developed following SPC's 2022 Regional Aquaculture Assessment
- [2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent](#)
- [Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-Based Fisheries Management \(CBFM\) 2021-2025](#)

The Ocean Action panels at UNOC3 are collaborative, multi-stakeholder sessions designed to:

- Generate concrete commitments and actions to support SDG14 implementation
- Produce specific outcomes that will be captured in the "Nice Ocean Action Plan"
- Contribute to the Conference's overarching theme of "Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean"
- Foster partnerships between governments, civil society, private sector, and other stakeholders

1. SPC, Coastal Fishery Report Card 2024. The Pacific Community
2. FAO, Role of fish in food security in selected Pacific Island Countries. 2018. Policy Brief No. 2
3. Charlton KE, et al. Fish, food security and health in Pacific Island countries and territories: a systematic literature review. BMC Public Health. 2016 Mar 24;16:285.
4. SPC, The aquaculture sector findings and policy implications of the Benefish Study 4. 2023 Policy Brief No. 44
5. Gillett, Robert. Fisheries in the economies of the Pacific island countries and territories. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2009.
6. World Bank. Fish to 2030: Prospects for Fisheries and Aquaculture. 2013. WORLD BANK REPORT NUMBER 83177-GLB
7. Bell, J.D., et al. (2009a). Planning the use of fish for food security in the Pacific. Marine Policy, 33(1), pp.64–76.
8. MRAG Asia Pacific (2022). Policy Options to Increase the Contribution of Tuna Fisheries to National Food Security Across FFA Members. Report prepared for the Forum Fisheries Agency. 75 p.
9. Bell, J.D., et al. (2021). Pathways to sustaining tuna-dependent Pacific Island economies during climate change. Nature Sustainability, 4(10), pp.900–910.
10. ADB. Food Security and Climate Change in the Pacific: Rethinking the Options. 2011
11. MRAG Asia Pacific (2022). Policy Options to Increase the Contribution of Tuna Fisheries to National Food Security Across FFA Members. Report prepared for the Forum Fisheries Agency. 75 p.
12. SPC, The aquaculture sector findings and policy implications of the Benefish Study 4. 2023 Policy Brief No. 44
13. FFA, SPC (2015). Future of Fisheries: A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries