

Fisheries and other sectorsⁱ

1. Key points

- Fisheries are a critical resource for PICTs providing essential social and economic benefits including food security, access revenue and contributions to overall GDP (as high as 98%).
- Catches of tunas in the West and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission area (WCPFC) are estimated to account for nearly 58% of world supply. Yet 90% of these catches are exported outside the region. In addition, regional fleets caught less than a third of total catch and there are still island countries with no domestic fleet who cannot directly engage in fishing.
- Management of Pacific fisheries is becoming increasingly complex and is requiring more intensive engagement with a broader range of stakeholders and actors at national, sub-regional and regional level as well as internationally.
- As economic returns increase, including as a result of successful rights-based management arrangements (e.g. the PNA purse seine vessel day scheme) or the development of domestic fishing fleets, there is an associated need for increased investment in fisheries management at national and sub-regional level to ensure gains are sustained and leveraged for additional social and economic benefits to PICTs.
- With increased attention to integrated Ocean management, particularly in the Pacific, fisheries is necessarily part of wider considerations in relation to: wider ecosystem-based management; responding to the threat and impacts of climate change; and the balancing of use rights and trade-offs between fisheries and other, non-fisheries specific objectives and activities.
- At the same time, there is a need for increased attention to fisheries-specific issues and processes to ensure that Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) are able to maximise the social and economic benefits from their fisheries rights and resources which are a central contributor to the Sustainable Development of all PICTs.
- Given the complex nature of fisheries issues and the many interactions with other sectors or issues (e.g. deep sea mining, tourism, marine pollution) or broader processes (e.g. trade negotiations, BBNJ) it is essential that there is clarity around governance of fisheries and the associated responsibilities of different actors at national, sub-regional and regional level as well as in wider international engagements. There must also be strong processes at all levels to ensure effective communication and coordination across sectors, and to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity for input.

2. Challenges and opportunities

- Pacific Islands Forum leaders adopted the Future of Fisheries: a regional roadmap for Pacific sustainable fisheries in 2015 to improve the management of coastal and offshore fisheries and improve on benefits to the Blue Pacific on the sustainable use of these resources.
- Forum Fisheries Ministers considered a range of specific fisheries issues and challenges when they met in June at this year’s Forum Fisheries Committee Ministerial Meeting in Pohnpei, including responding to the impacts of climate change on tuna fisheries, improving the economic performance of the region’s longline fisheries, tackling IUU fishing, and agreeing priority issues to take into the negotiations with fishing nations at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission annual meeting to be held in Port Moresby in December 2019. Equally important, Fisheries Ministers agreed to consider coastal fisheries issues as well as broader issues that impact on fisheries including broader climate change impacts, trade issues, the impacts of marine pollution, and delimitation of maritime boundaries.
- Pacific leaders aspire the offshore fisheries sector to play a larger role in the supply of fish protein to the inhabitants of the region: they pledged to increase regional tuna consumption to 40,000 tons by 2024¹. The increase in fishing effort by PICT implies the provision of adequate fishing means. To date, there are still island countries with no domestic fleet and cannot directly engage in fishing².
- The tuna industry supports nearly 23,000 jobs in the region, 53% of which from tuna processing plants in Papua New Guinea. A significant proportion of the catches are processed in factories outside the region. Pacific islands forum leaders have committed to creating 18,000 new jobs by 2024 in the tuna industry, including through processing plants, fishing crews, observers on board, etc³. An opportunity is to be seized in the retention of a greater part of the regional catches by investing in the development of regional companies⁴.
- Addressing the under-performance of **regional longline fisheries** remains one of the biggest fisheries specific challenge facing the region. Progress has been made over the last year, including at the last WCPFC meeting in December 2018, and in implementation of the PNA Longline Vessel Day Scheme. Ministers have now adopted a Regional Longline Strategy for further advancing PICs shared objectives with respect to longline fisheries, including through the strengthening of zone-based management of longline fishing within EEZs and action within the WCPFC to constrain longline fishing activity on the high seas including stronger monitoring of trans-shipment.
- Ministers adopted **minimum labour conditions for crew** on fishing vessels operating in the region – a landmark decision that puts the Pacific at the forefront of international efforts to stamp out human rights abuses and end modern slavery at sea.
- With respect to the ever-present challenge of tackling **Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing (SDG 14.4)**, Ministers welcomed the leadership being taken by RMI through the President’s call for an IUU Free Pacific by 2023, and by FSM on the issue of electronic monitoring through the Technology for Tuna Transparency (T3) Challenge that recognizes the
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¹ FFA, SPC (2015). Future of Fisheries: A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries: Objective 4

² PIFS, 2018. First quadrennial Pacific report for sustainable development.

³ FFA, SPC (2015). Future of Fisheries : A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries: Objective

⁴ PIFS, 2018. First quadrennial Pacific report for sustainable development.

- potential for electronic monitoring (cameras/sensors on fishing vessels) to be a game changer for improving management of longline fisheries.
- The Friends of Ocean Action and High-Level Panel have identified a range of measures as critical to achieving the goal of closing the Pacific to IUU fishing. These include:
 - i. The sharing of vessel identification data (registration, ownership, authorization, flags, operators) to the Global Record, and the submission of Designated Ports and Contact Points (with the FAO / RFMOs);
 - ii. The exchange of operational data on fishing activities with port states to enable efficient risk assessment, inspection and processing of vessels scheduled to enter port;
 - iii. The application of equally effective port state measures to domestic fleets;
 - iv. The active participation of Parties to the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and their working groups to expedite implementation of the agreement;
 - v. Development of national, sub-regional and region plans of action against IUU fishing that will spur cooperation amongst agencies;
 - vi. The sharing of intelligence obtained through MCS between relevant agencies in other states /Economies of the region (to ensure the all members of a region are able to identify and take action against IUU operators).
- The integrated Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) framework put in place by FFA member countries has been recognized as world leading and has virtually eliminated “pirate” IUU activity in the region. The focus has now turned to **tackling unreporting and mis-reporting of fishing activity by licensed fishing vessels** – particularly those fishing primarily on the high seas where management measures and monitoring of activity, including transshipment between fishing vessels and carrier vessels, is weak.
- Specifically, the Regional MCS Strategy endorsed by Fisheries Ministers in 2018 with priority objectives: i) regional standards are in place for effective and efficient MCS systems, ii) quality information is available and accessible to national and regional officials to assess IUU risk and plan MCS activities, iii) procedures established and operationalized to conduct effective MCS activities and iv) effective compliance and enforcement through efficient use of available information, analysis and intelligence, achieved through whole of Government engagement.
- In relation to the SDG 14.6, and the associated commitment of World Trade Organization Members to complete negotiations by the end of 2019 on a new WTO agreement to prohibit harmful **fisheries subsidies**, Ministers committed to engage in these negotiations to achieve a successful outcome and emphasised that any outcome should not unnecessarily constrain the ability of SIDS to develop their tuna fisheries and that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for SIDS should be an integral part of these negotiations.
- Regional ambitions for the development of the sector is confronted to acute challenges, in particular climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, bycatch, and pollution. Bycatch, for instance, remains a significant issue in the region, in particular of ocean shark populations

(e.g., silky sharks and white-tipped oceanic sharks). International and regional plans of actions have been developed to minimize bycatch with some improvement.

- Ghost gear is an international issue that can also be traced back in the Pacific. FADs used by industrial fisheries can improve tuna catch rates especially for purse seine vessels. This non-selective fishing method can have a negative impact on resources, especially when poorly managed and abandoned. Discussions are considering how to best address such issues.
- To continue providing important benefits to PICTs, fisheries management could further stressed that operations be rooted on equity, respect for the environment and its ecosystems, on the best available scientific information and traditional knowledge, and on inclusive and genuine regional cooperation.

4. How issues link to key policies (SDG14, FPO, Samoa Pathway, 2050 Regional Strategy, etc.)

- As outlined above, fisheries provide social, cultural and economic benefits to all Pacific Island countries. As such, fisheries contribute not only to achievement of SDG14, more specifically 14.4, 14.6 and 14.7 but to a far broader range of SDGs in PICTs. Fisheries is also recognized in the SAMOA Pathway as an important contributor to food security and job creation.
- Fisheries provide benefits to PICTs, both through investment in line agencies and Ministries directly responsible for fisheries and through greater cooperation and collaboration across all relevant sectors e.g. environment, finance, economic, trade, security and foreign affairs.
- Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries 2015 present ambitious goals and strategic steps to improve the management of fisheries so to maximize benefits to PICTs.

5. Background and other reference materials

- FFA key documents, <https://www.ffa.int/>
- SPC key documents, <https://fame1.spc.int/>
- WCPFC key documents, <https://www.wcpfc.int/home>
- PNAO, key documents, <https://www.pnatuna.com/>
- RMCSS, <https://www.ffa.int/node/2099>
- Tuna Report Card, <https://fame1.spc.int/en/publications/roadmap-a-report-cards>
- Climate change impacts on tuna brochure
- Coastal fisheries report card, <https://fame1.spc.int/en/publications/roadmap-a-report-cards>
- PIFS (2018). Our People, Our Environment, Our Ocean: First Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development report.
- FFA, SPC (2015). Future of Fisheries: A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries
- MRAG, 2016 Towards the quantification of IUU fishing in the Pacific Islands Region, FFA <https://www.ffa.int/files/FFA%20Quantifying%20IUU%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf>
- FAO, Code of conduct for responsible fisheries, 1995. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-v9878f.pdf>
- FFA, SPC, SPREP, Regional Plan of Action for Sharks: Guidance of Pacific Island Countries and Territories on the Conservation and Management of Sharks, 2009.
- Senina, et al. (2018) Impacts of climate change on tropical tuna species and tuna fisheries in Pacific Island waters and high seas areas: Modelling the effects of climate change on tuna abundance in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Final Report (CI-3) for SAN 6003922. Developed for Conservation International (CI) as part of the GEF-funded, World Bank implemented Ocean Partnerships for sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation (OPP), a sub-project of the Common Oceans ABNJ Program led by UN-FAO.
- SPC (2015): A New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathway to Change: The Noumea Strategy. The Noumea Strategy: document prepared at the end of the regional workshop on the future of coastal fisheries management held from March 3 to 6, 2015 in Nouméa. Adopted by the 9th Conference of SPC Fisheries Directors in Noumea in March 2015.

ⁱ This brief was compiled by FFA with inputs from relevant organisations and experts. It should be noted that this paper is primarily focused on offshore fisheries given the regional focus, but also touches on some of the broader issues that encompass coastal fisheries.