



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

TAKING STOCK

An assessment of fisheries
policy transparency



for Kiribati,
the Marshall Islands
and Papua New Guinea



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Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this assessment. All information was believed to be correct as of August 2026. Nevertheless, the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FITI) cannot accept responsibility for the consequences resulting from the use of this assessment or its contents by others.

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In conducting this assessment, the FITI did not investigate the veracity of the published information and did not make any judgement about the integrity of the information or practices disclosed.

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The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FITI) is a global multi-stakeholder partnership that strengthens transparency and collaboration in marine fisheries management.

By making fisheries management more transparent and inclusive, the FITI promotes informed public debates on fisheries policies and supports the long-term contribution of the sector to national economies and the well-being of citizens and businesses that depend on a healthy marine environment.



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INTRODUCTION

This report examines government transparency in the fisheries sector of three Pacific countries: Kiribati, the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Papua New Guinea (PNG). By using the FiTI Standard – the global default framework for transparency in national marine fisheries management – it considers transparency from the perspective of each country's national policy framework.

It asks a simple question: what are national priorities and targets in the fisheries sector, and does government information allow the public to understand how these objectives and targets are being met?

The report identifies positive aspects of fisheries transparency across all three countries. It also identifies shortcomings. This is not unusual: most countries in the world struggle to articulate their national priorities in the fisheries sector, and very few can collate and publish sufficient data to inform the public about management effectiveness. However, this report offers a constructive evaluation of government transparency to facilitate public debate on what improvements could be made.

This report departs from traditional approaches that frames transparency in fisheries governance as either too specific or too narrow. For example, transparency is often associated with efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing – exposing vessels operating outside the law, closing loopholes in licensing systems, holding flag states accountable for the conduct of their fleets. More broadly, transparency in fisheries governance has become part of the anti-corruption toolkit: publishing beneficial ownership of fishing companies, disclosing access agreements, tracking revenue flows. These are important objectives. But they represent a particular and limited conception of what fisheries transparency is for – one focused primarily on detecting and deterring wrongdoing.

Instead, this report offers a different conception that lies at the heart of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). **Government transparency, as used here, is considered a condition for citizens to participate meaningfully in government decision-making.** It is therefore a component of democratic governance. This approach is, in fact, far more aligned with how Pacific countries have conceptualised transparency for themselves. The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, for example, adopted at the 51st Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting in 2022, linked transparency to the 'full observance of democratic principles and values'.

A focus on policy coherence

What is unique about this report is that it introduces the question of how transparent the national government's policy framework is. This dimension of transparency is given less prominence in international fisheries governance debates than it deserves.¹ But approaching transparency from a policy framework point-of-view makes it more relevant to national priorities rather than to the agendas of external actors. Transparency becomes less about judging countries against an external checklist and more about questioning whether national authorities are providing their citizens with the information they themselves have identified as important for managing their fisheries sector.

¹ An important exception to this is presented by Mora, C. et al. (2009), 'Management Effectiveness of the World's Marine Fisheries', PLOS Biology 7(6): e1000131. The study found that of all management attributes analysed – scientific robustness, implementation capability, fishing capacity, subsidies, and access to foreign fishing – variations in policymaking transparency produced the largest difference in fisheries sustainability outcomes. Policymaking transparency was characterised as the sharing of scientific information with key stakeholders and a participatory approach to agreeing on management measures. See also: Standing, A. (2024), 'From transparency to participation: An elusive relationship?' FiTI tBrief #9, Fisheries Transparency Initiative.

In 2026, the FiTI Standard was updated with this in mind, following a global, two-year, multi-stakeholder process. The updated Standard now covers transparency requirements for 12 thematic areas of marine fisheries management. The Standard's first area '**National Objectives**' asks national authorities to provide a succinct summary of their national objectives and targets.² The Standard also encourages a review of this summary and the specific targets identified in the policy framework by different stakeholder groups, including government representatives, the fishing industry and civil society. They should identify where the national policy framework may be pulling in different directions, and what aspects are being missed. This report suggests issues that the national stakeholders in these three countries might consider if they were to approach this task.

This policy framework approach also demonstrates the relevance of almost all other 11 thematic areas of the FiTI Standard. These can be used to *work backwards*: asking whether national authorities currently collate and publish information that can be used to understand the problems that policies are used to solve. They can also be used to *work forward*, asking whether data and information help in understanding the outcomes of management decisions and actions.

In this respect, transparency is relevant to what is sometimes referred to as the **policy-making cycle**: the process by which governments identify policies, gather and publish data, and review outcomes to re-evaluate policy choices. In an ideal scenario, this cycle works with complete transparency and public participation. Examples exist showing how national fisheries authorities use this policy-making cycle as part of their planning processes.³ However, in reality, we know that most governments do not operate this way: the process by which policy decisions are made and evaluated is far messier and more fragmented, and opportunities for public participation are constrained. Often, the cycle is disrupted by unforeseen events, lobbying by special-interest groups, or new demands imposed by outsiders, including international organisations and development partners. Nevertheless, this policy-making cycle is a useful concept for understanding how transparency works and why a lack of transparency can cause the cycle to break down.

The structure of this report

Part 1 attempts to map policy documents across each of the three countries and synthesise national objectives and targets.

Part 2 provides a reflection on policy coherence, gaps and the adequacy of national targets.

Part 3 identifies several of the transparency requirements in the FiTI Standard that link directly to these national objectives and targets. It asks how comprehensive governments' publications are in meeting these requirements, which include national revenues, catch data, information on food consumption, and employment and incomes of people working in the fisheries sector.

The **conclusion** draws out the key analytical observations across all three countries.

At the time of the publication of this report, none of the three Pacific countries have yet formally engaged with the FiTI to enhance fisheries transparency and stakeholder collaboration. Therefore, this assessment is based entirely on desktop research—analysing what is publicly available on government websites and reports. It does not offer the same level of detail as a full assessment of the FiTI Standard for countries committed to implementing it. Nor does it provide national stakeholder verification and input. Nevertheless, it offers a starting point for national debates on policy-making transparency that should shift the focus away from its narrower, more limited use.

2 The FiTI Standard requirement for governments to publish a succinct summary of national fisheries objectives and targets is stated in requirement A.1.i, introduced in the updated *FiTI Standard 2.0 (2026)*.

3 NOAA Fisheries (2021), '*NOAA Fisheries Strategic Plan 2021-2025*', National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US Department of Commerce. The Plan uses an integrated management cycle framework — Investigate and Understand, Integrate and Predict, Communicate Science — to structure its approach to fisheries management, with data collection, stakeholder engagement and science communication running throughout the cycle.



About the FiTI Standard

The FiTI Standard (current version 2.0) is the internationally recognised framework that defines what information on marine fisheries management should be published online by national authorities, how it can be verified, and how it can be used more effectively to inform public debate.

The FiTI Standard was developed through a global multi-stakeholder process, including governments, industrial fishing companies, small-scale fishing representatives, intergovernmental organisations and civil society groups working on fisheries and marine conservation.

Its objective is to contribute to the sustainability of marine fisheries by increasing the accessibility, credibility and usability of national fisheries management information.

The FiTI Standard covers transparency requirements for the following **12 thematic areas of marine fisheries management**:



1. National Objectives



2. Legal Framework



3. Small-scale Fisheries



4. Vessels and Authorisations



5. Catches



6. Health of Fish Populations



7. Employment and Labour Standards



8. Law Enforcement



9. Trade and Consumption



10. Fiscal Management



11. Development Finance



12. Beneficial Ownership

Principle of progressive improvement

Although the FiTI Standard holds all participating countries to the same high standards, it recognises that national authorities may lack financial resources, technology, expertise or staff to fulfil the transparency requirements of the FiTI Standard. Therefore, countries are not expected to have complete data for every transparency requirement from the beginning. Instead, national authorities must disclose the information they have, and where important gaps exist, improvements over time must be demonstrated.

For more information about the FiTI Standard visit <https://fiti.global/fiti-standard>

PART 1

National objectives for the fisheries sector

National fisheries are public resources, managed by governments on behalf of citizens, fishing communities and future generations. For that management to be publicly accountable, citizens – especially those in fishing communities – need to understand what their government has committed to achieving.

Ideally, those interested in national objectives should be able to understand how they support broader national development goals. They should also be able to understand how national objectives for the fisheries sector are implemented through sector strategies and management plans, as well as the specific rules and targets that give them effect. Where those linkages are absent or left implicit, the national objective framework may be formally complete while remaining practically unintelligible.

Equally important is the question of accessibility: national objectives and targets should be easy to find and presented online, where members of the public are most likely to look for it.

1.1 The challenges of understanding fisheries policies in Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea

Each of the three countries has published extensive policy documents covering the fisheries sector. However, the policy landscape in each country is fragmented. This is not unusual – fisheries policy tends to develop incrementally, across instruments, agencies, and over time, responding to changing conditions, new scientific understanding, donor priorities, and international commitments.

This research identified 20 core policy-relevant documents in Kiribati, 13 in the Marshall Islands, and 16 in Papua New Guinea. These documents span decades of policy development and are produced by multiple tiers of government. They range from national vision statements to fishery-specific management plans and regulations.

Core policy-relevant documents identified:



20
Kiribati



13
Marshall Islands



16
Papua New Guinea

Reading across them is not straightforward for several reasons.

- Documents are produced by different government authorities — fisheries ministries, national planning offices, environmental agencies and climate directorates — often without reference to what already exists. Regional organisations and development partners add further instruments that are not always clearly integrated into the national framework.
- Several documents were produced in response to external requirements, including donor conditionality, regional body reporting processes, and obligations arising from international agreements. Documents produced this way may appear formally integrated within national processes but often have limited domestic implementation or influence.
- Policy objectives are sometimes found in legislation rather than standalone documents, blurring the boundary between policy and law. Primary legislation may contain the most authoritative statement of national objectives, while subsidiary regulations are often harder to locate than the Acts they derive from. Laws are formally public instruments but are rarely written for general readers.
- The terms “goals”, “objectives”, “outcomes”, “priorities”, “key result areas” and “targets” are used interchangeably within and across frameworks, making it difficult to distinguish high-level aspirations from specific, accountable commitments.
- Several important documents carry end dates that have passed, with no successor publicly available. Whether a government is still operating under them, has informally replaced them, or has left the policy area unaddressed is often impossible to determine.
- Some legally operative documents cited in official publications cannot be found for public download on any website. In some cases, documents appear only in draft form, with no way of determining whether a final version exists.

The result is that none of the three countries provides a single, plain-language, publicly available document setting out what the government is committed to achieving in fisheries. None of the countries has a consolidated list of relevant policies either. Someone seeking to understand national objectives must find and read up to 20 documents produced over decades by different agencies, many of which have uncertain status.

This is a fundamental barrier to public accountability: where a non-specialist reader cannot understand the policy framework, the accountability relationship between government and citizens is weakened.

Customary tenure, the de facto front line of coastal fisheries management⁴

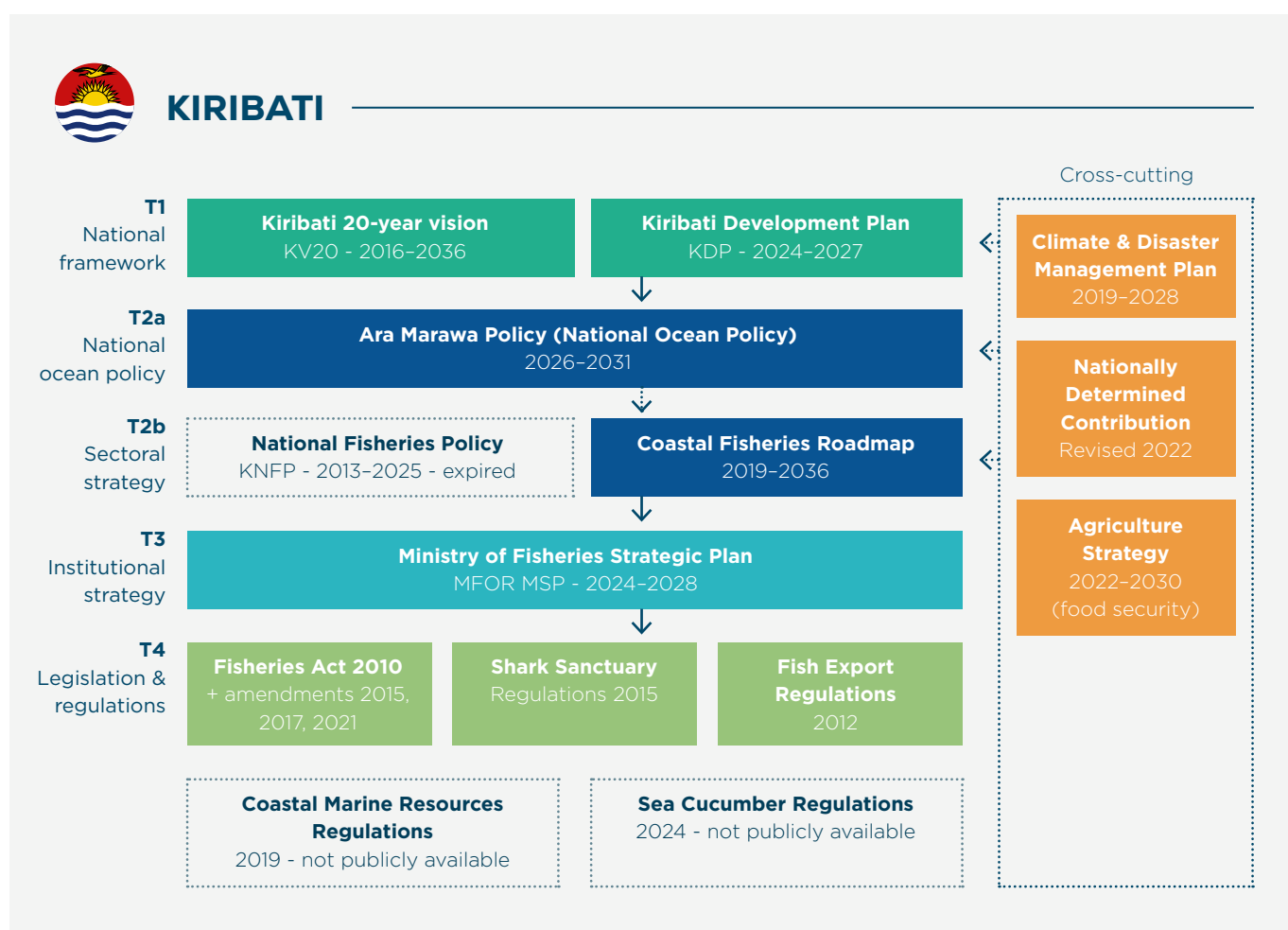
Across the region, customary tenure provides a functioning authority over inshore resources even where it holds a formally subordinate position in law, sitting alongside statutory frameworks. In all three countries, this makes customary tenure highly relevant to understanding the management and control of fishing activities and other extractive sectors across substantial coastal regions, including those operated by corporations and state-owned industries. In Kiribati, unimane decisions carry a high degree of local respect and compliance, whether or not they have ever been formalised as byelaws, and communities have re-established and enforced spawning-ground closures on their own initiative, later given formal government recognition. In RMI, traditional landowners hold considerable de facto authority over marine areas even though this authority is not formally defined in law or tested in court. In PNG, customary ownership covers an estimated 97 per cent of coastal fisheries, and communities routinely assert and enforce these claims in practice regardless of how they are reflected in statute. For this reason, the topic needs care - customary tenure is a live, asserted authority already shaping who can fish where and on what terms. Government transparency on laws and regulations governing the fisheries sector must therefore give full recognition of the role of customary tenure and continue to ensure these are formally recognised and recorded, as required by the Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries.

4 Sources: Govan, H., Tuxson, T., Tauati, M., Lalavanua, W., Schwarz, A. & Kinch, J. (2026), 'Scaling up community-based fisheries management in the Pacific: Outlook and prospects for securing sustainable coastal fisheries, livelihoods and ecosystems', Rome, Italy: FAO. Rohe, J.R., Govan, H., Schlüter, A. and Ferse, S.C.A. (2019), 'A legal pluralism perspective on coastal fisheries governance in two Pacific Island countries', Marine Policy. Sahib, M. and White, M. (2018), 'Policy challenges in the coastal fisheries management of the Marshall Islands', Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority.

1.2 Mapping the policy landscape in each country

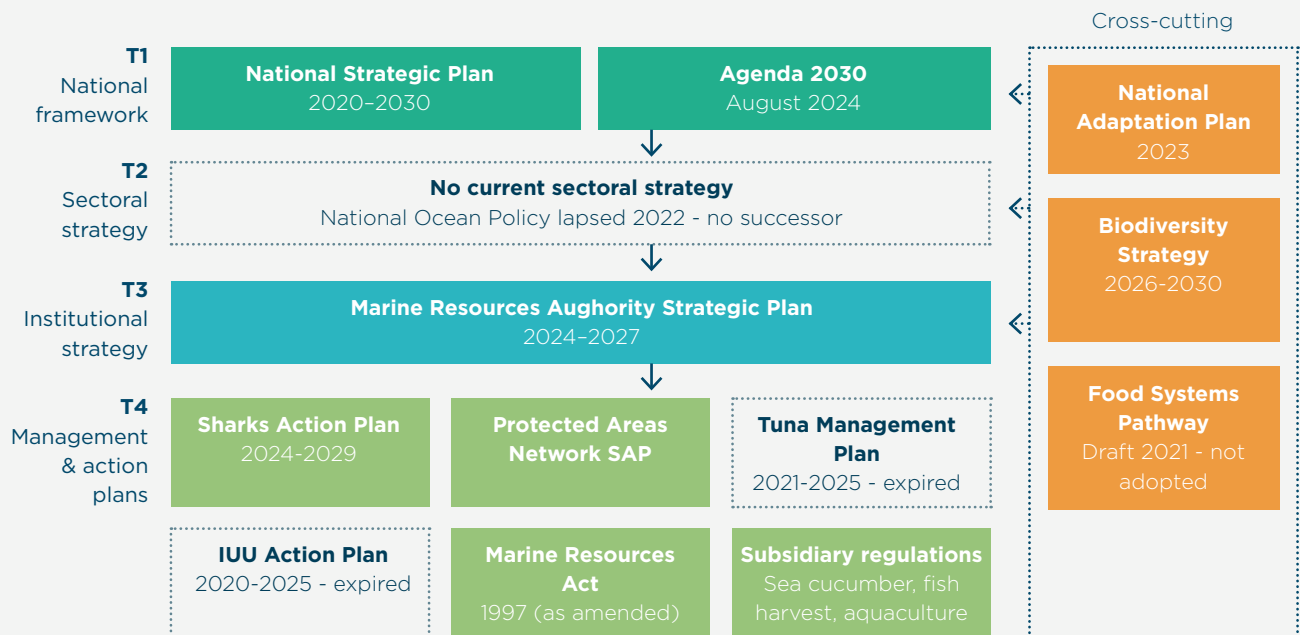
Despite these challenges, it has been possible to construct a working summary of each country's policy landscape through extensive documentary research. Graphics 1, 2 and 3 set out the documents identified as most relevant for each country, organised into **tiers (T)** from the highest-level national policy documents down to fishery-specific management plans. Some documents are treated as cross-cutting, particularly those related to international commitments on climate and biodiversity.

It should be noted that the documents identified in tier 4 (T4) are unlikely to be complete. At this level, national authorities can produce various plans and regulations, including ministerial decrees. It is not straightforward to identify all of these from desktop research alone. However, this reinforces a key point about transparency – none of the countries provide a complete mapping of relevant laws and policy documents.

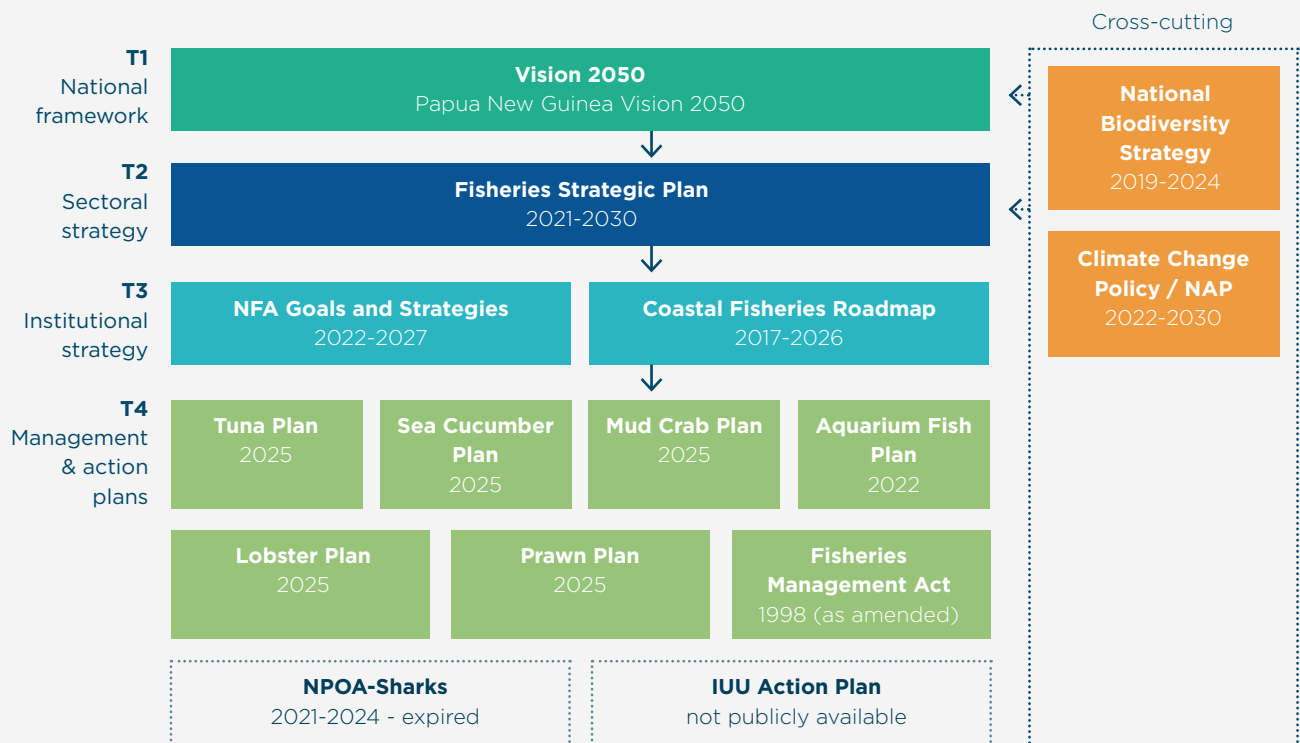




MARSHALL ISLANDS



PAPUA NEW GUINEA



1.3 A consolidated view of national fisheries objectives

Reading across these documents reveals common fisheries objectives, summarised below under seven distinct headings. However, this is not a structure any of the three governments has adopted. This is a potential starting point for a consolidated, plain-language summary of national fisheries objectives to facilitate public understanding.

NATIONAL FISHERIES OBJECTIVES

Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea



National economic returns

Revenue as a public good

Policies govern access fees, licence revenues and fiscal management—primarily from offshore tuna access through the Vessel Day Scheme. Benefit-sharing principles determine how revenues reach citizens.

Targets include: annual revenues; fisheries management expenditures.

Production

Sustainable management of fish populations

Policies set catch limits, effort controls and management principles for offshore tuna and coastal fisheries. None of the three countries frame production as expansionist – the goal is sustainability, not growth.

Targets include: total allowable catches; stock assessment cycles; seasonal closures; species quotas.

Biodiversity

Limiting fishing impacts on the marine environment

Policies restrict harmful fishing practices and protect threatened species and habitats. All three countries have substantive legal commitments including shark sanctuary designations and MPA frameworks.

Targets include: MPA coverage; shark bycatch reduction; threatened species prohibitions.

Consumption

Domestic fish supply and nutrition

Policies aim to maintain fish availability for communities in subsistence contexts. Fish is the primary protein source across all three countries, and food security is a stated national development priority.

Targets include: per capita consumption; community distribution; food safety.

Livelihoods

Income and wellbeing of fishing communities

Policies prioritise citizen participation, employment in processing and community income from coastal fisheries. Domestication of benefits – favouring national citizens over foreign operators – is a common theme.

Targets include: total employment; increased wages; work conditions.

Management

Governance, enforcement and participation

Policies strengthen legal frameworks, monitoring and control systems and community co-management structures. IUU prevention and transparent governance are stated priorities in all three countries.

Targets include: observer coverage; IUU prevention commitments; co-management governance structures.

Climate change

Managing and adapting to climate impacts

Policies acknowledge climate risks to fish populations and fishing communities. All three countries recognise climate change as a significant long-term threat, with Kiribati facing the most acute documented risks.

Targets include: vulnerability assessments; ecosystem-based adaptation; national adaptation plan integration.

A more detailed overview of these objectives and their associated targets in each of the three countries can be found on the FiTI website (https://fiti.global/taking-stock/pacific_fisheriespolicytransparency).

PART 2

Policy coherence, consistency & targets

The policy framework outlined in Part 1 can be reviewed across several dimensions. This report highlights key observations across three themes:

Are there
issues of policy
incoherence?

Are there gaps
in the policy
frameworks?

How
comprehensive are
targets for national
objectives?

A more thorough analysis would require deeper research and should ultimately be led by national stakeholders.

2.1 Are there issues of policy incoherence?

Policy coherence asks how well a government's objectives work together — and where they pull in conflicting directions. Fisheries is a sector where tensions are common: governments are simultaneously managing an ecological resource, a national revenue stream, a food supply system and a source of livelihoods. Fisheries policy also tends to involve multiple agencies — fisheries ministries, environment departments, finance, labour, and climate directorates — and effective coordination among them is difficult. Perfect coherence is unlikely ever to be achieved, but the process of identifying tensions provides the foundation for improving how fisheries are managed and for whom.

Reading across the policy documents of the three countries suggests that the national frameworks are broadly coherent in their stated objectives — several of the seven objectives outlined in Part 1 are interdependent rather than rivalrous. Nevertheless, there are tensions worth exploring. Three are highlighted below, all within the fisheries policy landscape rather than between fisheries and other sectors.

MPAs vs production

Across **all three countries**, a standout policy is the commitment to substantially increase ocean areas designated as marine protected areas (MPAs)— raising a question of whether this conservation drive undermines ambitions for economic returns and fisheries production.

Kiribati provides a concrete example: in 2015, it created the Phoenix Islands Protected Area, covering approximately 11.6% of its exclusive economic zone. By 2022, faced with an estimated USD 60 million in lost revenues, the government degazetted the majority of the area to allow controlled commercial fishing to resume.



Production vs declining fish populations

All three countries commit to maintaining fish availability as a core fisheries objective, yet all three also acknowledge significant long-term declines in the fish populations, predominantly caused by climate change. All three simultaneously project growing or consistent revenues from their exclusive economic zones while acknowledging tuna catches are likely to decline.

No publicly accessible document in any of the three countries attempts to reconcile these growth commitments with projected resource decline. There is no scenario analysis, no contingency objective and no adaptive pathway. It is a gap that extends to national climate adaptation frameworks as well.



Revenue vs processing expansion

PNG's Fisheries Sector Plan 2021–2030 contains two headline economic targets in the same Annex. The first objective is the elimination of a subsidy (rebate worth K143 million in 2020) that is provided to offshore fishing companies to encourage them to invest in onshore processing. The reason for ending this is to increase the amount of government revenues from the tuna fishing industry. The second objective is the expansion of onshore tuna processing capacity from six plants to ten (base case) or twenty (optimistic case) by 2030. The challenge here is that rebate has been the primary mechanism used to attract foreign investment in those plants—the same model the Fisheries Sector Plan credits with creating the processing sector. Eliminating the rebate while simultaneously projecting growth from six to ten or twenty plants requires one of two things to be true: either the commercial case for onshore processing in PNG is now strong enough to attract investment without the incentive, or new incentive mechanisms will replace the rebate. The Fisheries Sector Plan makes neither argument. No other document located in the policy inventory for PNG attempts to resolve this contradiction.

This reflects a wider tension in Pacific fisheries policy: revenue maximisation and domestication of processing are not always compatible pathways.



Export maximisation vs. domestic fish availability

There is an unaddressed tension between food security and export objectives. **All three countries** simultaneously pursue export revenue maximisation and domestic fish availability, yet no framework sets out how these are reconciled when they conflict. As climate change reduces catch potential, this reconciliation becomes increasingly urgent — yet it appears in neither fisheries nor food policy in any of the three countries.



2.2 Are there gaps in the policy frameworks?

A second question concerns what is missing. Across all three countries, offshore tuna dominates the policy landscape in terms of document density, institutional attention and data infrastructure. By contrast, coastal fisheries — which support the majority of people engaged in fishing and provide the primary protein source for most communities — receive thinner, older and less operational frameworks. Beyond this structural imbalance, several gaps are significant enough to warrant national stakeholder attention.

Gender & post-harvest

In **all three countries**, gender equity is stated as a guiding principle in fisheries policy, yet no subsequent instrument provides guidance on what this means in practice. This gap is most visible in the post-harvest sector — covering the processing, handling, distribution and sale of fish between landing and point of sale — which is likely the largest employer in fisheries across all three countries. Industrial processing appears in policy frameworks as an investment and revenue objective, but not as an employment or welfare concern. Small-scale coastal processing is almost entirely absent from policy frameworks. The result is that a large, economically significant and predominantly female workforce has no dedicated policy.



Revenue distribution

Across **all three countries**, fisheries generate substantial public revenues — predominantly through the vessel day scheme, but also through coastal access licensing. Yet no country has articulated a public rationale for how those revenues should be distributed: between current spending and intergenerational savings, between national budgets and fisheries management reinvestment, or between offshore and coastal communities. The same absence applies to coastal access fees — no country has stated publicly whether fees are designed to recover management costs, reflect the commercial value of the resource, or generate a community dividend.



Kiribati comes closest to addressing this, with its Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund framing revenues as a sovereign asset held for future generations — but even there, no formula governing the allocation between present and future use has been published.



Food security

Fish is the primary source of animal protein across **all three national populations** — not only for coastal communities but for citizens as a whole. All three governments state food security as a core fisheries objective, yet none has published a policy instrument that addresses supply adequacy, affordability or access for food-insecure groups at the national level. There are no targets for per capita fish consumption, no monitoring of domestic supply trends, and no mechanism for assessing whether fisheries production is meeting national nutritional needs.



Missing sectors?

In **all three countries** there was no inclusion in the national policy framework for sports or recreational fishing, despite that it is a significant fishery in terms of revenue generation and jobs, as well as potentially having a negative impact on fish populations. Equally, only one of the countries, **PNG**, have clear policies for the regulation and development of fish harvesting for the international aquarium industry. This is almost entirely overlooked in the policy framework on RMI and Kiribati.



2.3 How comprehensive are targets for national objectives?

The research for this report showed an even picture of targets across the three national policy frameworks.⁵ The strongest targets relate to offshore tuna revenue, though it is debatable how much direct control governments have over these figures. Outside revenue, quantified targets, baselines and monitoring responsibilities are largely absent, particularly for sustainability, food security, livelihoods and climate adaptation. All three frameworks are also considerably stronger at setting activity targets — things governments directly control, such as observer deployments, stock assessments, or management plans — than at setting outcome targets that measure what those activities actually achieve. The relationship between activities and outcomes is often tenuous or not established, meaning governments may deliver on their commitments without any way of knowing whether the underlying objective has been met.

Revenues

Kiribati's AU\$200 million annual tuna revenue floor is the strongest target in any of the three frameworks — quantified, with clear monitoring responsibility assigned to the Ministry of Fisheries.



By contrast, **RMI** states revenue maximisation as its highest-priority objective across every tier of its framework, yet no government document was found that sets a quantified target, identifies a baseline or names a responsible monitoring body.



It is worth noting that tuna revenues are partly outside national control, being influenced by environmental dynamics, climate change and regional agreements — a point recognised in several government reports.

Livelihoods

Targets and measures of success for livelihoods objectives are absent across **all three countries**.



PNG comes closest: its Coastal Fisheries Roadmap sets a target of 30% of coastal and island communities accessing alternative livelihood support by 2026.



However, there is no definition of what that support means and no data collection framework to measure it.

Coastal fisheries

All three countries commit to managing coastal fisheries sustainably and recognise unsustainable fishing as a major threat to existing production, yet very few quantified catch or production targets exist.



PNG is the exception, with targets for prawn and lobster fisheries.



Kiribati has likely set targets for its sea cucumber fishery, but the underlying regulations are not publicly available.



Where data on actual catches is limited, it would be reasonable to expect targets focused on scientific assessment instead — but no concrete targets for undertaking fish population assessments were found in any of the three frameworks.

⁵ For a comprehensive review of the targets, please see here: https://fiji.global/taking-stock/pacific_fisheriespolicytransparency

IUU fishing

All three countries have strong commitments to preventing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, using zero-tolerance language drawn from international frameworks. However, the targets chosen to monitor progress are all inputs, such as observer programmes, vessel monitoring systems, port state measures. No country has published a baseline estimate of IUU levels, set a reduction target, or established an indicator of IUU incidence over time. This raises a deeper question: eliminating IUU fishing is an objective that can probably never be measured, making it difficult to assess whether current enforcement investment is working. A more operational alternative might be to commit to efficiency and due process in handling non-compliance cases.



The three countries therefore present complex and reasonably comprehensive policy frameworks, and the above-mentioned shortcomings are common worldwide. However, some of the tensions and gaps identified here are significant. They would benefit from further national debate, particularly around how high-level objectives on social and livelihood dimensions can be translated into implementable, monitorable commitments.

PART 3

Public information on achieving national objectives and targets

Parts 1 and 2 have established what the governments of Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea set out to achieve through fisheries management, and it assessed the coherence and adequacy of their policy frameworks. Part 3 evaluates what information is publicly available to allow citizens and stakeholders to monitor whether those objectives and targets are being met.



The **FiTI Standard** provides the framework for this evaluation. However, not all 12 thematic areas (and their detailed transparency requirements) in the Standard are covered — that would be the work of a full assessment, which is conducted in collaboration with national stakeholders in FiTI Implementing countries.⁶ Instead, it identifies the specific sub-requirements within the Standard that are most relevant to each of the national fisheries objectives established in Part 1.

The assessment is organised around six of those seven objectives. Climate change is the exception: as noted in Part 2, none of the three countries has articulated specific fisheries-sector climate policies with measurable targets, so there is no delivery information to assess against. Within the management objective, the analysis is further narrowed to law enforcement transparency — a deliberate choice given that this is where the most significant accountability gaps were identified.

A note on the terminology for the assessment results

For each transparency requirement in the FiTI Standard, the following section will indicate whether the information is fully published or at least partially published. This assessment is only interested in information published by national authorities through their own online reports or websites. However, it will indicate if this information is supplied to another organisation for publication, such as a regional fisheries management authority.

Where information is not published, a distinction is made between information that is not disclosed (i.e. the government has the information but chooses not to make it public), and information that is not available to the government (i.e. data is not collated or produced).



Information published



Information not disclosed



Information partially published



Information not available

⁶ For more information, please see here: <https://fiti.global/fiti-reports>

3.1 National economic returns

Fishing revenues are the primary policy objective across all three countries, making fiscal transparency one of the most consequential public accountability issues within the framework. A citizen asking whether their government is managing the national fishery in the public interest needs, at a minimum, to know what the fishery earns, who is paying, and how the money is used.

The **FiTI Standard** includes dedicated requirements on fiscal transparency, covering total government revenues disaggregated by sector and flag state, budget documents for the principal fisheries authority, and fee schedules and licence terms. This assessment also considers vessel registry information, which is essential context for understanding who is accessing national fisheries resources and on what basis.

Annual revenues by sector and flag state (A.10.i)⁷



Kiribati

Tuna fisheries:

... **Partially published**

Coastal fisheries:

... **Partially published**

Kiribati publishes total fishing licence revenue through the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resource (MFOR) annual reports, disaggregated by purse seine, longline and pole-and-line in the 2024 report, though not in the 2025 report. Unlike RMI, the 2025 report includes total revenue for the current year. No breakdown by flag state is published.

The 2025 MFOR annual report records revenues from the coastal fisheries division divided between recreational fisheries and local licensing. No further sectoral breakdown is provided, including for sea cucumber or aquarium trade revenues. The MFOR website hosts a dedicated revenue dashboard, but this is password-protected and not publicly accessible.



Marshall Islands

Tuna fisheries:

✓ **Published**

Coastal fisheries:

✗ **Not disclosed**

The Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) annual report includes a detailed narrative on national income from tuna fisheries, disaggregated by revenue type — vessel day scheme fees, bilateral licence fees, observer fees, transshipment, fish market income and fines. Independently audited financial statements, published through the Office of the Auditor-General, provide a further breakdown by flag state and domestic company. As of mid-2026, the most recent published data covers 2024 — contrary to the annual public reporting commitment in RMI's now-expired Tuna Management Plan.

No information is published on coastal fisheries revenues, covering sea cucumbers, small-scale fishing, sports fishing and the aquarium trade.

⁷ Reference refers to the detailed section in the FiTI Standard.



Papua New Guinea

Tuna fisheries:

Not disclosed

Coastal fisheries:

Not disclosed

The Fisheries Sector Performance Report 2023, published by the National Fisheries Authority (NFA), provides total revenues from the fishing sector for 2023 and records the payment made to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, including the proportion forgone through the Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) rebate scheme. No equivalent report for 2024 or 2025 was identified — the 2023 report appears to have been a one-off publication. The report does not disaggregate revenue by fishing sector or flag state, and it is unclear whether non-VDS revenues — covering longline, sea-cucumber, prawn, coastal species and the aquarium trade — are included in the total.

A 2024 Auditor-General report confirms the NFA submitted revenue data covering only 2021 and 2022, and raised concerns about the completeness of that information.

No information is published on revenues from coastal fisheries.

i The FFA's annual [Economic Development Indicators and Statistics report](#) provides only estimates of PNG's tuna revenues — confirming that national authorities are not sharing revenue data with the FFA, in contrast to RMI and Kiribati which report directly.



Published fee schedules and licence terms (A.2.iv)



Kiribati

Not disclosed

No published fee schedule for any coastal or offshore commercial licence type was identified. The Fisheries Act 2010 and the Community-based fisheries management (CBFM) Regulations 2019 refer to “prescribed fees” contained in subsidiary instruments that were not located in any publicly accessible source. The Sea Cucumber Regulations 2024 are not publicly available.



Marshall Islands

Not disclosed

No published fee schedule was identified for any fishing sector. Bilateral VDS access fee rates are commercially negotiated between vessel owners and the government and treated as confidential, although aggregate revenue data is publicly shared. Some headline licence fee information is partially visible in audited accounts but not in a form that meets the Standard's requirement for a published fee schedule with licence conditions and quota terms.



Papua New Guinea

Not disclosed

A fee schedule for some offshore licence categories was published in the Fisheries Management (Amendment) Regulation 2016, but this is now a decade old and its current applicability is unclear. No current fee information for coastal fisheries, the aquarium trade, beche-de-mer, prawn or other licence types was identified in any source reviewed.



Published vessel registry (A.4.i)



Kiribati



Marshall Islands



**Papua New
Guinea**

X Not disclosed

No vessel registry was identified in any publicly accessible source for any of the three countries. A vessel registry was published by the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) in PNG in 2017 and remains visible on the NFA website, but no updates have been published in the nine years since. A 2015 NFA document committed to publishing a vessel licence list twice a year — a commitment unmet in the decade since.

i *The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) maintains a vessel register for tuna fisheries covering nationally flagged vessels across the region. However, this does not show which vessels are authorised to fish in a specific country's EEZ, nor where nationally flagged vessels from PNG, RMI or Kiribati are authorised to fish elsewhere. It does not therefore substitute for a national vessel registry.*



Annual budget and expenditure of the principal fisheries authority (A.10.ii–iii)



Kiribati

Partially published

MFOR's annual report does not include a budget nor does it include information on the total expenditures. Instead, it provides a list of development projects in the fisheries sector, including those funded by the ministry directly as well as those financed through foreign donors.

The government publishes budget documents on MFOR at two other levels. The Citizens Budget 2025 — a plain-language summary explicitly designed for public accessibility, published by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development — lists MFOR's recurrent budget allocation in a ministry-by-ministry table.⁸ The 2026 Development Budget, approved by Parliament and publicly available, lists individual MFOR income and expenditures, including a complete list of development projects by donor, implementing agency and amounts by year.⁹

However, none of the publications reviewed for this assessment provides a divisional breakdown within MFOR — citizens cannot determine from publicly available sources what proportion of the recurrent budget goes to offshore management versus coastal fisheries versus research.



Marshall Islands

Partially published

The MIMRA annual report and 2024 audited financial statements disclose MIMRA's operating budget disaggregated by division, and confirm annual transfers from fisheries revenues to the General Fund. The most recent published data covers 2024.



Papua New Guinea

Not disclosed

The 2023 Fisheries Sector Performance Report includes a breakdown of NFA expenditures across operational projects, investment projects, administration and VDS rebates, and records revenues transferred to the Consolidated Fund. It does not constitute a formal budget document and contains no projected expenditures beyond 2023.

Treasury budget documents provide a single NFA line item per year but do not disaggregate project expenditures in an accessible form — the relevant data is spread across a document running to 854 pages. A 2024 Auditor-General report covers NFA finances only to 2022. Taken together, the available information is too fragmented and inconsistent to constitute meaningful public disclosure of the NFA's budget and expenditure.

8 See: https://mfed.gov.ki/sites/default/files/2025-06/Final%20Citizens%20Budget%202025_0.pdf

9 See: <https://mfed.gov.ki/sites/default/files/2026-01/2026%20Development%20Budget%20as%20Approved.pdf>

3.2 Production

Sustainable catch levels are a core commitment across all three national frameworks, making public information on how much fish is caught or landed each year a basic requirement for monitoring management success.

The **FiTI Standard** requires national authorities to publish annual catch data disaggregated by sector and flag state, including information on how catch and effort data are collated.



Annual catches and landings by sector (A.5.ii–iii)



Kiribati

Tuna fisheries:



Not disclosed

[info available at WCPFC]

Coastal fisheries:



Not available

No catch or landings data is published by MFOR. As with PNG and RMI, Kiribati submits annual tuna fisheries reports to the WCPFC, with detailed purse seine and longline catch data available up to 2024. However, the artisanal fisheries catch data in the most recent WCPFC submission used the same figures from 2019 through to 2023, suggesting no new data for this sector has been collated.

No coastal fisheries catch data was identified in any source reviewed. It is likely, though not confirmed, that no systematic data collection exists for coastal catches — hence the “not available” rather than “not disclosed” rating.

i None of the three countries publishes catch data for the sports fishing sector. In Kiribati, commercialised fishing tourism targeting bonefish and other reef species is significant and likely contributes to meaningful reductions in fish populations.



Marshall Islands

Tuna fisheries:



Published

Coastal fisheries:



Not available

RMI publishes offshore tuna catch data from its EEZ and by nationally flagged vessels in its annual report, available on the MIMRA website. There is a time lag in reporting — the latest catch data as of mid-2026 covers 2024. RMI also submits annual reports to the WCPFC covering catches and landings within its EEZ and by nationally flagged vessels in the region.

No coastal fisheries catch data was identified in any source reviewed. It is likely, though not confirmed, that no systematic data collection exists for coastal catches — hence the “not available” rather than “not disclosed” rating.



Papua New Guinea

Tuna fisheries:



Not disclosed

[info available at WCPFC]

Coastal fisheries:



Not disclosed

The NFA website contains a standalone page with summary catch information, but the information is dated, including tuna catches from 2018 and reef fisheries data is from 2002. The 2023 fisheries performance report is the most recent publication that provides landings data for the offshore tuna fishery, disaggregated by domestic and foreign flagged vessels, but no equivalent report for 2024 or 2025 has been published. PNG submits annual catch and effort reports to the WCPFC covering nationally flagged vessels and EEZ catches, publicly accessible through the WCPFC website only. This also contains information up to 2024 only.

The 2023 performance report provides total catch data for crab, prawn, lobster and reef fish, but not sea cucumber, with no explanation of how the data is collated and no species breakdown for reef fish.

3.3 Biodiversity

All three countries commit to managing fisheries in ways that limit degradation of marine biodiversity, with shark protection highlighted across all three frameworks, given their historic overfishing as both target species and bycatch in commercial fisheries.

The **FiTI Standard** requires governments to publish information on the biological status of fish populations and on the management of endangered species, including any national quotas, assessments and trade permits for CITES-listed species.

For migratory tuna species, scientific stock assessments are led by regional organisations — principally the WCPFC Scientific Committee, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Parties to the Nauru Agreement observer programme. These generate substantial publicly accessible data on the status of skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye and albacore tuna across the Western and Central Pacific. The assessment considers what is published at the national level.



Biological status of fish populations (A.6.i–iii)



Kiribati

Tuna fisheries:

Not disclosed

[info available at WCPFC + SPC]

Coastal fisheries:

Not disclosed

No information on tuna stock monitoring methods or biological status is published in any national government report or website in Kiribati.

With regard to coastal fisheries, no information can be found in any government reports. It is difficult to know what data national authorities are collating, and if the lack of public information is due to authorities having no data. However, the MFOR Annual Report 2025 notes that stock assessments of sea-cucumbers were completed for three island groups — Kiritimati, Abaiang and Butaritari. This is described as the first coastal species stock assessment programme in Kiribati's fisheries history. However, no published assessment report was identified in any publicly accessible source at the time of writing, and the Sea Cucumber Regulations 2024 governing the quota system to which these assessments provide scientific support remain inaccessible.



Marshall Islands

Tuna fisheries:

Not disclosed

[info available at WCPFC + SPC]

Coastal fisheries:

Not disclosed

No information on tuna stock monitoring methods or biological status is published in any national government report or website in RMI.

With regard to coastal fisheries, information is not published. However, this cannot simply be explained by no data being collated. The Reimaanlok process requires ecological baseline data collection at each site, with data flowing into a Conservation GIS database maintained by Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC); in 2024, thirteen Local Resource Officers completed training in the Community Marine Monitoring Toolkit covering fish catch, reef health and seagrass habitats. A scientific survey of the northern atolls conducted with National Geographic's Pristine Seas programme in 2023 delivered reports in 2024, and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) 2026–2030 assigns MIMRA a formal obligation to maintain fisheries stock assessment data ahead of the Eighth National Report due in 2029. Despite these ongoing efforts, there has yet to be any information on the health of fish populations published by the government.


Papua New Guinea

Tuna fisheries:

Not disclosed

[info available at WCPFC + SPC]

Coastal fisheries:

Not disclosed

No information on tuna stock monitoring methods or biological status is published in any national government report or website in PNG. The WCPFC Scientific Committee proceedings are the relevant source, covering skipjack (2025), yellowfin and bigeye (2023), but these are accessible through the WCPFC website only.

With regard to coastal fish, management plans published by the NFA contain references to stock assessment requirements — annual assessments are required before opening the sea cucumber and mud crab fisheries each season, and they are also required for the prawn fisheries. But there is no explanation of how these assessments are to be made, and by whom. The assessments themselves were also not found online on any government website in PNG.


Discards by fishing vessels, disaggregated by sector (A.5.vi)

Kiribati

Tuna fisheries:

Not disclosed

[info available at WCPFC]

Coastal fisheries:

Not available

There is no description of discards for the tuna fisheries found in any government reports published on national authorities' websites, including the annual report of MFOR. However, MFOR does report annual data in its technical annual reports to the WCPFC, with the latest covering the years 2020-2024. This covers incidental catches of sharks for purse seine and long line vessels, the catching of seabirds by the longline vessels, and the number of whales encircled by purse seine vessels, and the number of other marine mammals and sea turtles caught by the same vessels.

No coastal fisheries discard data was identified in any source reviewed. Again, it is likely, though not confirmed, that no systematic data collection exists for coastal discards — hence the “not available” rather than “not disclosed” rating.


Marshall Islands

Tuna fisheries:

Not disclosed

[info available at WCPFC]

Coastal fisheries:

Not available

No discard information is published on any RMI government website or in the MIMRA annual report. MIMRA does report incidental catch data in its technical annual reports to the WCPFC, covering 2020-2024. This includes shark catches for purse seine and longline vessels, seabird catches by longline vessels, and whale interactions with purse seine vessels. However, unlike PNG, no data is provided on interactions with marine mammals, sea turtles or endangered rays.

No coastal fisheries discard data was identified in any source reviewed. It is likely, though not confirmed, that no systematic data collection exists for coastal discards — hence the “not available” rather than “not disclosed” rating.



Papua New Guinea

Tuna fisheries:

Not disclosed

[info available at WCPFC]

Coastal fisheries:

Not available

No discard information is published on any PNG government website. The NFA reports incidental catches of sharks, marine mammals and birds to the WCPFC for nationally flagged tuna vessels. The most recent report (2025) covers 2020–2024 and includes shark and ray species caught by purse seine and longline vessels, seabirds caught by longline vessels, and whale species and sea turtles encircled by purse seine vessels.

No coastal fisheries discard data was identified in any source reviewed. It is likely, though not confirmed, that no systematic data collection exists for coastal discards — hence the “not available” rather than “not disclosed” rating.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Out of the three countries, only PNG is a party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Under the FiTI Standard, the transparency requirements for CITES quotas, Non-Detrimental Findings Reports and trade permits would therefore be formally not applicable to the Marshall Islands or Kiribati.

However, all three countries explicitly reference CITES in their fisheries policy frameworks. The Marshall Islands Sharks Action Plan 2024–2029 cites CITES Appendix II listings as the scientific basis for its shark protection measures. The PNG NPOA-Sharks 2021–2024 similarly acknowledged CITES obligations for listed shark species. Kiribati’s Shark Sanctuary Regulations 2015 and the Ara Marawa Policy 2026–2031 both reference internationally recognised species protection frameworks, including CITES. Governments that cite an international framework in their own policy instruments create a reasonable public expectation that they can account for how they are meeting it.

In the case of sea cucumbers, several commercially harvested species are listed in CITES Appendix II, which requires that trade not be detrimental to the survival of the species. Sea cucumber is commercially harvested and exported from all three countries — most significantly from Kiribati, which exported 49.4 tonnes in 2024 under a new quota system, and from PNG, which has a published sea cucumber management plan. Exports to China, Hong Kong, and other markets require CITES documentation under the importing country’s requirements: the exporter must obtain CITES permits processed through the importing country’s management authority. This means CITES documentation is generated for these trades on the importing side, but it is unclear what documentation is supplied by the exporting countries, if any.

Similarly, multiple shark species found in all three EEZs are listed in CITES Appendix II, including oceanic whitetip, hammerhead species, whale sharks and thresher sharks. All three countries have adopted strong shark protection measures, and shark fins are a commercially traded product from the region. Trade documentation should be generated by importing countries, but it is not clear which permits, if any, are issued by exporting countries.

The resulting accountability gap is significant. Citizens in PNG, the Marshall Islands and Kiribati cannot determine from any publicly available national source the names of exporters, the quantities permitted to trade, or whether harvests are sustainable.

3.4 Consumption

Fish is the primary source of animal protein for populations across all three countries, and all three governments recognise food consumption as a core fisheries objective — though, as noted in Part 2, the mechanisms for delivering on this commitment are largely absent.

The **FiTI Standard** requires national authorities to publish information on the annual consumption of wild-caught marine fish, including, where available, estimates by demographic group and estimates of food waste. This requirement reflects SDG Target 12.3, which calls for halving per capita food waste globally by 2030.



Annual fish consumption, including estimates across groups and regions (A.9.i-ii)



Kiribati



Published

The Kiribati National Statistics Office published a food consumption report in June 2025 based on a 2023 HIES. It found fish consumption at approximately 160 grams per person per day, with fish and shellfish accounting for 7 percent of total dietary energy. Unlike the RMI report, this was a standalone publication designed specifically for food consumption analysis with its own public launch.

Here too, no disaggregation of fish consumption by geographic location, demographic group, sex or income level is provided, although it seems possible given the design of the survey.



Marshall Islands



Published

For RMI, an HIES Survey was undertaken in 2019. A food consumption section is included in the final public report, which was published jointly by the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO), FAO and The Pacific Community (SPC) in 2021. It provides a national aggregate of 180 grams per person per day for total fish and fish products, with reef fish identified as the most consumed fish product at approximately 145 grams per person per day in edible weight — the third highest consumed food item overall after rice and flour. It also provides some information on whether fish was store-bought, self-caught or received as a gift: about 36 percent of the dietary energy from fish comes from self-caught fish or fish received as a gift, and of the households that consume reef fish, more than 60 percent obtained it from their own fishing or as a gift rather than through purchase.

The survey results were not disaggregated by geographic location, demographic group, sex or income level — though the survey data would in principle support this analysis.



Papua New Guinea



Not available

No information in fish consumption is provided in reports by the NFA. It is not data that it collates. In 2009 PNG conducted a national Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) which included information on food consumption. However, being over 15 years old it is inadequate for current policy monitoring purposes. A new HIES for PNG is listed in the Pacific Community's regional survey schedule but no fieldwork timeline or food consumption report has been publicly confirmed.

Fish waste and loss along production and supply chains (A.9.iii)



Kiribati

None of the countries publish estimates of waste or loss in the supply chain for any fish products.



Marshall Islands



Papua New
Guinea

 Not available

3.5 Livelihoods

All three countries set policy aspirations to maintain or increase fisheries' contribution to employment and incomes. Generating reliable livelihoods data is inherently complex — it requires understanding not just who is engaged in the sector but the quality of that engagement, including wages, working conditions and the scale of informal employment.

The **FiTI Standard** requires governments to publish the information they hold on employment and income for men and women, including on the informal economy. It also requires a summary of the labour rights afforded to fishing crews and information on annual accidents and mortalities in the fishing sector.

For all three countries, the primary regional source of employment data is the FFA's annual Economic Development Indicators and Statistics (EDIS) report, which provides total employment figures for the tuna fisheries sector. However, the EDIS data has significant limitations for national accountability purposes: it combines employment across five categories — vessel crews, onshore processing, ancillary services, observers, and government employees — without a breakdown by category or gender. In some cases the source is not attributed to any national authority but collated by the FFA itself. The assessments below record only what is published at the national level; EDIS figures are noted where they are the only available source.



Employment in the fisheries sector by gender (A.7.i)



Kiribati

Tuna fisheries:



Not disclosed

[info available at FFA]

Coastal fisheries:



Not available

No employment data for the tuna fisheries sector was identified in any MFOR publication. The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) EDIS report records 1,259 persons employed in Kiribati's tuna fisheries sector in 2023, with MFOR and Kiribati Fish Limited named as the source — making Kiribati the most directly attributed of the three countries in the EDIS data.

The Kiribati Labour Market Monograph 2023–2024 (KNSO/SPC, 2025) provides more granular employment data than is available for either PNG or RMI from HIES surveys. Unlike RMI, the survey included the category of “marine fishing” from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and included a gender breakdown, showing that this accounted for 7.0% of total employment (11.4% male, 1.8% female). This is the only published data across the three countries that isolates marine fishing as a named economic activity distinct from agriculture and forestry.

However, this figure is presented in isolation and is not carried through the report's fuller analyses of wages, regional variation, status in employment or labour market outcomes — those analyses revert to the three-sector aggregate. The category of marine fishing also does not capture post-harvest employment, nor does it distinguish full-time from part-time, seasonal or subsistence fishing. The HIES analysis confirms that 93.1% of people in the agriculture/forestry/fishery sector are informally employed.

No coastal fisheries employment data was identified in any source reviewed. It is likely, though not confirmed, that no systematic data collection exists — hence the “not available” rather than “not disclosed” rating.



Marshall Islands

Tuna fisheries:

Not disclosed

[info available at FFA]

Coastal fisheries:

Not available

No employment data for the fisheries sector was identified in any MIMRA publication. The FFA EDIS report records 1,382 persons employed in RMI's tuna fisheries sector in 2023.

The 2019/20 HIES provides a further source of employment data, but with significant limitations. The survey used a higher-level ILO category that combines agriculture, forestry and fisheries, meaning no fisheries-specific figure can be isolated. The results suggest only 826 people are employed in the sector — likely covering only those working as fishers, excluding post-harvest workers and informal or subsistence fishing.

No coastal fisheries employment data was identified in any source reviewed. It is likely, though not confirmed, that no systematic data collection exists — hence the “not available” rather than “not disclosed” rating.



Papua New Guinea

Tuna fisheries:

Partially published

Coastal fisheries:

Not available

The fisheries sector performance report 2023, describes employment in the tuna fishing and processing sector (10,138 nationals and 356 foreigners). The report does not provide separate figures for those employed in the post-harvest sector or those working onboard fishing vessels. However, the report does describe that approximately 70% of tuna processing employees are women. No equivalent report for 2024 or 2025 has been published.

The FFA EDIS report records 11,381 persons employed in PNG's tuna fisheries sector in 2023.

The 2023 performance report also describes employment in the non-tuna fishing sector (1,130 nationals and 94 foreigners), though it is unclear what this category covers and it appears inconsistent with other data. The NFA's sea-cucumber plan (gazetted in 2025) states approximately 500,000 fishers in coastal and island villages depend on the sea-cucumber trade for cash income — but no source is given for this figure, and it likely derives from a 2009 estimate of total subsistence and artisanal fishing in PNG (Gillett, 2009), which was explicitly speculative and not sector-specific.



Incomes of those working in the fisheries sector (A.7.iv)



Kiribati



Marshall Islands



Papua New
Guinea

No government information was found on the wages or incomes people receive from the fisheries sector in any of the three countries. The HIES surveys in both RMI and Kiribati contain data on wages and income, but these are combined for those classified as working in the agriculture, forestry and fishery sector. This also excludes those working in the post-harvest sector.



Not available



Annual serious injuries and fatalities at sea (A.7.v)



Kiribati



Marshall Islands



Papua New
Guinea

No government publication was found with this information across all three countries. All three have nonetheless supported the development of a WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure for Crew Labour Standards, due to enter into force in 2028, which will require member states to collate and share mortality data with the WCPFC Secretariat.



Not available

3.6 Management

The management transparency assessment in this report focuses on law enforcement: specifically, whether governments publish information that enables citizens to assess whether fisheries laws are being applied effectively.

The **FiTI Standard** includes requirements on national strategies for addressing non-compliance, annual inspection statistics, and penalties for serious fisheries violations.



Published penalty framework for fisheries law violations (A.8.i–ii)



Kiribati



Published

The Fisheries Act 2010 establishes the primary legislative framework for fisheries enforcement in Kiribati, amended three times. The Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2017 tripled all existing penalty provisions in direct response to European Commission concerns about Kiribati's IUU enforcement framework, and introduced definitions of serious fishing violation. It also formalised the role of the Fisheries Administrative Penalty Committee (FAPCOM) as an administrative penalty mechanism applicable to all fishing vessels. The Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2021 extended the scope of the Act to cover marine biological diversity and marine genetic resources, introduced mandatory registration of small-scale fishing vessels, and expanded the framework for community-based fishery management plans.

The principal penalty amounts following the 2017 amendments are expressed in Australian dollars. For unlicensed foreign fishing in Kiribati waters: master or fishing master up to \$3,000,000 and 10 years imprisonment; owner or charterer up to \$3,000,000 and 10 years imprisonment. For breach of a foreign fishing vessel licence condition: master up to \$750,000; owner or charterer up to \$3,000,000. For operating a local vessel without a licence: up to \$1,500,000 and 5 years imprisonment. For fishing in a marine protected area or prohibited area: up to \$3,000,000 and 10 years imprisonment. For obstruction of an authorised officer or observer: up to \$1,500,000 and 5 years imprisonment.

The penalty framework above applies to both offshore and coastal fishing vessels under the Fisheries Act 2010. The 2021 Amendment introduced the most directly coastal-relevant penalty: owners or operators of small-scale fishing vessels (defined as vessels under 7 metres with motorised engines) who fail to register with the Director of Fisheries, or breach registration conditions, are liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000. This is the only published coastal-specific penalty figure in Kiribati's accessible legislation.


Marshall Islands
... Partially published

The Fisheries Enforcement Act 1997, as amended in 2011, sets out the primary penalty framework for fishing violations in RMI. The 2011 amendment strengthened enforcement powers, increased fines for observer and officer obstruction, and introduced vessel monitoring system and catch certification requirements. Both the original Act and its amendment are publicly accessible through the MIMRA website. The Act is structured around summary administrative proceedings — out-of-court settlements — as the predominant enforcement mode. Under summary proceedings, settlements are set at half the maximum fine for the relevant offence.

The Tuna Management Plan 2020–2025 (now expired) included a summary table of penalties with practical examples in its Appendix II, providing the most accessible consolidated account of the framework. The key penalty ranges include: unlicensed fishing, up to US\$1,000,000; shark-related violations, US\$25,000–\$200,000 plus the retail value of confiscated fins; obstruction of an authorised observer or officer, US\$100,000–\$500,000 or up to six months' imprisonment; fishing beyond fishery waters without authorisation, US\$25,000–\$250,000; and VMS/mobile transceiver unit violations, US\$25,000–\$200,000. Repeat offenders must pay the maximum fine for any subsequent offence, and a banning order of up to three years may be imposed for multiple violations.

Despite the accessibility of the underlying legislation, neither the NPOA-IUU 2020–2025 nor the Tuna Management Plan 2020–2025 have been renewed as of mid-2026. It is assumed that these penalties still apply.

The penalty amounts above relate to the offshore commercial tuna fishery. The coastal sector is governed by a separate instrument — the Management and Development of Local Fisheries Act — which applies within the 5nm zone under Local Government Council co-management authority. No published penalty schedule for the coastal sector was identified in any publicly accessible source reviewed for this assessment.



**Papua New
Guinea**

... **Partially published**

The Fisheries Management (Amendment) Act 2015 increased court-imposed penalties originally established in the 1998 Fisheries Management Act, to a maximum of K5 million (approximately US\$1.4 million) for a first offence and K20 million (approximately US\$5.7 million) for a repeat offence within 24 months. It also created the power to issue fixed penalty notices, with offences and amounts to be set by regulation. These maximum penalty levels are publicly described in the 2015 NFA IUU Communications Document, accessible on the NFA legislation page, and represent the most accessible public account of PNG's penalty framework.

The Fisheries Management (Amendment) Regulation 2016 — also available on the NFA website as a scanned PDF — does not establish a comprehensive penalty schedule. It provides clarification on escalating fines for repeat offences and defines what constitutes a serious offence, but does not set out the fixed penalty notice amounts the 2015 Act required. The result is that PNG's penalty framework is fragmented across multiple instruments — the 1998 Act, the 2015 Amendment, the 2016 Regulation — none of which presents a clear, consolidated account of what a vessel operator or member of the public can expect to face for a given type of breach. Furthermore, the primary legislation is now over a decade old without consolidation or plain-language republication. No standalone summary document consolidating thresholds, penalty categories, which authorities receive fine revenues, and how the framework applies across offence types has been identified in any publicly accessible source.

The same Fisheries Management Act and its amendments apply in principle to all fishing sectors, including coastal fisheries. However, the published penalty information — the IUU Communications Document and the 2015 Amendment — is exclusively oriented toward offshore commercial fishing and foreign vessels. No sector-specific penalty guidance for coastal fisheries has been identified in any publicly accessible source. The coastal sector — encompassing sea cucumber, mud crab, reef fish, prawn and other species — operates within the same legal framework but without any accessible account of how that framework applies in practice.



Annual vessel inspections in ports and at sea (A.8.iii)



Kiribati

X Not disclosed

Kiribati's MCS and Enforcement Unit, established within the Coastal Fisheries Division in 2020, conducts land and sea inspections. The MFOR Annual Report 2024 describes enforcement activities including satellite vessel tracking, aerial and maritime patrol improvements, and a trial of PELAGIC tracking devices on artisanal boats in South Tarawa lagoon to monitor activity in the domestic fishing zone. Kiribati's 123 active observers contribute to offshore monitoring. Despite this activity, no inspection statistics are published in any accessible document.

Observer deployment data — partially accessible through PNA and WCPFC reporting — provides a related but incomplete indicator of monitoring intensity in the offshore tuna sector. It does not cover port inspections, coastal fisheries enforcement or domestic fishing zone surveillance. The absence of published inspection statistics means there is no publicly verifiable basis for assessing whether enforcement effort is proportionate to the scale and value of the fisheries being regulated.



Marshall Islands

X Not disclosed

MIMRA deployed 44 active observers in 2024, undertaking 135 purse seine and 43 longline vessel trips, representing a significant increase in observer coverage compared to previous years. Electronic reporting coverage for longline vessels exceeded 90% in 2023 and was maintained into 2024. MIMRA also employs a dedicated port sampler covering nearly 100% of longline unloadings at the Marshall Islands Fishing Venture (MIFV) fish base. These figures are disclosed in the MIMRA Annual Report.

However, observer deployment is not equivalent to the vessel inspection statistics: it covers only tuna fishery vessels operating in the offshore sector under observer programme obligations. Port state inspections, at-sea boardings, and compliance checks of vessels in port are not reported in any annual figure in any document reviewed.



Papua New Guinea

X Not disclosed

PNG has significantly expanded its monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) infrastructure since 2025. Two purpose-built fisheries patrol vessels were commissioned in December 2025, and a Mission Command and Surveillance Centre was opened in Daru, Western Province. The NFA coordinates a multi-agency enforcement network involving the PNG Defence Force, Constabulary, Customs and provincial agencies, and operates regionally through the FFA MCS Surveillance Centre in Honiara.

Despite this infrastructure, the NFA does not publish annual inspection, frequency of at sea patrols, or boarding statistics in any document reviewed. The 2015 IUU Communications Document committed to publishing a vessel licence list twice a year; this commitment has not been met in the decade since. The NFA MCS page states a key performance indicator of at least ten successful coordinated inter-agency patrols reported annually to the NFA Board — but these reports are not publicly accessible.



Penalties imposed for serious fisheries violations (A.8.iv)



Kiribati

Not disclosed

No published record of enforcement case outcomes was identified for Kiribati in any source reviewed for this assessment. The MFOR Annual Reports reference enforcement activities in general terms but do not disclose individual cases, fine revenues, or prosecution outcomes. The 2024 Annual Report's legal section describes 32 legal advisories and review of 18 legal documents during the year — including contributions to the Fisheries (Penalty Notice) Regulations and FAPCOM guidelines — but does not describe enforcement actions against fishing vessels.

Kiribati has established the Fisheries Administrative Penalty Committee (FAPCOM) as an institutional mechanism for administrative penalties, with guidelines developed in 2024. However, no FAPCOM decisions or penalty notice outcomes have been identified in any publicly accessible source.



Marshall Islands

Partially published

The MIMRA Annual Report 2024 and the independently audited financial statements record aggregate fine and settlement revenues: US\$1,075,000 in fines collected between 2019 and 2024, including a US\$150,000 settlement in 2024 for an earlier violation. The MIMRA website confirms that MIMRA's legal division handles prosecution for IUU fishing, contravention of licence conditions, observer obstruction, and misreporting, with most cases settled out of court under summary proceedings in the past four years.

These aggregate totals represent a meaningful level of public disclosure. However, these are not a consolidated list identifying the vessel name, the company, the nature of the offence, and the sanction imposed for each significant case over the previous three years.

i The out-of-court settlement approach is efficient, but it means outcomes are not captured in publicly accessible court records, making aggregate fine totals the only public window into enforcement activity. Whether non-disclosure agreements apply to individual settlements is not clear and would require further research.

**Papua New
Guinea****X Not disclosed**

There are no consolidated lists of penalties and fines imposed for fishing violations. However, the NFA website does provide press briefings on specific cases. This includes, for example, a case in February 2026 involving three Indonesian vessels intercepted by the NFA patrol vessel Ilakini in the Gulf of Papua. Information is provided on the outcome of the court trial, including the fact that three captains were fined K40,000 each, in default four years' imprisonment; crew members were fined K20,000 each, in default two years' imprisonment. One vessel was also sunk during transit and was not recovered; the court indicated the two remaining vessels would be disposed of following proceedings.

It is, however, not known how many other cases have been brought to trial in PNG or resulted in out of court settlements. The press releases appear to be selective case studies. It is therefore not possible for a member of the public to determine the scale of enforcement activities, the consistency of penalties applied, or the revenues generated.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

By drawing on the FiTI Standard, the transparency assessment presented here for the three Pacific countries first mapped what each government has committed to achieving through fisheries management; it then considered whether the information needed to monitor those commitments is publicly available.

The findings of this assessment show that all three countries have recognised the importance of transparency and have taken meaningful steps to inform the public about their fisheries. However, across a range of thematic areas, significant transparency deficits remain, and in several cases the deficit begins with the policy framework itself: objectives stated without a theory of change, targets set without a baseline, and commitments made in areas where no data collection mechanism exists.

All three countries have a dedicated fisheries website and a principal fisheries authority responsible for public communications. **Kiribati and RMI** both produce annual reports that provide citizens with regular accounts of fisheries management activities and revenues. **PNG** does not produce an annual report; the closest equivalent, a fisheries sector performance report, was published once in 2023 and has not been published since. PNG's website also contains pages that have not been updated for years, sitting alongside more recent publications, creating a confused and potentially misleading picture for anyone trying to understand current government policy.



The policy-making cycle introduced at the start of this report provides a useful frame for reading the findings of Parts 1, 2 and 3. The cycle describes an ideal: policy objectives that are clear and accessible; measurable targets that connect those objectives to specific commitments; data that is collected and published in forms citizens can use; and a feedback loop through which public accountability drives better policy. No country is likely to achieve this in full — fisheries governance is complex, contested and data-deficient almost everywhere, and national authorities in the Pacific operate under significant resource and capacity constraints. But the cycle is useful precisely because it identifies where, and at what stage, the chain of accountability characteristically breaks down.

In the three countries examined here, the evidence points to several recurring patterns.

A succinct summary of national objectives and targets

As parts 1 and 2 established, across **all three countries**, policy frameworks are mostly coherent and detailed, though several issues could be improved. However, the accessibility of this framework is problematic. Information is fragmented across several documents, with some of these being outdated or still in draft. This means the ideal 'transparency cycle' is partially broken from the outset: it is very hard to understand precisely what governments are trying to achieve, especially in coastal fisheries and the post-harvest sector.



Producing a consolidated, plain-language summary of national fisheries objectives would itself be a significant act of transparency, one that very few countries have undertaken. It would require governments to decide what is current and what is superseded, to identify where objectives are genuinely measurable and where they are aspirational, and to confront points of tension that are easier to leave implicit when policies are distributed across many documents.

The why without the how

Across the **three countries**, some policy objectives are stated without a publicly articulated theory of change. Governments can explain why an objective matters but not what specific management choices they will take to achieve it.



An important area where this manifests is with coastal fisheries. All three countries have a high-level commitment to sustainability, but it is not always clear which strategies they are adopting to achieve this across their fishing sectors. The positive cases are those in which a fishery has a clear management plan – which involves establishing a total allowable catch based on stock assessments and then limiting the number of people allowed to catch fish within that limit. **PNG** has recently updated several management plans that follow this approach, although, unfortunately, at least one of them, governing sea cucumbers, has not been published. There are also positive examples, such as in **Kiribati**, where areas are managed through community co-management structures; decisions on how much fish can be caught and by whom are delegated to those most intimately involved with fishers. Yet there are some fishing sectors where it is difficult for a member of the public to understand what strategy the national government is using, including recreational or sports fishing.



Food security presents a sharper version of the same problem. **All three countries** commit to maintaining fish availability as a core objective, yet all three simultaneously pursue export revenue maximisation. These objectives are not irreconcilable, but they can pull in opposite directions, particularly as climate change puts pressure on coastal fish populations and reduces the supply available for domestic consumption. Managing that tension requires deliberate policy choices: what proportion of fish production is reserved for domestic markets, who absorbs the cost when export and food security objectives conflict, and what the floor is for per capita availability. None of the three countries has articulated those choices publicly. The transparency problem here is not primarily about data; it is about the absence of a stated position on how the government will navigate a foreseeable tension at the heart of its own framework.



Data deficiency is not only about resources

The results described in Part 3 show that the primary transparency deficit in the **three Pacific countries** is the absence of information: “not available” and “partially published” dominate across various thematic areas of the FiTI Standard. This may challenge simplistic narratives about transparency that equate opacity with deliberate concealment. The more pervasive finding from this report is that governments have identified objectives and targets in areas where they cannot produce the relevant information.



Data deficiency is most acute in the areas that matter most to coastal communities — coastal fisheries, livelihoods, food security and gender. In contrast, the quality and depth of data are greater for offshore tuna fisheries. None of this is surprising. It is widely appreciated that small-scale fisheries are data-deficient compared to industrial fisheries, and that fisheries management authorities often direct more resources—and institutional attention—to industrial fisheries than to local coastal fisheries, including the post-harvest sector.

This report suggests a lack of funding or resources is not always the plausible reason for this data asymmetry. This might be relevant to stock assessments for coastal fisheries, which are genuinely resource-intensive, require scientific capacity, and involve costly fieldwork in remote areas. However, the thematic areas of food consumption and livelihoods show the problem is not always resources. Household Income and Expenditure Surveys (HIES) have been undertaken in all countries. A failure lies in how these have been designed and administered. Valuable data could have been generated for the fisheries sector if these surveys had been adapted to national interests. The ILO employment category that combines agriculture, forestry and fisheries might make sense for large

continental economies. However, for **Kiribati** or **RMI** — where fishing is not just an industry but a defining feature of the economy, food system and social life — it renders fisheries analytically invisible. Kiribati is the only country that has isolated “marine fishing” in its survey and produced more useful fisheries employment data. But this was still used only for fishing at sea, not for employment in the post-harvest sector.



The implications of data deficiency

Observation 3 established that data deficiency is often a structural problem rather than a resource constraint. This observation considers the consequences — specifically, what happens when governments adopt policy commitments in areas where the data needed to monitor them does not exist. The answer, across **all three countries**, is that the gap goes largely unacknowledged. Policy documents do not flag the absence of monitoring data; annual reports do not note where targets cannot be assessed; and there is no public record of governments having reviewed whether their commitments are measurable. This silence is itself a transparency failure — and in some cases a more significant one than the data gap it conceals.



One example of this lies in gender and post-harvest employment. All three countries state gender equity as a guiding principle for national fisheries policy. However, none of the three countries has data about women’s employment or their incomes. In fact, across all three countries, information on employment and income in fisheries — for both men and women — is very limited. This raises an important challenge for policy-making transparency: it is hard to understand how national authorities attempt to improve something that they do not measure. In the case of **PNG**, for example, the Coastal Fisheries Roadmap sets a target of 30% of coastal communities accessing improved livelihoods support by 2026. Yet there is no definition of what that support means, and no data exist to show whether this has been achieved.



IUU fishing is another example. Across all three countries, national policy frameworks present a zero-tolerance approach to this, based on the belief that IUU fishing presents a serious threat. However, national policy documents do not clearly articulate what that threat is, what its negative economic, social or ecological impacts are, or how severe it is. Information that might be relevant in understanding national responses to IUU fishing is also not disclosed. In none of the countries are authorities publishing information on the actual fines and penalties they impose on companies found guilty of breaking fishing laws. **PNG** provides details on select cases, but these show that the fines and penalties imposed fall well below the levels established in its national laws.



Regional reporting vs. national accountability

There are several areas where data on national fisheries can only be found in regional or international reports or websites. This is a strength of the Pacific region: over the past decade or so, several regional organisations have generated detailed information on fisheries in countries across the region. However, the FiTI Standard views this as a suboptimal approach if the information remains available only at this level, because it is much more likely to be overlooked in national policy documents and debates. An underlying issue is that information flowing to regional bodies serves the interests of external audiences rather than citizens.

An example is found across **all three countries** regarding bycatch information, especially for sharks. WCPFC submissions show dramatic increases in incidental shark catches across all three countries — figures that have direct relevance for national shark conservation commitments, yet do not appear in any national publication and are therefore not raised as a problem or offered an explanation. Neither **Kiribati** nor **PNG** publishes current, comprehensive catch data from offshore tuna fisheries in national reports or on government websites. What exists is incomplete, outdated, or inaccessible without cross-referencing



regional sources. **PNG** does not publish information on tuna fishery revenues either, although estimates are available in technical reports produced by the FFA.



This pattern reveals a structural disconnect between where data is produced and the accountability purpose it is meant to serve. Regional reporting systems were designed for intergovernmental and technical audiences; they generate high-quality data about national fisheries, but in formats and at levels of aggregation that are not designed to help citizens assess whether their government is delivering on its commitments. The synthesis step — connecting regionally available data to nationally stated objectives, interpreting it for a public audience, and asking what it means for policy — is the responsibility of national authorities. Where it is absent, the accountability chain is broken not by secrecy or data deficiency, but by the failure to perform a function that existing information would support.

Confidentiality on revenues and benefit sharing

Across all three countries, this transparency assessment identified examples where national authorities hold data but have chosen not to publish it. This is predominantly found in relation to money and the allocation of access rights to publicly owned fisheries resources. VDS fees are treated as commercially sensitive; fee schedules are not disclosed; and the identities of companies and individuals granted exclusive access to high-value coastal resources — particularly sea cucumber — are not published in any of the three countries. No vessel registry is publicly available. In **RMI**, a revenue dashboard exists but is accessible only to authorised users.



All three countries adopt a general principle of public ownership of fisheries resources and commit to equitable benefit sharing. **Kiribati** has gone further, articulating an explicit intergenerational equity commitment. Yet those stated values sit in direct tension with confidentiality practices surrounding the commercial transactions through which access to publicly owned resources is granted.



The learning deficit

What is missing from the information presented by national authorities points to a deeper problem than data deficiency or disclosure choices: the absence of public assessment of whether fisheries management is working. Across **all three countries**, this review of how well fisheries are being managed is not being presented. Annual reports are activity logs: they record observer deployments, patrol operations, regulations drafted and meetings held. They do not systematically ask whether those activities are producing the outcomes the policy framework commits to.



Revenues are the partial exception. **Kiribati** and **RMI** both open their annual reports with revenue figures, giving citizens at least one performance metric they can track year on year. But beyond revenues, there is very little published information on progress against any objective — production, livelihoods, food security, biodiversity or IUU enforcement.



The consequences of this are most starkly illustrated by the shark bycatch data available in WCPFC submissions. **RMI's** Sharks Action Plan 2024–2029 commits explicitly to reducing shark bycatch in tuna fisheries to near zero through 22 time-bound actions. The WCPFC data tells a different story: incidental catches of silky sharks by **RMI's** chartered longline fleet increased from 10 tonnes in 2020 to 630 tonnes in 2024; blue shark catches rose from 13 to 408 tonnes over the same period. This data is publicly accessible — but only through a regional technical document. No national publication acknowledges it, analyses it, or asks what it means for the government's own shark conservation commitments. Whether the increase reflects better reporting, changed fishing behaviour, or a genuine deterioration in bycatch management is unknown because no national authority has asked the question publicly. This is the learning deficit in its clearest form: not an absence of data, but an absence of the analysis and accountability that data should generate.



Whose transparency agenda?

In summary, this report has set out to understand the objectives and targets national authorities for **Kiribati**, **RMI** and **PNG**, and it has considered whether basic information about them is being collated and published. There are positive examples: national authorities setting the objective of revenue maximisation and publishing clear data on how much they were paid for access to their fishing grounds by (mostly) foreign fishing companies. Yet there are also anomalies, such as national authorities promising to clamp down on illegal fishing but not publishing the fines and penalties imposed on those caught.



This report shows that the information that matters most for public accountability varies according to what a government has committed to, what its fisheries look like, and who depends on them. In **Kiribati**, **RMI** and **PNG**, the most consequential transparency gaps are not necessarily the ones that attract the most attention from international advocates. They are the gaps between what governments have set out to achieve and the information needed to assess whether they have been successful.



The most important finding from this study is that the national policy frameworks in each of the countries under review are, to varying degrees, lacking in transparency. A lot of the information that is needed to understand objectives and targets is not being collated at all, and perhaps without sufficient reflection by authorities on the problems this causes.

There is therefore value in seeing transparency not as an external checklist, but rather as a quality of national policy-making processes. It is a matter of public debate, informed by meaningful contributions from a wide range of stakeholders, how to address gaps and inconsistencies in the policy framework, how to adapt to data deficiencies, where to challenge confidentiality practices, and which information is most salient for addressing national priorities.

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