

**COMPETENT
AUTHORITY**



2022

**1ST QUARTER
REPORT**

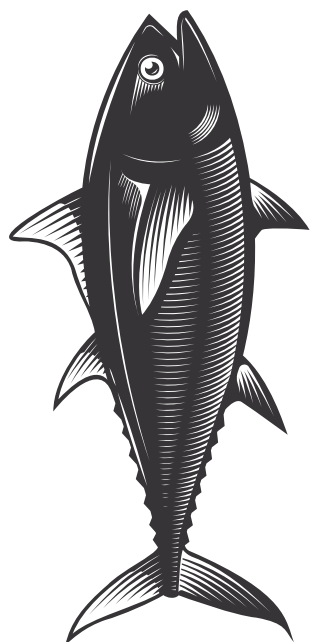
PREPARED BY
The CA team

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1.0 Introduction

The 1st Quarter of 2022 focused on the development of the 2020-2023 work plan based on the 2020-2023 CA strategic development plan. The first quarter of 2022 was also focused on the completion of the response to the first RMI EU Questionnaire and elements of CA databases and traceability work.



2.0 RMI Response to EU Questionnaire

The RMI response to the European Union Questionnaire is a highly prioritized item for RMI efforts for EU authorization. The EU evaluation of the response provides valuable feedback on the quality and accuracy of the RMI-provided information. While awaiting the 2nd EU response, the CA must be proactive in getting its in-house in order to address outstanding matters in preparation for further EU missions or queries. The CA compiled all the responses to the EU Questionnaire and submitted them by diplomatic channel to the EU by the end of January 2022. The responses were a result of the first RMI EU Questionnaire evaluation by the European Union.

3.0 CA Internal Awareness

Several internal awareness sessions were conducted by the CA team. The purpose of the internal awareness sessions is to reinforce core principles and to provide a further understanding of the instruments and policies that will be employed by the CA. It is thus vital and essential for the CA team to be fully versed in these topics. The awareness sessions also give opportunities to the CA officers to make presentations to further gauge their understanding and give them the opportunity to become confident in the presentation of any CA related matter. The Internal awareness sessions consisted of the following:

- RMI Industry Standards and the National Control Plan awareness, focusing on Management Review, Planning, NCP Housekeeping, and the EU audit plan.
- CA awareness with the Oceanic group to advise the team of the functions, developments, and achievements of the CA.
- The presentation to the CA officers on the current CDS work undertaken by the Oceanic Division and Oceanic Chief, Mr. Beau Bigler; the CDS work will be a cross-cutting between the CA and the Oceanic, and thus understanding of the current work is essential for related divisions
- CA internal industry standards presentation by Lyla and Tatiana

CA Officer Lyla Lemari presented a part of the RMI Industry Standard from Sections 1-6 which focuses on the General Terms and Interpretations, Export Requirements, Design and Construction, and Operation Requirements. Through her presentation, she better understood the details of each section, and not only will she master the Industry Standards, but she will also put the standards into practice when doing inspections and audits for each industry. The sessions provided a beneficial exercise for the CA team to digest information regarding the Industry Standard, to fully understand the purpose of the team's role, and what the requirements are to undertake the mission.

Tatiana presented sections 7 through 11 on the RMI Industry standards. These sections covered a range of topics such as product standards and export, overseas market access requirements, fishmeal, vessel requirements, complaints, and appeals, and resolving disputes. Through this presentation, Tatiana was able to explain to the CA division the requirements for each of these topics they will need to fully understand and comprehend to implement. The sections Tatiana covered are essential materials for the RMI Fisheries Industry to fully understand the requirements of the RMI CA and the markets they will be entering. Once requirements are met, the issuance of certificates required by importing countries will be made in which Section 7.5: Certification, explains the provisions and requirements of operators and exporters needed to receive such certificates.

4.0 Combined CA & Industry Training/Awareness

4.1 Standard transitional Period awareness and international Standards Training

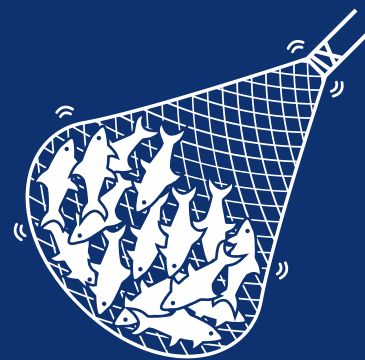
The purpose of this workshop was two-fold:

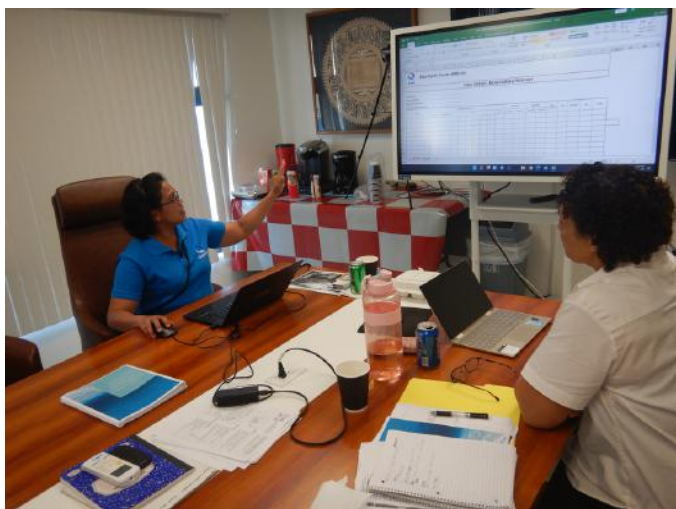
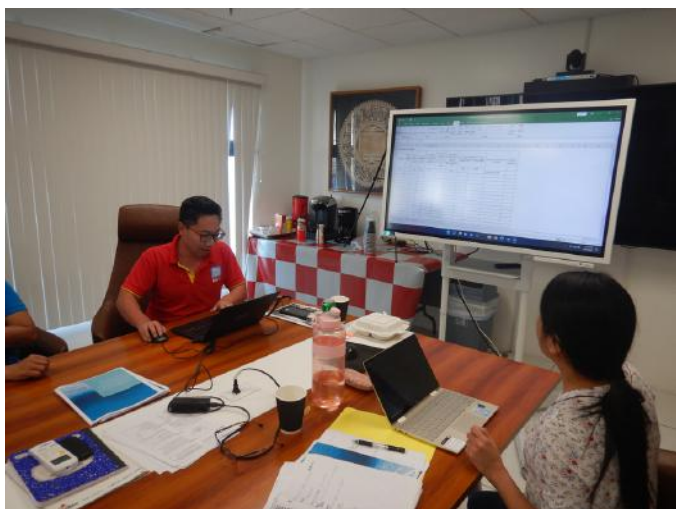
- **Awareness of the Industry Standards transitional period**

A presentation was carried out by the CA advisor on the transitional period of the industry standards including the conditions related to that period. An 8-12 month period is given for the industry to work towards complying with the requirements of the Industry Standard before said requirements are fully enforced.

- **International Standards Training**

Dexter Martinez delivered the training on the international requirements related to fishing vessels particularly focusing on fish handling practices. The outcome of this exercise resulted in the industry developing a fish monitoring form that will be used by all the operators landing fish at RMI for containerization and or for processing and export.





4.2 CA & Industry Fish Sampling and Monitoring Meeting

The internal awareness meeting for fish monitoring and evaluation was carried out on March 08, 2022, for the purpose of advising the industry and the CA of the different types of samples that will be required of them as part of the requirements of the RMI Standards.

A key message in the meeting was for the industry to fully cooperate with the CA and to allow for the necessary resources to be available for sampling. Sampling will be for all operators exporting out of RMI. The industry is also advised to schedule their own sampling in accordance with their sampling plans and to submit said sampling for testing.



5.0 Export Certificates

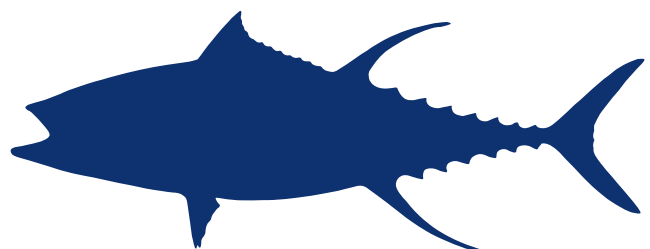
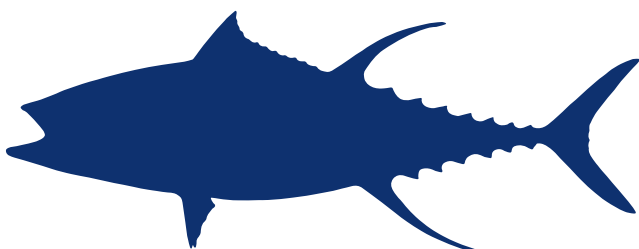
MIMRA's Chief Fisheries Officer, Beau Bigler, gave the responsibility of issuing export certificates to the Competent Authority Division. Since any export certifications will fall under the CA, they've started learning about the current export certificate being issued by MIMRA. The current certificates being issued to exports are the hygiene certificate, which assures that the product was handled according to the standard Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for frozen seafood, and also the export certificate, which attests that the fisheries product was landed legally and handled under supervision. By issuing these certificates, the CA must cross-check the information provided by the exporter with various data regarding the fisheries product. The CA's experience in handling export certificates will complement their knowledge and efforts in issuing Health Certificates in the future.

The purpose was to orient the CA officers towards understanding the exports certification process thus giving them the head start towards that process where CA officers will eventually be authorizing exports. Field inspection is carried out in order to confirm the particulars of the export documents.



6.0 PII Inspection

The CA team did the first inspection of 2022 in early February, mainly to assess the conditions of the yard and the landing sites, and to compare findings from previous inspections of the sites. The Competent Authority was escorted by the PII team to observe the progress of the expansion of the landing site, which is still under construction for the future purposes of loading/unloading operations. The site has seen activity from unloading, but due to Covid-19, fewer vessels have come to do containerization in comparison to previous years. During this time of lockdown, PII is expanding its yard for containerization work, as well as having its HACCP plan in place for future reference. The CA team was pleased to observe that PII repaired their equipment, mastered hygiene practices, and built new amenities. The Competent Authority team has been working closely with each industry and through the inspections and observations, most of the industries are in compliance.



7.0 Regional Meetings & Participation

Regional meetings and workshops will continue to be an integral part of all the fisheries work in the region. The regular updates from Pacific Island members provide valuable information and lessons for participants to learn from and to help each other in regulating and managing the Pacific region's tuna resources.

7.1 FFA Regional PSM Framework Implementation & National Prioritization Work

The 2-day FFA workshop discussed members' regional port monitoring and catch documentation and enhancing compliance. The meeting focused on CDS, a system that traces fish and fishery products through the supply chain. This showed the many efforts driven by FFA members to protect their ocean resources and ensure the legality of Pacific caught tuna. Francisco Blaha, MIMRA's offshore advisor, presented on containerization and how the RMI is increasing its efforts in these operations. The CA has already conducted inspections of containerization, so this presentation was beneficial to them to understand the logistics of this operation.

7.2 PNA VDS Workshop

PNA held a 3-day workshop on Vessel Day Scheme (VDS), in which the CA was able to join only on the first day due to the schedule conflict with the MCS virtual meeting. Through this workshop, the CA was able to understand the main objectives of the VDS and its main purpose of conservation of tuna resources. The conservation efforts of the VDS are aligned with CA's work in monitoring the traceability of fisheries products and ensuring that the products are legally caught and come from a region that prioritizes conservation and management. The VDS ensures that fishing vessels that are licensed to fish in PNA EEZs are limited to a number of fishing days per year which is sustainable and economically beneficial. The PNA VDS workshop was a good refresher for the CA to understand fishing in the PNA waters, as well as the aspects of fish traceability in PNA waters.



7.3 25th MCS Working Group Virtual Meeting

The Competent Authority team sat in on the 25th MCS working group virtual meeting, which helped them understand the initiatives the FFA members take to combat IUU in the current environment. It was a great opportunity for the CA to understand how members monitor their waters and the resources within. The CA were able to familiarize themselves with the FFA members and their use of high-tech tools in response to IUU in the Pacific.



8.0 Other CA Activities

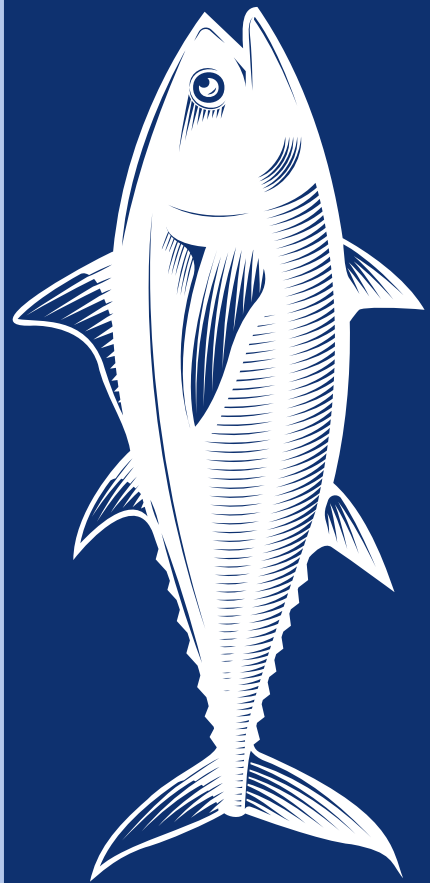
Continued work with the IT to improve the CA inspection forms, work in import data-based field linking industry, CA, and customs, and continued IT development on traceability of fish after landing and the processes that are anticipated.

9.0 Budget

The CA 1st Quarter expenses were expended under the MIMRA budget and mainly in the areas of training and awareness.

10.0 Internal Review

The internal review of the CA is part of the CA evaluation and monitoring processes and will continue to be an important element as part of its housekeeping to ensure the documented process and implementation on all fronts are adhered to and up to date. The internal review takes into account the operational and technical aspects of the CA work. The findings of shortfalls must be brought to the attention of the CA team so as to provide an action plan for improvement. The findings should be captured in the quarterly reports as well as necessary.



11.0 Reports/Newsletters

Reporting is an essential component of the CA work to document all CA undertakings, both operational and technical, including, financials, achievements, challenges, shortfalls, recommendations, and upcoming events. Newsletters on the other hand capture interesting social events of the life of the CA officers.

1st Quarter reports and newsletters are all in order.

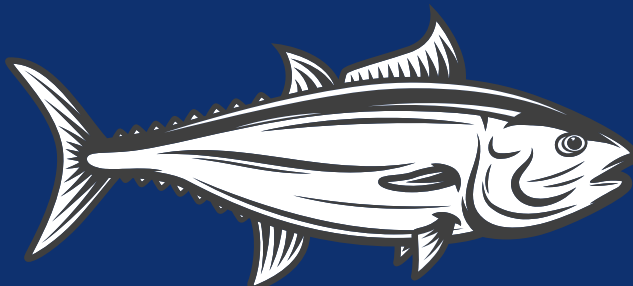
12.0 Achievements

The RMI CA listing process has begun with the 2nd Evaluation of the EU RMI questionnaire. This is a milestone and the effort that the RMI has now put its foot in the EU door, and thus on the ground preparatory work is needed to ensure the CA is ready for any feedback from the EU.

13.0 Recommendations

The focus of the CA going forward in the 2nd Quarter of 2022 is to align the QTR program with the CA strategic plan and be proactively moving toward its implementation.

The CA is proactive in its drive to be a competent authority by making adequate preparations whilst waiting for EU feedback on the RMI CA EU Questionnaire.



Acknowledgments

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MIMRA Management and the Board

Fisheries Industry

Competent Authority Team

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to establish the Competent Authority Division.

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