



4th Quarter

**COMPETENT
AUTHORITY
QUARTERLY
REPORT**

Prepared by the Competent
Authority Team

October-December
2022

Picture by: Caleb Joseph

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Introduction

The last quarter of 2022 saw continued progress in the CA's progress toward achieving EU accreditation. As industry members were provided updates on the EU accreditation process, the next step forward was tasked to both the CA and the industry, to prove that one facility and one or more vessels comply with the RMI standards and that the CA has records to show proof of compliance. There is constant cooperation between both parties to ensure efforts are ongoing in these areas so that RMI moves closer to its EU accreditation status.

While work progresses and grows, the CA is also pursuing new team members to contribute to the vast areas involved in the regulatory work.

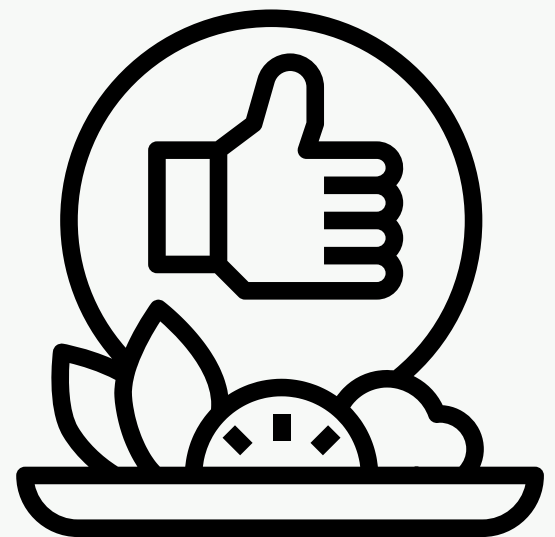
Interviews for CA auditors and managers

The month of October resulted in interviews for CA Officer and the CA Manager. As the Competent Authority moves closer to receiving EU accreditation, the team must grow, necessitating the additional personnel.



Food Safety Training with MOHHS

The CA participated in the virtual food safety training on laboratory requirements for food imported and exported in the RMI with the Ministry of Health. As they control industrially fished tuna goods that are exported as RMI products, MOHHS is extending its task force on food safety, adding the CA to the task force.



Inspections

01

MISCO Inspection

The CA conducted its first initial inspection of the MISCO market's processing facility for 2022. MISCO has the intention to upgrade its facility to meet standards for exporting reef fish and tuna to the United States. Therefore, MISCO established communication with the CA for their future endeavors. The assessment included infrastructure and GMP conditions both internally and externally along with conditions of the chillers and freezers used to hold fish. Water samples were also collected and tested.

02

OIFMC Inspection

Outer Islands Fish Market Center was subjected to its first initial inspection in 2022 conducted by the CA. OIFMC focuses on importing reef fish from the outer islands of the Marshall Islands to be sold in the capital, Majuro. There is interest to send reef fish to US consumers which pushed the market to develop contact with the CA. The CA, upon inspecting the facility's sound infrastructure, noted OIFMC's potential to meet the EU market and provided advice for changes and upgrades needed to push the facility for EU authorization. The assessment included infrastructure and GMP conditions both internally and externally along with conditions of the chillers and freezers used to hold fish. Water samples were also collected and submitted for testing coliform and E.coli.

03

PII Inspection

The CA conducted its 2nd inspection of the PII Dock for 2022. PII has been a proactive industry member, by participating in CA and industry-held meetings, training, and workshops including inspections and sampling initiatives and drives by the CA. Their commendable effort and cooperation give them much progress towards full compliance with the various requirements set by the Competent Authority initiatives and drives.



03

04

PPF Inspection

PPF had its second inspection of 2022 for its processing facility. The inspection included an assessment of infrastructure and GMP conditions internally and externally, chillers and freezer conditions, receiving areas, and the conditions of the processing areas, amenities, and waste areas. During the lack of processing activities for almost 3 years, PPF has taken the opportunity to fix outstanding plant infrastructure issues identified in the CA inspections toward meeting the RMI Standards. PPF, through the CA initiatives and drives, has engaged its expertise to assist in training for both the industry and CA on numerous occasions and has also been one of the vocal voices in cooperating with the CA work and the industry drives in RMI. They have all the necessary food safety mechanisms in place and will be the first ones to qualify in meeting RMI standards and the EU if major infrastructure renovations are carried out.

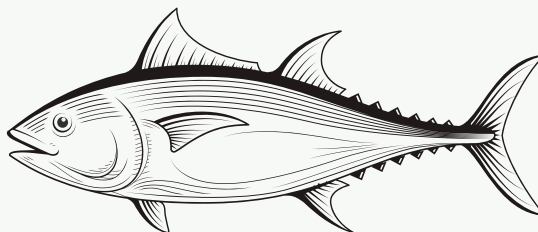
05

MIFV Inspection

The CA completed its second inspection for the MIFV processing facility for 2022. The assessment included infrastructure & GMP conditions internally and externally, chiller and freezer conditions, HACCP documentation, SSOP documentation, GMP documentation, water testing, histamine testing, and environmental and personnel swabs. MIFV has continued on their processing for their Asia and US markets and is looking into working with the CA in meeting the RMI Standards to enter the EU market.

Fish4ACP

A workshop launching for FISH4ACP was held in November 2022 as a second phase project initiative by FAO in supporting the Marshall Islands fishery initiatives and the project drives in the various sectors of the industry including support for the Competent Authority work.



Workshops/ Training

01

Training with Jope & Cushla

Jope Tamani, from FFA, and advisor Cushla conducted training in understanding market access for the Competent Authority and industry members. There are multiple markets for fish exporters to export to, but this training focused mainly on the large markets for tuna which are the US, EU, and China. The main market for the members that participated in the online training interested in the EU which requires Competent Authority. The training explained why the Competent Authority must comply with standards that are deemed equivalent to the EU market. These standards in turn produce two (2) types of certificates: the Health Certificate and the Catch Certificate, which verify that IUU activity was not carried out when catching these fish. Jope and Cushla emphasized the CA's job to assure the safety of products being produced in facilities and establishments under the full control of the CA of that country. This training was great for the RMI, FSM, and Samoa as they were the newly established CA in the process of having a fully operational CA. There was also participation from the industry members, which gave an opportunity for them to understand the new market changes.

02

Crew Standards Workshop with FFA

Tatiana attended the crew standards workshop with FFA Perry Smith and Leonard Rodwell. Industry professionals were invited to the session to learn about the minimal requirements for crew members of fishing vessels. The presentation included information about crewing labor standards, with topics such as managing crew contracts, how basic human rights are protected, how to handle deaths, travel expenses, insurance, rest intervals, etc. The RMI agents described how crewing is carried out by agencies in the nations of the crew members and how little is known about the processes. Great points were made and learned about how crew members should be treated and what rights they have when working on ships.

03

SAW 3

Tatiana took part in the third Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW) that SPC held. She participated in SAW 1 and SAW 2 earlier in the year and wanted to continue to build capacity for stock assessment. From the workshop, what Tatiana most noted was how stock assessments were presented at the SC18 and the steps SC takes to formulate management advice later on.

05

04

EU Tracent Training

To comprehend the EU export certification system, the CA and participants from PPF and MIFV teamed up in a Zoom meeting with an EU representative. The training demonstrated how simple and user-friendly the system is for when the RMI begins exporting to the EU. Since the CA and the industry will both be using the system to submit information about fish exports, it was a good idea to start becoming familiar with it. The system also has great advantages in that once RMI is an EU-authorized country, the CA can create and edit amendments necessary when a facility or vessel has complied with the RMI standards and EU requirements.

05

Food Safety Training with IAEA

A follow-up Food Safety Training was conducted by the MOHHS and various stakeholders, with only a few participants due to the Christmas season. The expertise will assist by providing a lab in the US that carries out some of the test requirements for the Competent Authority. This will benefit the CA testing requirements, as well as the industry, whose request for a lab close to the RMI can be addressed through the US-based lab.

Follow-Up Inspections

MISCO

A month following its initial inspection, the CA performed a follow-up assessment of MISCO's processing facility. The significant improvements noted from the inspection is backed by MISCO's embracing of CA facility standards, and their aspirations to export fish to the USA's mainland customers.

OIFMC

The CA's follow-up inspection of OIFMC showed certain improvements in their facility. The OIFMC plant is in great condition for a processing facility and is working to implement documentation like HACCP, SSOP, and training materials. OIFMC strives to maintain good standards to sell fish to not just consumers in Majuro, but also to buyers outside of the RMI.

Other Facilities

In December, other follow-up inspections and activities carried out, including:

- MIFV follow-up and product sampling for histamine
- PII follow-up inspection, no sampling due to no fish landing
- PPF follow-up inspection, sampling for histamine, and organoleptic evaluation.

Since 2021, these companies have been subject to inspections and follow-ups, and they are aware of the conditions that must be satisfied before follow-ups can be carried out.

06

New Employee

We welcome the team's new CA auditor, Donny Andrike. Donny was recruited and oriented into the CA processes and internal training.



Jabbuk Inspection

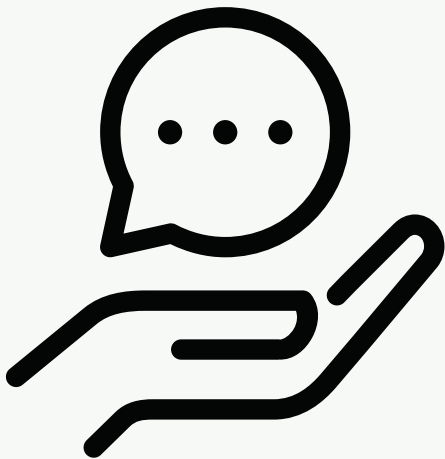
The CA conducted its first inspection of an RMI-flagged vessel, FV Jabbuk. Jabbuk is part of the Pan Pacific Fishing purse seine fleets. The CA team, along with the PPF's fleet manager, Jabbuk's radio operator, and the captain toured the vessel, from the engine room to the bridge, to inspect if the vessel is kept in a hygienic and maintained condition. The CA also collected samples to test for histamine and performed an organoleptic evaluation of the fish on board in addition to the inspection.

Budget

There were no expandables in the budget for the last quarter of 2022 while awaiting discussions and meetings with the World Bank for the 2023 budget allocation.

Achievements

All documentary assessments of the Competent Authority were undertaken and seen to be satisfactory with the EU requesting proof of compliance by the operators to the RMI Standards and EU Standards for granting authorization.

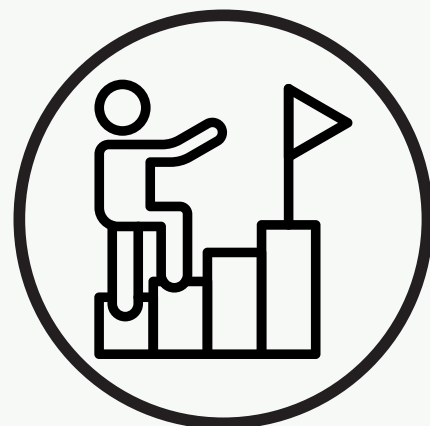


Recommendations

The CA needs the Industry to be constantly interacting with them so both parties can fully understand and work on EU market-related and RMI Standards requirements and obligations.

Challenges

- Implementation of the food safety system on board the vessels.
- Improvement of infrastructure conditions of the processing plants.
- Supporting services to the fishery operators in the fishery value chain to also take on the challenge to work with operators to improve conditions imposed on them by the CA.



Acknowledgments

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MIMRA Management and the Board

Fisheries Industry

Competent Authority Team

World Bank

Prop World Bank Team

We thank you for your continued support.

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