



MARSHALL
ISLANDS
MARINE
RESOURCES
AUTHORITY

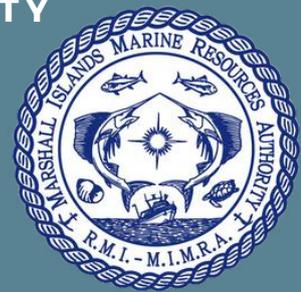


**COMPETENT
AUTHORITY
4TH QUARTER
REPORT
2021**

**MARSHALL ISLANDS MARINE
RESOURCES AUTHORITY**

October-December 2021

Prepared by the CA Team



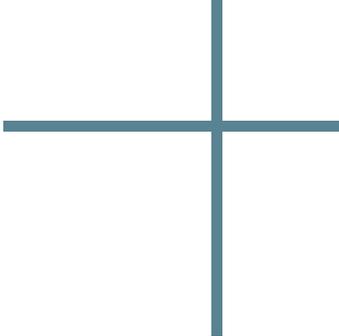


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1.0 INTRODUCTION

A milestone achieved during the 4th quarter of 2021 was the receiving of the response from the EU on the two CA-submitted questionnaires, which is a pivotal step towards EU accreditation for RMI fisheries.

The highlights of the 4th Quarter were the RMI 1st Questionnaire assessment response from the EU and the Internal audit training for industry and CA which resulted in plant internal audits exercises and presentations by the participants.

The CA was assigned an intern, who took part in field inspection, training and presentations to learn about the CA work.

A number of stakeholder meetings were held and presentations were made including industry inspections.



2.0 Capacity Building/ Training/ CA In-house Presentation

2.1 Regional Competent Authority Capacity Building

The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) hosted a training for Competent Authorities in the Pacific region on capacity building and development from the end of October through to November 2021. Mr. Jope Tamani and Cushla Hogarth conducted this training for already existing and newly developed CA's in the region. It was a learning experience for all as the newly developed CA's were able to learn from older CA's of the various challenges and issues about the training elements.

2.2 Internal Audit Training

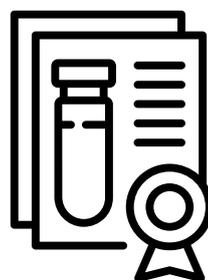
The Competent Authority team and industry did a 2-day workshop to understand internal auditing procedures. Dexter Martinez, PPF QA, conducted the training for the participants, which included QC personnel, maintenance, product line management, accounting/financial personnel, and operations management. The purpose of this training was to have those not in the QA department internally audit those that are in the QA department, which was the reason for inviting employees from all different departments. The training proved useful for those outside of the QA department, giving tools to be able to ensure if the organization's risk management, governance, and internal control processes are operating effectively.



2.3 CA In-House Mentoring and Presentation

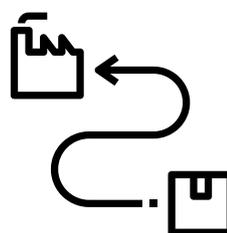
1. Understanding HACCP

Several trainings have been conducted under the World Bank Project and through the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). A series of short in-house sessions were held including presentations and practical applications, emphasized essential HACCP concepts and skills.



2. Traceability

Traceability is one of the essential components towards export certification. The CA conducted a traceability assessment of MIFV to confirm if the necessary procedures and systems for product handling and integrity checking were in place. Traceability will form one of the important requirements to ensure products are from a legal source. The CA team undertook the exercise as part of learning as well as part of its inspection.



3. Presentation on the Requirements related to EU audits of Competent Authorities

The purpose of this presentation was to highlight the EU auditing process of the CA and the areas the CA must prepare for in the event an EU assessment takes place.

4. EU Questionnaire

The CA Team met together to consolidate and put together a response to the feedback received from the EU on the assessment of the RMI MIMRA EU Questionnaires. Outside of the CA, the response was shared with other MIMRA persons, such as the Director, Legal Counsel, Offshore Fisheries Advisor, Francisco, and others for their comments and inputs before submission to the EU.

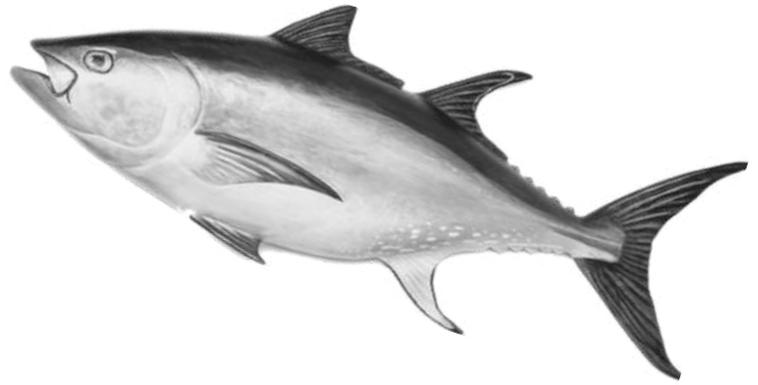
3.0 Stakeholder Presentation and Meetings

3.1 Zoom Meeting with EU Delegation

The CA in collaboration with the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) organized a Zoom meeting with the Pacific EU Delegation to provide some insight and understanding to stakeholders queries related to the EU market access and the requirements for RMI CA authorization. Participants to the meetings were PII, PPF, MIFV, Koo's Shipping, Foreign Affairs, Trade, Customs, Majuro Quarantine Division, the CA team, and Director of MIMRA Glen Joseph.

3.2 Meeting with Customs

As a key stakeholder towards EU accreditation, the Customs Authority has a significant role in collaborating with the CA for endeavors related to fish exports and imports among others. The CA team had a meeting with the Customs Authority on November 11, 2021, to bring awareness to the requirements of the CA concerning import and export, as well as the important roles the Customs Authority will play in the process with support from MIMRA.



3.3 Fishing Vessels and Bilateral Partners Presentation

Separate presentations regarding RMI food safety requirements were conducted for both the domestic-based RMI fishing vessel operators and their agents, and for the bilateral fishing fleet partners.

Those present on behalf of the domestic fishing fleets were Pan Pacific Foods Inc., Pacific International Inc., Marshall Islands Fishing Venture Inc., and Koo's Shipping. Those present for the bilateral via Zoom were Taiwan Deep Sea Fishing, Queen Tuvalu, RD Fishing, Japan Far Seas Purseine Fishing Association, and China Fisheries Association, inclusive also of RMI domestic fleet operators. These meetings took place in October and November respectively.



4.0 Inspections

4.1 Plant Verification and Follow-Up

4.1.1 MIFV Inspection

- Facility Inspection:

The CA team conducted the 2nd inspection for the MIFV processing facility for 2021. The purpose of this inspection is to make sure MIFV is moving forward in its efforts to renovate/renew any non-conformances from previous inspections, in compliance with new RMI standards on building structure for fish processing facilities. The improvements of the MIFV facilities is a positive exhibition of their tandem work with the Competent Authority team.

- Traceability Assessment:

A traceability exercise was carried out by the CA team and intern Ms. Faith Muller. Muller was able to learn about the traceability of fish from moment of landing and the different coding mechanisms involved in ensuring the same fish is handled throughout until packed for export. Traceability assessment is an essential part of the CA official control systems in ensuring fish sources are legal and from approved vessels, as well as ensuring the easy traceability of the fish quantifying mechanism.



4.1.2 PPF Inspection

The PPF team guided the CA team throughout their processing facility and the maintenance around the area PPF has been working on. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 lockdown, PPF has not been able to process their products for over a year. PPF is taking advantage of this non-processing time to maintain the facility to meet the new RMI standards for processing facility structure. The CA team sees this as a good sign from management in their efforts to improve the processing facility.



4.1.3 KMI Inspection

KMI's efforts to comply with the RMI standards are a good sign for the CA team as they are a fairly new processing facility. KMI has not yet processed products as they are waiting for their specialist for tuna products to run the facility, who is unable to enter the RMI due to the border closure. KMI has been showing positive signs of them wanting to move forward with the CA team.



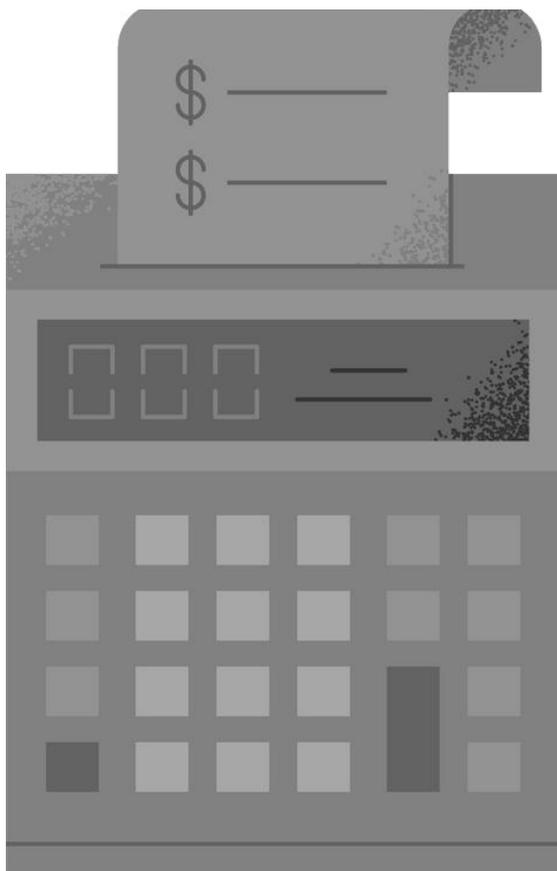
4.1.4 PII Inspection

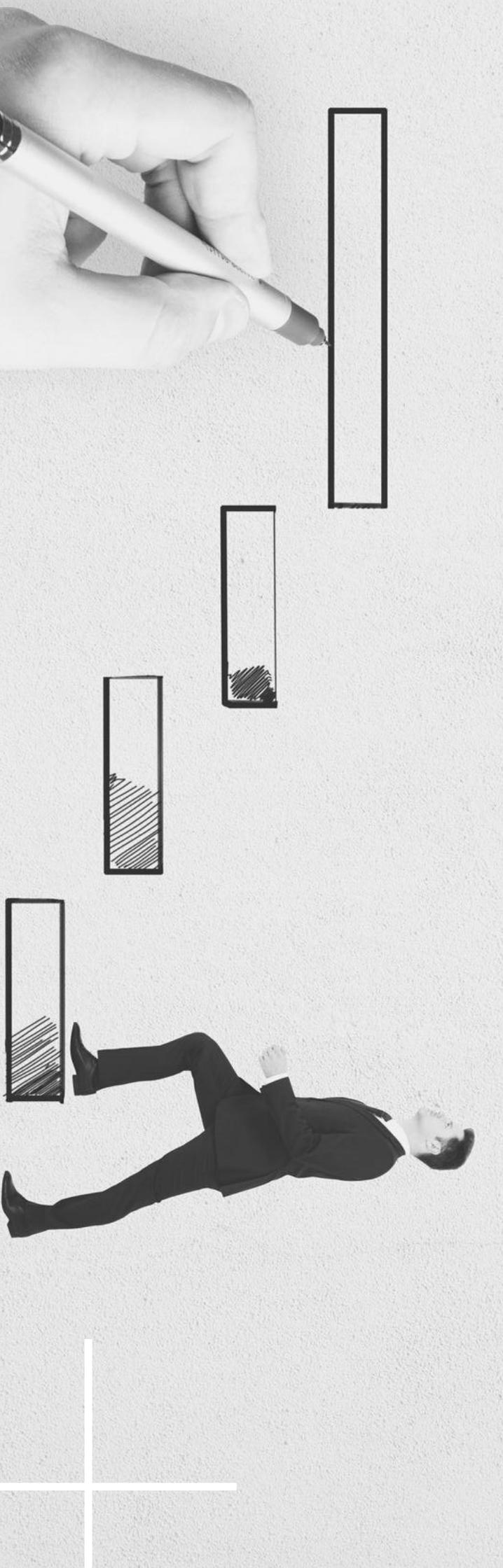
No inspection was undertaken for PII in the last quarter of 2021.

5.0 Budget

There is no budgetary allocation for the CA in the 3rd and 4th Quarters of 2021, as the funding for the CA operations was under the World Bank. Now that the funding from these sources has ceased while awaiting new funding, MIMRA only funded one activity at the cost of USD 1,190 for the internal audit training with the industry.

Many of the items for the CA were purchased prior to the World Bank Funding ceasing.





6.0 Achievements

The response was received from the EU on the RMI submitted questionnaire. The CA team and assisting MIMRA members will work on a response for further evaluation.

The continuous partnership between the CA and the industry is a positive direction in understanding the changing roles on the fish export fronts in RMI. Collaborations with relevant stakeholders and authorities are also continuing to develop moving forward.

7.0 Challenges

Due to Covid-19, a few operators are unable to progress further in processing, hindering opportunities for the CA to measure compliance. The CA officers are unable to board fishing vessels – particularly RMI vessels – during fish landing for containerization for food safety evaluation.

Implementation of the new RMI standards may be challenging, but it will be a journey where the CA and the industry can work together in its implementation to accommodate emerging new requirements to meet new market standards.

8.0 Recommendations

As there are a lot of competing areas, the CA is working towards fast tracking accreditation for the EU market, while carefully planning and focusing on individual tasks to meet established goals and priorities.

This is an opportune time for the industry to work and improve on their factory structures and other related areas such as HACCP documentation and implementation for new operators, while the covid-19 pandemic restrictions are still in place. Once the RMI standard is in full effect, there will be the imposition of penalties following the CA assessment criteria.



Acknowledgements

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MIMRA Management and the Board

Fisheries Industry

World Bank Group

Competent Authority Team

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

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