



January–March

# 2023 Quarterly Report

Prepared By

Competent Authority Team

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# INTRODUCTION



2023 saw a shift in the RMI Competent Authority staffing, with the recruitment of a new officer and a manager. Ongoing EU efforts by the CA led to the development of the most recent documentary response, which awaits feedback from the EU. The delegation of the European Union to the Pacific also paid a visit to the landing site and the processing facilities in Majuro. The CA team's participation in PNA meetings featured a lot of activity as well. As the CA concentrates on EU conformity, the demand for inspection also leads to a few fishing vessel inspections. With two new employees on board, the CA team anticipates a productive 2023.

# OUR 2023 CA TEAM



**Dexter Martinez**  
*Manager*



**Tatiana Shoniber**  
*Senior Officer*

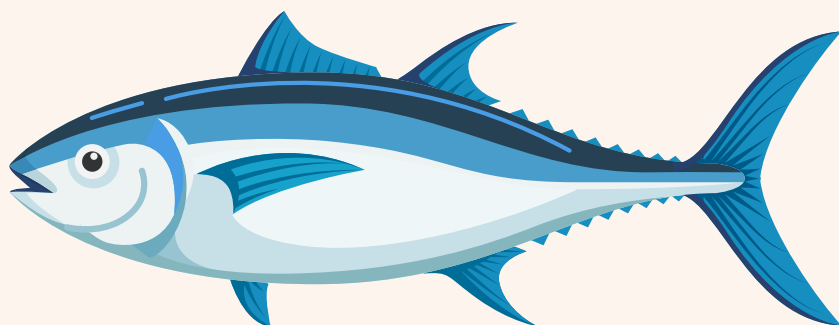


**Donny Andrike**  
*Officer*

# NEW STAFF

## HIRING OF COMPETENT AUTHORITY MANAGER

The Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) recruited Dexter Martinez for the position of Competent Authority Manager. The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) through MIMRA currently exports fish and fishery products to the USA, Thailand, and Taiwan among the main market players. In efforts to diversify fisheries exports to the European Union (EU) market, the RMI Competent Authority (RMI CA) was established for the purpose of improving RMI sanitary controls of fish exports, while also meeting the EU export market standards and requirements. The CA Manager position will play a substantial role in fulfilling regulatory roles/functions on behalf of the Authority and the State. Thus, MIMRA hired Dexter Martinez based on his qualifications, as well as experiences and skills derived from his time in the fisheries industry sector.



# WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS

## LABOR STANDARDS ON FISHING VESSEL

Tatiana attended the labor standards of fishing vessels workshop in Nadi, Fiji. Strenuous working conditions on fishing vessels in the Pacific can be characterized by long hours, high levels of risk, poor living conditions, low pay, and extended time at sea. The workshop focused on upholding internationally-recognized standards for safe working conditions in Pacific Island Countries. Tatiana, from her time observing how other countries deal with fishing vessel labor issues, remarked: “I've learned from this workshop that many PICs are unsure of which labor rules apply to fishermen on fishing vessels. Foreign-flagged vessels are not subject to national labor regulations, and the labor laws do not apply to fishing vessels. The management of the fishing industry has not adequately addressed the working conditions on fishing vessels for both domestic and foreign crews. The crews of fishing vessels fall into a wide gray area where there is little coordination between government entities. These organizations were brought together for this session to start collaborating on ways to safeguard ship crews and make it appealing to work on them.”



# COMPETENT AUTHORITY REGIONAL TRAINING

The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) conducted a three-week training course for Regional Competent Authority Officers and Industry officials. The objective of the course was to provide the fundamental technical and practical knowledge and competencies required for Competent Authority Officers on the topics:

- Background to the Competent Authority
- The Roles and Duties CA officers
- Code of Ethics for CA Officers
- CA services, tools, and equipment
- CA Documentation
- Health Standards for Fish & Fishery products
- Certification
- Reporting
- EU Rapid Alert
- Crisis Management
- Internal Audit and Review of CA systems
- Food Safety Management
- Good Hygiene Practices
- Seafood HACCP
- Fishing & Processing Techs.
- Understanding Processors
- Implementation of verification, approval & Surveillance
- Understanding key legislation, requirements, and standards with a specific focus on EU, US, China, and New Zealand markets.
- Inspection and Auditing practical sessions
- Factory visit to observe structure and compliance.
- Non-compliance and Corrective Actions
- Inventory Control & Traceability
- Leadership and people skills
- Conflict Resolution



The training was timely for the newly recruited CA officer to build capacity. It was also a good opportunity for the new CA Manager to renew commitments for continued cooperation and technical support from FFA, and PEUMP Program, and to network with other CAs from within the region.

# VISITORS

## EU AMBASSADOR SITE VISITS

The Delegation of the European Union to the Pacific and CA team discussed upgrading tuna strategies developed with the support of FISH4ACP and RMI's accreditation to export RMI fisheries products to the EU. The delegation also toured throughout the RMI fisheries industries and visited the PII harbor, which serves as a fish landing site, and MIFV & PPF factories and cold store.



## PNAO GRAND OPENING

The first gathering of PNA members since the Covid-19 pandemic occurred with the PNA office's grand opening of its four-story headquarters in Majuro. Delegations from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru, RMI, FSM, Palau, and Tokelau, as well as guests from the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), attended the week-long event. Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and Palau ministers were able to attend these events out of the eight (8) PNA + Tokelau members. The event comprised of the opening ceremony, ministerial and official meetings, and PNAO/MIMRA-hosted off-island excursions.





# INSPECTIONS

## DOCUMENTARY REVIEW FOR RMI FLAGGED FISHING-VESSELS

During February, the Competent Authority conducted Documentary Check/Review for 11 RMI Flagged Fishing vessels that submitted their HACCP plans (Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points) and Pre-Requisite Program Manuals, which are mandatory under the RMI Fish Processing & Export Regulation 2020 and the RMI Industry Standards. The objective is to establish and enforce proper hygiene, handling, and food-safety practices for all establishments exporting fish and fishery products from the RMI. Once these documents are fully compliant and endorsed by both the CA and the operators, the CA will conduct training for the crew on these respective vessels to ensure proper implementation of their HACCP plans and Pre-Requisite Program Manuals, which then should enable their products to meet EU, US or China market standards. The development of these HACCP plans and Pre-Requisite Program Manuals has been an ongoing effort for some time now, for all parties involved, with much-appreciated technical support from our Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) counterparts. Said development is a major step forward in the Competent Authority's efforts to get RMI access to the EU and other markets.



# LABORATORY UPDATE

The National Marine Environmental Laboratory is the initiative of the Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority to have an establishment that can meet its oceanic and coastal fisheries needs, and at the same time cater to national and international markets. The objectives of the laboratory are to meet requirements for fish exports; marine monitoring; training; scientific and technological research and service provision purposes. The laboratory is an integral component of the work of the Competent Authority and for organizational drives and initiatives. With the intention of entering the European market for seafood exports, the CA has to meet EU obligations in certifying that fish from its vessels and/or processing plants meets EU sanitary standards and health requirements. Meeting the latter will require the use of laboratories, which must be able to perform tests required by national authorities as well as for the intended export market. With the assistance of the University of the South Pacific, the Institute of Applied Sciences, and the International Atomic Energy Agency, MIMRA was able to finalize the layout of the Chemistry, Microbiology, and Radiation units of its Lab. It is envisaged that this project will be completed at the end of 2023.



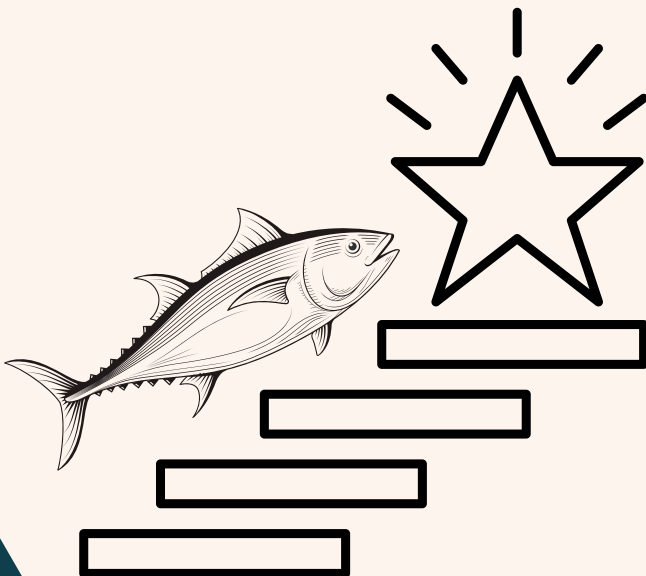
## BUDGET

CA 1st Quarter expenses were expended under the MIMRA budget mainly in the areas of Sampling and Laboratory testing.



## ACHIEVEMENTS

CA began the first step of the proof of compliance by conducting a Document Review of the HACCP and GHP of the operators last February and March to check pre-requisite program compliance with EU Standards.



## CHALLENGES

Logistical requirements of sending frozen fish samples to laboratories outside of RMI.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

CA needs Management Commitment from the higher level management of the industry for the full implementation of the EU Standards.

# 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.



**MIMRA**  
Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority

# GET IN TOUCH



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