



# 5<sup>th</sup> SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

11–14 October 2022



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## Breakout session feedback on WP4: Implementation of the Regional framework on aquatic biosecurity and National Aquatic Biosecurity Plans

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## *Overview*

1. This paper provides the results of the respective Breakout Group (BOG) sessions on WP4: Implementation of the Regional framework on aquatic biosecurity and National Aquatic Biosecurity Plans held during the 5<sup>th</sup> SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture, 11-14 October 2022.

## *Background information*

1. Effective biosecurity assists in safeguarding local food production and access to markets, both of which are needed to increase economic resilience and decrease dependence on food imports within the Pacific. It is for this reason that Fisheries Ministers reiterated the need for development of aquatic biosecurity capacity at the recent Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM3) held in August 2022.
2. The SPC is facilitating the development of aquatic biosecurity capacity through the Regional Aquatic Biosecurity Framework (the Strategy). This framework provides guidance on development and implementation of biosecurity policies at a regional level. SPC is also working with its members to develop effective national aquatic biosecurity plans using principles outlined within the Framework.
3. Implementation of biosecurity planning at a practical level has been delayed by COVID, so it is now timely to reassess progress and develop a way forward. Participants at RTMFA5 were invited to share experiences and learnings encountered when formulating or implementing national biosecurity plans. This feedback will be used to identify the priority areas requiring further support and contribute to the mid-term review of the Strategy.

## *What we wanted to get out of the Breakout sessions*

4. The breakout sessions were designed to engage with delegates and to facilitate discussion to get their perspectives on the points raised in WP4 in paragraphs 12 to 17. These paragraphs sought feedback on the status of national aquatic biosecurity plans and any challenges that members had in implementing such plans.
5. The session also sought the delegates views and input on the process of moving forward following a period of hiatus during COVID, together with any suggestions for improvements that could be considered.

### *Breakout group arrangement*

The breakout groups were facilitated by FAME staff and organised as per the table below. The outcomes of discussions are consolidated and tabulated from pages 3 onward.

Breakout groups	BOG 1 (FR-hybrid)	BOG 2 (in-person)	BOG 3 (in-person)	BOG 4 (virtual)
Facilitators	Solen Devez	Ian Freeman	George Shedawi	Richard Veeran
Notetakers	Hugo Nguyen Julie-Anne Kerandel	Elana Shishkova Ruria Iteraera	Collette Brown Sebastien Gislard	Carolina Garcia Imhof Margaret Fox
Members	Polynésie française Nouvelle-Calédonie France Wallis et Futuna	Australia, Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Fiji.	New Zealand, Palau, Samoa, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands	Guam, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Tokelau, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu
Observers	LMMA, JICA, WB.	LMMA, JICA, WB	WB, JICA	USC, ANCORS, SPREP, Waitt Ins., FAO SAP
CBFD	WF	WS, CK, MH, VU, SB, TV	KI, TO, FM, FJ, TO	cChange, CI, BUY, WWF Munda Western Province, WWF SI, UW, WWF Pacific Solomon Islands Program, FAO SAP World Fish, OPOR

Document de travail 4: Réflexion sur les problématiques et difficultés relatives à la mise en œuvre de la biosécurité aquatique	
Groupe de travail 1	
Questions	Réponses
<p>1. Avez-vous des connaissances ou de l'expérience dans l'élaboration d'un plan national de biosécurité aquatique ? Si oui, veuillez les partager.</p>	<p><i>Nouvelle-Calédonie</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partie crevetticulture: réseau REC (réseaux épidémiosurveillance crevettes), audits réalisés par le LNC (laboratoire de NC).</li> <li>• Pour les poissons: CCDTAM, travail sur suivi du grossissement à Touho, essai de développer la compétence locale avec le laboratoire de Kone mais pas de vétérinaire spécialisé en aquaculture sur la zone. Possibilité d'aide de la métropole (Jean-Christophe Raymond)</li> <li>• Etude sur la traçabilité des contaminations des produits de la mer par les composants métalliques. Va être reprise pour les huîtres.</li> <li>• Aux frontières: certificats, analyses systématiques exigées, mises en quarantaines</li> </ul> <p><i>Polynésie française</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crevette: filière en développement, analyse de risque à l'importation (réalisé avec l'aide de la CPS et Brian Jones-New Zealand) et surveillance en place.</li> <li>• Perliculture : plan difficile à mettre en place dû à l'éloignement des îles. Travail avec la division biosécurité, groupe de défense sanitaire et le laboratoire national. Echanges techniques réalisés avec Ifremer et INRA sur les maladies de poissons et d'huîtres perlières.</li> <li>• Essai de mise en place d'une base de données avec Ifremer sur l'analyse des juvéniles dans le cadre de la recherche de maladies: permet de savoir si l'origine provient des éclosiers. Demande du territoire que les éclosiers soient classés ICPE II.</li> <li>• Projet Paci-seaweed: étude sur la qualité alimentaire des algues.</li> </ul> <p><i>Wallis et Futuna</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pas d'exploitations aquacoles, pas de plan de biosécurité mis en place.</li> </ul>



<p>2. <i>D'après votre expérience, quels sont les domaines prioritaires pour la mise en œuvre des plans de biosécurité aquatique au niveau national ? Si la mise en œuvre n'a pas encore eu lieu, quelles difficultés entrevoyez-vous ?</i></p>	<p><i>Nouvelle-Calédonie</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manque de référent local disposant de connaissances spécifiques en aquaculture/pisciculture. Limite les possibilités en termes de réactivité.</li> <li>• Plan de biosécurité pour les mollusques dans le cadre du développement de l'ostréiculture.</li> </ul> <p><i>Polynésie française</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection aux frontières des ressources locales. Les états et territoires océaniques ne pourront pas concurrencer les volumes asiatiques mais ont un atout sur la qualité des eaux et faible présence de maladies. Capacité de diagnostic avec experts et mise en place de réseaux entre experts. (ex: atlas histopathologie sur les huîtres perlières).</li> <li>• Besoin de mise en place d'outils d'aide au suivi des pathologies</li> <li>• Difficulté de développer un plan de biosécurité national lorsque pas d'objectif commun entre biosécurité stricte et développement aquacole (CPS pourrait aider sur ce point, afin d'améliorer la transversalité entre les différents organismes en charge).</li> <li>• Besoin de formation sur les espèces émergentes.</li> </ul>
<p>3. <i>Pensez-vous qu'il est pertinent de limiter la portée du plan d'action à la santé et au transfert des animaux aquatiques, ou celle-ci doit-elle être élargie (p. ex., pour englober les maladies des plantes aquatiques et les organismes nuisibles, la sécurité sanitaire des aliments, la pollution génétique) ?</i></p>	<p><i>Nouvelle-Calédonie</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accord cadre en préparation pour 2023. Demande de faire un état des lieux des huîtres en NC, pour savoir quelles espèces peuvent être exploitées.</li> <li>• Favorable pour élargir le plan biosécurité le plus possible aux autres espèces pour protéger le territoire des pathogènes.</li> </ul> <p><i>Polynésie française</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schéma directeur sur l'aquaculture mis à jour et inclut les aspects biosécurité, mais difficulté de mise en œuvre car différents services compétents.</li> </ul>
<p>4. <i>Selon vous, votre État ou Territoire est-il doté de lois et de réglementations adaptées pour répondre aux problématiques et gérer les procédures liées à la biosécurité aquatique ?</i></p>	<p><i>Polynésie française</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La réglementation doit être harmonisée et transversale car gérée par des services différents tant au niveau des services techniques que scientifiques (compétences partagées, environnement, santé, commerce etc.). Le terme biosécurité n'est pas forcément adapté.</li> <li>• Aspect régional pas facile à intégrer, le rôle de la CPS est limité pour réaliser des plans nationaux car ne doit pas jouer le rôle d'agent de biosécurité. De plus la possibilité d'exportation des produits dépend aussi des exigences sanitaires du pays importateur, les pays doivent intégrer cela dans leur plan de développement des exports.</li> </ul>



	<p><i>Nouvelle-Calédonie</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La réglementation semble assez adaptée. Les cas précédents d'introduction de pathogène sur la crevette a permis de renforcer l'aspect suivi et réglementaire. Réseau bien structuré au niveau de la veille sanitaire. Volonté d'étendre la réglementation et le suivi à l'ensemble des espèces, même non CITES pour protéger le territoire (risque important d'entrée de maladies dû à l'insularité).</li> </ul>
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Breakout Group 2	
Questions	Answers
<p>1. Do you have any learning or experience in developing a national aquatic biosecurity plan? If so, please share.</p>	<p><i>Tonga</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tonga advised that it does not have specific legislation addressing biosecurity, but new sections were being prepared in other Acts to address biosecurity and CITIES issues. Legislation currently addressing biosecurity include the <i>Animal Diseases Act 1988</i> and the <i>Quarantine Act 1988</i>.</li> <li>• Tonga members advised that they would like assistance from SPC in revision of their current biosecurity legislation.</li> </ul> <p><i>Papua New Guinea</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PNG has a biosecurity plan, but members advised that it was currently not fully endorsed by the government.</li> <li>• Still having export issues for aquaculture product. Export of prawns to Australia was raised as an example of export issues during plenary discussions</li> </ul> <p><i>Fiji</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A workshop on biosecurity was conducted in Suva during 2017, but there has been little follow-up on the recommendations from this workshop. The workshop was not conducted by SPC, although some staff did attend. It was recommended that a report from this workshop be circulated amongst members as an initial action to promote further discussion and future action.</li> </ul> <p><i>Kiribati</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiribati has a Biosecurity Act, but members advised that it is more focused on terrestrial biosecurity than aquatic biosecurity. A risk analysis document has been developed and this currently focuses on the introduction of sandfish.</li> </ul>



	<p>There was general agreement amongst those members present that,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a need to map out what biosecurity planning had been undertaken by various PICTs, and</li> <li>• there is a need for more collaboration between authorities within PICTs, in particular between fisheries and quarantine authorities.</li> </ul>
<p>2. <i>Based on your experience, what are the priority areas for the implementation of aquatic biosecurity plans at the national level? If implementation has not occurred, what challenges do you anticipate?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was agreed that there are challenges in understanding which organizations and personnel are responsible for aquatic biosecurity matters. In addition, collaboration with colleagues in other departments can be difficult.</li> <li>• Members identified that there is a need for training on conducting disease risk assessments and familiarization with the WOHAI reporting requirements and the Codex Alimentarius. Additional capacity building was required in developing SOPs and safety management systems to support this work.</li> <li>• There is a requirement for access to suitable testing facilities by many PICTs.</li> <li>• Linked to the requirement for laboratory resources is the accreditation of laboratories and training of technicians.</li> <li>• One member noted that development of an agreed biosecurity plan for Madagascar was dependent on getting support from the Ministry of Finance and that bioeconomic models can help demonstrate the value of investing in biosecurity.</li> <li>• The member from PNG advised that there was pressure from government to double export revenue and recognition by markets of biosecurity arrangements was seen as being key to achieving this.</li> </ul>
<p>3. <i>Do you consider limiting the scope to aquatic animal health and translocation appropriate, or should this be expanded (e.g., include aquatic plant diseases and pests, food safety, genetic pollution)?</i></p>	<p><i>Fiji</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food standards are more often implemented for EU standards to enable market access</li> </ul> <p><i>Kiribati</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also noted that their Verification Division's primary role is to ensure standards meet export market requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Members present agreed that,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if an aquatic biosecurity plan were to be developed the scope should be expanded beyond animal disease and translocation,</li> <li>• considered food safety to be out-of-scope,</li> <li>• genetic pollution is something that might be considered but requires better understanding.</li> </ul>



4. <i>Does your country/territory have adequate laws and regulations to address aquatic biosecurity issues and procedures?</i>	Members noted that legislation varied between PICTs. For territories (e.g., French territories and COMPAC states that follow national standards) biosecurity legislation applies, whereas this may not be the case for other countries.
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Breakout Group 3	
Questions	Answers
1. <i>Do you have any learning or experience in developing a national biosecurity plan? If so, please share.</i>	<p><i>Samoa</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has previously worked with SPC to develop the Samoan National Aquatic Biosecurity Strategy 2018-21 (SNABS). This included a workshop with representatives from a various Ministries.</li> <li>• Samoa has begun implementing the SNABS but is also needs to be reviewed.</li> <li>• Other aquatic biosecurity work has included training workshops on disease diagnosis in Tilapia, disease surveillance in giant clams and contributing to WOA (OIE) disease reporting.</li> </ul> <p><i>Cook Islands</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CI has an existing national biosecurity strategy and conducted a series of multi-agency workshops in 2018.</li> <li>• Although the strategy is in-place, it is yet to be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture.</li> <li>• CI has also participated in targeted aquatic disease testing in giant clams.</li> <li>• Development of national aquatic biosecurity standards is in progress, with some actioned.</li> </ul> <p><i>Palau</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the existing Biosecurity Act 2016 and is currently developing regulations relevant to aquatic biosecurity.</li> <li>• Seeking funding to build capacity to allow implementation of the Act.</li> <li>• Palau has identified gaps in the understanding of aquatic biosecurity roles and responsible agencies. It is looking to improve existing arrangements and further develop capacity.</li> </ul> <p><i>Solomon Islands</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has existing National Strategy on Aquatic Biosecurity (2018-2023) but this has not progressed much beyond the planning stage.</li> <li>• The member from SI stated that they do not have the technical capacity to implement the strategy completely and require assistance from SPC for implementation. Have established post-entry quarantine facility.</li> </ul>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biosecurity regulations are currently focused on creating import/export standards, aquatic health management and effective governance.</li> </ul> <p><i>Federated States of Micronesia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not currently have an aquatic biosecurity plan but does have the Invasive Alien Species Program (IASP).</li> <li>• In addition to the IASP, individual states have their own invasive species taskforces, but currently only the Pohnpei group is active.</li> <li>• The government works closely with regional taskforces and rely on these for local guidance and advice.</li> <li>• Recently detected invasive catfish populations and are currently developing control plans.</li> </ul> <p><i>Tuvalu</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The member for Tuvalu advised the group that although they have the Biosecurity Act 2017, there are no regulations in-place to support the Act.</li> <li>• Tuvalu is not seeking to develop an aquatic biosecurity plan at present, instead has opted to lower biosecurity risk by only allowing the culture of native species.</li> </ul> <p><i>USA</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USA has a various plans in-place, for example the Aquatic Animal Health Plan and Aquaculture Animal Health Guidelines and offered to share these amongst members.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Based on your experience, what are the priority areas for the implementation of aquatic biosecurity plans at the national level? If implementation has not occurred, what challenges do you anticipate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions did not address the question specifically, instead most responses indicated that members felt that they had inadequate biosecurity legislation relating to aquatic biosecurity.</li> <li>• SI, Samoa, and CI indicated that, although they have a biosecurity plan, it was not adequately supported by legislation.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Do you consider limiting the scope to aquatic animal health and translocation appropriate, or should this be expanded (e.g., include aquatic plant diseases and pests, food safety, genetic pollution)?</p>	<p><i>Samoa</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed that the scope should be expanded to include aquatic plant diseases and pests but stated that food safety was already addressed through other legislation. In general, should seek to avoid duplication as this would cause confusions over roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p><i>Solomon Islands:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given that focus is currently on attracting tourism and export markets, agree that an expansion of the biosecurity scope addressing environmental issues should be considered.</li> </ul>



	<p><i>Palau</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commented that food safety should remain out of scope, but aquatic plants should be included.</li> <li>• There was general discussion regarding the term ‘genetic pollution’ with members requesting clarification on what it was and its significance. It was concluded that, although genetic pollution was a subject requiring further investigation, it should not be included in the scope of the RFis time.</li> </ul>
<p>4. <i>Does your country/territory have adequate laws and regulations to address aquatic biosecurity issues and procedures?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samoa, CI, Tuvalu, SI and Palau all indicated that they felt that their legislation was inadequate to address aquatic biosecurity issues.</li> <li>• There was general agreement there was a need to harmonise legislation and associated regulations between relevant Ministries/authorities with a PICT, but also between PICTs.</li> <li>• The USA member commented that Hawaii had developed an Interagency Biosecurity Plan to address the issue of inter-agency communication. This plan is available online.</li> </ul>

#### Breakout Group 4

Questions	Answers
<p>1. <i>Do you have any learning or experience in developing a national aquatic biosecurity plan? If so, please share.</i></p>	<p><i>USA</i></p> <p>The USA member provided the following examples of biosecurity plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing state regulations, <a href="#">Link</a></li> <li>• The USDA APHIS aquatic animal health plan, <a href="#">Link</a></li> <li>• USDA APHIS aquaculture health guidelines, <a href="#">Link</a></li> <li>• For Guam, <a href="#">Link</a></li> </ul> <p><i>New Zealand</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also advised that their plans were available on-line, <a href="#">Link</a></li> </ul> <p><i>Marshall Islands</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently developing Biosecurity Act, but still in draft form.</li> <li>• Quarantine regulation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce.</li> <li>• Members advised that they had limited to no experience in developing biosecurity plans,</li> </ul>



<p>2. <i>Based on your experience, what are the priority areas for the implementation of aquatic biosecurity plans at the national level? If implementation has not occurred, what challenges do you anticipate?</i></p>	<p>USA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commented that prevention based on risk minimisation and management protocols is preferred over response.</li> <li>• Currently investigating ballast water and biofouling as pathways for marine pest species.</li> <li>• Also reviewing quarantine requirements to better align import protocols to key markets and are considering assigning costs of implementation to producers.</li> <li>• Data sharing and data ownership is an ongoing issue.</li> <li>• Capacity building for inspection and response personnel.</li> <li>• Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan, but this is not limited to aquatic species. <a href="https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/plans/hibp/">https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/plans/hibp/</a></li> </ul>
<p>3. <i>Do you consider limiting the scope to aquatic animal health and translocation appropriate, or should this be expanded (e.g., include aquatic plant diseases and pests, food safety, genetic pollution)?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In answer to the question members requested that a holistic approach be considered when developing plans and strategies for aquatic biosecurity and therefore agreed with expanding the scope.</li> </ul> <p>USA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aquatic plant diseases and pests are generally poorly studied but the area needs more attention. There are other resources to draw from, SPC encouraged to consider a holistic approach. <a href="https://www.globalseaweed.org/">https://www.globalseaweed.org/</a></li> <li>• Genetic Pollution is an issue of potential significance. Evolution has helped populations endure many risks and dilution of this by introduced variants can have negative effects. Stock resistance to disease is a good example.</li> </ul> <p>OPOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed that aquatic biosecurity it can be challenging to look at aquatic biosecurity wholistically but considered that this was the only option for many smaller communities.</li> </ul>
<p>4. <i>Does your country/territory have adequate laws and regulations to address aquatic biosecurity issues and procedures?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation is considered adequate in some countries (for example US, AU, NZ). NZ has a biosecurity agency within MPI and supporting legislation. NOAA has a seafood inspection program (mainly for shellfish): <a href="https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/seafood-commerce-and-trade/domestic-&amp;-international-services">https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/seafood-commerce-and-trade/domestic-&amp;-international-services</a> USDA National Shellfish Sanitation Program: <a href="https://www.fda.gov/food/federalstate-food-programs/national-shellfish-sanitation-program-nssp">https://www.fda.gov/food/federalstate-food-programs/national-shellfish-sanitation-program-nssp</a></li> <li>• Some countries have laws and regulations that address biosecurity, but member considered that this is an area that needs to be strengthened and further supported.</li> </ul>



*Fiji*

- Inter-agency approach to the introduction of species.
- Draft Biosecurity plan -outcome of workshop done in 2017.
- All biosecurity compliance on aquatic species is under Biosecurity of Fiji (BAF). Fisheries works with this agency for compliance of introduction of prawns and hatchery equipment. Also working with BAF on establishing a contract established for supply from overseas hatcheries.

*Tuvalu*

- Biosecurity Act endorsed but no regulations in place at this point

*Guam*

- Has a plan, but room for opportunities for further development

*Nauru*

- Currently have an invasive species program underway in coastal waters.