

National RD&E Seafood Industry Safety Initiative

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 Introduction

The Fisheries Research & Development Corporation (FRDC) has taken the lead in developing a national strategy to address efforts and resources lacking in the workplace health and safety space of the Australian seafood industry (inclusive of aquaculture and wild-catch commercial fishing). This was due to an absence of effort to integrate safety and workplace health into fishing operations due to minimal extension of previous projects in this area.

A key driver of this current initiative is the fact that commercial fishing safety performance has not improved in last 15 years and is now considered (according to available statistics) to be one of the most dangerous occupations. However, it is acknowledged that the data available may not be an accurate representation of the actual fishing and aquaculture performance.

There have been significant resources (financial and physical) allocated to workplace health and safety (including behaviour, mental health, training and systems for data collection) over the last 15 years in the seafood industry. However, the majority of these activities have been 'standalone' and there has been limited extension for the wider industry to adopt. In addition, there have been limited resources within industry to continue the developmental work required. Further, there has been little critical analysis to date, of why such measures where they have been extended, have largely failed to generate change in both behaviour and cultural attitude towards safety.

Safety in the Australian seafood industry has been traditionally shaped by national, State and Territory maritime laws. Vessel licences were/are issued subject to a periodic safety inspection of vessels carried out by the relevant maritime authority and also now by private licenced marine surveyors. The false assumption that "a safe vessel is a safe workplace" simply because it has passed inspection has become embedded in the culture of this industry.

A fishing vessel is a workspace that are covered by two pieces of legislation administered by different regulators – federal v. jurisdictional. However, there is a poor understanding and differentiation between these pieces of legislation, providing a fundamental barrier to improved safety performance throughout the fishing industry. Legislative attempts to resolve these issues have achieved only limited success, as fishers continue to operate under false assurances in a high-risk industry, and injuries and deaths remain an all-too-common occurrence.

The FRDC in partnership with Seafood Industry Australia and Australian Maritime Safety Authority is developing a collaborative, national strategy to improve the safety of all individuals working in Australian fishing and aquaculture.

2.0 Objectives

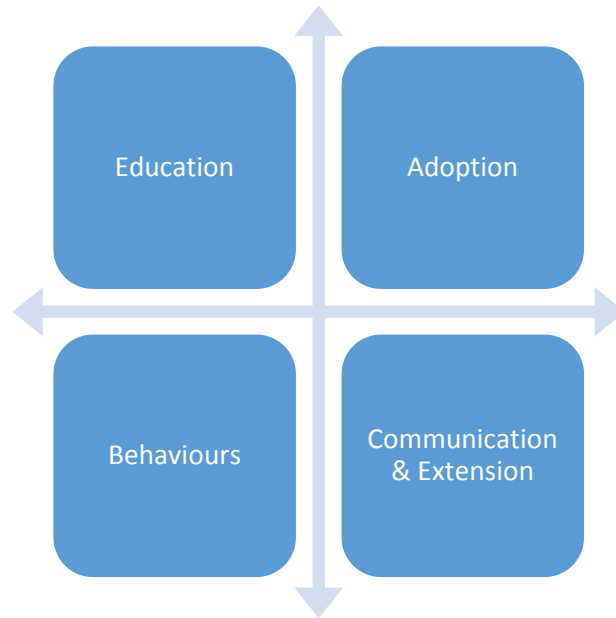
The Initiative will work with industry, community, regulatory and research partners to achieve a positive change in safety compliance and uptake of industry developed tools and resources to assist the Australian Seafood Industry to achieve the following objectives:

- Moving towards zero fatalities and reduction in workplace safety incidences;
- Continuous cultural improvements in the use of workplace safety management systems; and

- Increase in uptake of industry workplace safety and training programs and education tools.

To realise these objectives, the *National RD&E Seafood Industry Safety Initiative* was established to focus on the integration of the investments made in the area of workplace health and safety and safety training.

The initiative focuses on four interconnected areas of RD&E investment and activity:



3.0 Terms of Reference

3.1 Governance

The Initiative will be overseen by a Steering Committee made up of representatives from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and national seafood industry leaders. An independent Chair will oversee the Steering Committee. Membership is voluntary.

The primary roles of the Steering Committee are to:

- develop and implement a strategic safety direction for the seafood industry through partnerships and leadership;
- identify RD&E priorities, through review and consultation with key fisheries stakeholders and develop projects to address those priorities;
- ensure future projects are aligned with the strategic safety direction;
- facilitate effective extension and adoption of R&D outputs relevant to industry safety; and
- promote collaboration and co-investment opportunities in RD&E both nationally and internationally.

3.2 The Executive Chair

The role of the independent Executive Chair (knowledgeable of FRDC stakeholders) is to:

- represent the Steering Committee to stakeholders
- maintain an informal link between the Steering Committee and the Executive Officer between meetings; including regular dialogue with the Executive Officer on operational matters and consulting with the remainder of the Steering Committee promptly over any matter that might cause concern
- make sure that the Steering Committee has the necessary information to undertake effective decision making such that logical and understandable outcomes are achieved

- direct Steering Committee discussions to effectively use the time available to address the critical safety and workplace health issues facing the Australian seafood industry
- act as a facilitator at Steering Committee meetings to ensure that no member dominates discussion, that appropriate discussion takes place and that relevant opinion among members is forthcoming
- summarise committee decisions, thereby ensuring meeting minutes properly reflect Steering Committee discussions
- lead the committee in meeting its obligations including:
 - ensuring that a mission statement is clearly established, that strategies are in place for achieving it, and satisfy itself that the Committee is achieving its mission
 - foster a corporate culture that matches the organisation's values and strategies
 - ensure that the organisation adheres to high standards of ethics and corporate behaviour (including maintaining the Code of Conduct for Committee members (4.0))

3.3 Executive Support

The FRDC will assist the Chair in setting the agendas, meeting dates, facilitate meetings, and generate the record of meetings. The FRDC will undertake, or oversee, out of session activities. The Steering Committee will meet a minimum of twice a year (at least one meeting of which will be face to face).

The Steering Committee has the ability to invite individuals to meetings at their discretions.

3.4 Reporting

The Steering Committee will be kept updated on the progress of individual projects and activities related to the 'safety' of the Australian seafood industry, as well as opportunities for extension and leveraging.

Note, individual projects (e.g. SeSAFE) may have their own project specific Steering Committees. These are established to provide strategic guidance and/or technical input to optimise project success and facilitate the adoption of project outputs by the fishing and aquaculture industry. These committees will liaise with and update the overarching National RD&E Seafood Industry Safety Initiative Steering Committee.

3.5 RD&E planning and investment

The Steering Committee will identify RD&E priorities, as well as the balance of types of investment both broadly and specific to priority areas, including: directly commissioned; open call/competitive; and co-investment. The Steering Committee will provide advice in response to applications for projects or variations to existing projects relevant to industry safety education, adoption and behaviour.

3.6 Facilitating co-investment

The Steering Committee and FRDC representatives will work with RACs, IPAs and other Subprograms as well as non-FRDC stakeholders to:

- identify and implement co-investment in RD&E priority areas;
- collaborate in providing support to the FRDC in managing these projects; and
- ensure the flow of benefits is proportionate to the level of investment

4.0 Code of Conduct for Committee members

Please refer to the [Material Personal Interests for FRDC Committees](#) Policy.

5.0 Material personal interests

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