



Work programme for the FAO Reference Centre for Bivalve Mollusc Sanitation 2021/22

FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES

The functions and duties of the FAO Reference Centre are set out in the **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE DESIGNATION**.

In 2021/22 work programme aims to support FAO Member Countries wishing to develop, enhance or expand their production of safe bivalve molluscs for domestic consumption or for international trade.

WORK PROGRAMME, 2021/22

Outputs

1. Provide support for the development and maintenance of FAO resources on bivalve mollusc sanitation to include in 2021/22:
 - Preparation of framework and structure for e-learning module 3 covering technical guidance for growing area monitoring, classification and management.
 - Review, approval and bench testing of e-learning module 3.
 - Hosting of approved modules on the Cefas, FAO Reference Centre website www.cefasc.co.uk/faobivalves under the designated FAO Reference Centre training section.
 - Provision of support for the review of the English language version of the FAO/WHO Technical Guidance document
 - Provision of support for any reviews and updates to e-learning modules 1 and 2.
2. Provide guidance on relevant laboratory protocols, accreditation and use of methods for bivalve mollusc testing to include in 2021/22:
 - Continued development of protocols for microbiological methods and associated guidance with applicability for testing bivalve molluscs and water for dissemination via the Cefas, FAO Reference Centre website www.cefasc.co.uk/faobivalves
 - Maintenance and updating as appropriate of protocols currently hosted on the Cefas, FAO Reference Centre website.
 - Dissemination of protocols and supporting information on request of FAO member countries.
3. Maintenance and continued development of the Cefas, FAO Reference Centre website (www.cefasc.co.uk/faobivalves) as the main route of dissemination of relevant material for FAO Member Countries.
4. Further development of the vibrio genome project for tracking of *Vibrio* (and other pathogens) associated with seafoods, including bivalve molluscs, to include in 2021/22, the maintenance and further expansion of the online risk and genomic tracking tools via a dedicated portal on

Expected outcomes

**Open access availability to training modules and technical guidance through FAO and Cefas websites*

**Open access availability to laboratory protocols*

**Open access availability to all guidance documentation and training material*

**Open access availability to epidemiological real-time information on pathogens and risk for LMICs and others*

the Cefas, FAO Reference Centre website (www.cefas.co.uk/faobivalves).

5. Continued development of the bivalve mollusc-related pathogen strain and genome bank, to include in 2021/22:
 - Collaboration with the University of Kyoto on transfer of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* strains to the FAO Reference Centre
 - Collaboration with the University of North Carolina on transfer of *Vibrio vulnificus* strains to the FAO Reference Centre

**Open access resource for characterized reference materials for research and development, proficiency testing, method development/standardization and comparisons*
6. Provision on request of support with investigations into human illness outbreaks linked to bivalve mollusc consumption, including advice on investigations and interventions, and testing and characterization of associated samples and strains. For *Vibrio* spp., full sequencing of any isolated strains will feed into outputs 4 and 5, and provide considerable added information at no cost to FAO Member Countries.

** Increased awareness of bivalve mollusc-related health risks and good practice in outbreak situations amongst FAO Member Countries. Increased understanding of global circulation of Vibrio strains.*
7. Full analysis of the results of the pilot programme of proficiency testing (PT) for faecal indicator bacteria to support bivalve mollusc sanitation programmes for FAO Member Country laboratories in Africa, Asia and the Pacific (distribution in March 2021). This will help (i) to build laboratory capability in official laboratories where currently it does not exist (ii) to enable additional demonstration of competence in designated official laboratories undertaking testing of bivalve molluscs or growing waters and (iii) identify opportunities for further assistance by the FAO Reference Centre.

**Demonstration of competency of laboratories to undertake bivalve mollusc and water testing amongst African and Asian FAO Member Countries.*
8. Prepare and deliver a Regional Workshop on bivalve mollusc sanitation for FAO Member Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean:
 - Identify priority countries in partnership with FAO Fisheries Division.
 - Identify key contacts within national Competent Authorities.
 - Plan, develop and deliver a Workshop for Competent Authorities with the FAO Latin America and Caribbean area. The workshop to be held either physically or virtually dependent on COVID-19 restrictions.
 - Further to the above, undertake activities and follow up subsequent to the Workshop.

**Formation of a demonstrably competent network of Official Laboratories across Latin American and the Caribbean region with responsibility for the development and operation of bivalve mollusc sanitation programmes*
9. On request, deliver training¹ and support to include provision of microbiological testing protocols, reference materials (where available) and access to additional proficiency testing programmes. In addition, provide advice on the setting up of microbiological monitoring

**Increased proficiency in methods and programmes supporting the development of bivalve mollusc*

¹ Provision of training, other support and advice to be provided (where suitable Reference Centre staff have sufficient time available) within the existing baseline budget (including consumables and time for staff). However travel and subsistence expenses for trainees from FAO Member Countries if required for physical onsite training are excluded from the baseline budget and will require additional financial contributions from third parties.

programmes, including approaches to sanitary surveys and the assessment of classification data.

*sanitation programmes amongst
FAO Member Countries*

10. On request, support for FAO Member Countries on topics related to contamination of bivalve molluscs with harmful algal biotoxins, potentially to include assistance with baseline sampling programmes, development of National laboratory capacity, supply of materials to help with quality assurance (with no purchase fee) and support with outbreak situations.

**Increased awareness and competence in dealing with contamination of bivalve molluscs with biotoxins amongst FAO Member Countries*

11. Provision of technical assistance to FAO Fisheries Division and WHO in activities in support of bivalve mollusc safety on request to include in 2021/22:

**Increased utilization of FAO Reference Centre expertise by FAO and WHO*

- Advice on bivalve mollusc sanitation aspects of the FAO Fisheries Technical Paper covering bivalve mollusc production.
- Assistance in the development of draft Guidance for Development and Implementation of Monitoring Programmes for Harmful Algal Biotoxins in Bivalve Molluscs

12. Production of annual report describing activities undertaken within the scope of the work programme.

**Greater awareness of the activities of the FAO Reference Centre within FAO and FAO Member Countries*

Plan approved by:

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