

## Work programme for the FAO Reference Centre for Bivalve Mollusc Sanitation 2025/26

### FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES

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

In 2025/26 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, 2025/26

<u>Outputs</u>	<u>Expected outcomes</u>
<b>1. Dissemination of information and technical guidance to FAO Member Countries</b>	
1.1 Maintenance and continued development of the Cefas, FAO Reference Centre website ( <a href="http://www.cefas.co.uk/faobivalves">www.cefas.co.uk/faobivalves</a> ) as the main route of dissemination of relevant material on bivalve molluscs for FAO Member Countries.	<i>Open access availability to training and technical guidance dedicated website</i>
1.2 Maintenance of the online risk and genomic tracking tools via a dedicated portal on the Cefas, FAO Reference Centre website ( <a href="http://www.cefas.co.uk/faobivalves">www.cefas.co.uk/faobivalves</a> ).	<i>Open access availability to epidemiological real-time information vibrio risks</i>
1.3 Maintain, revise and add to laboratory method protocols and associated guidance documents supporting bivalve mollusc monitoring, classification and product testing.	<i>Open access to laboratory protocols and guidance documents</i>
<b>2. Provision of scientific advice, and technical training for FAO Member Countries</b>	
2.1 On request of FAO Member Countries, provide technical and scientific advice on issues related to bivalve mollusc sanitation, specifically related to the FAO/WHO Technical Guidance for the development of growing area aspects of bivalve mollusc sanitation programmes (second edition) <a href="#">cb5072en.pdf</a> .	<i>Specific support for FAO Member Countries on bivalve mollusc growing area sanitation programmes</i>
2.2 On request of FAO Member Countries, provide limited (approximately equal to 10 hours of expert advice) technical and scientific advice, within the areas of Cefas competence, with respect to broader bivalve mollusc food safety (e.g., marine biotoxins and contaminants).	<i>Technical and scientific advice to FAO on aspects of bivalve food safety</i>
2.3 Deliver a regional training event for African countries in co-operation with FAO Rome and regional FAO officers, in the process of developing bivalve production nationally. This training is a follow up to the initial workshop in 2019 on Technical Guidance (section 2.1) and would be	<i>Building capacity and capability for FAO Member Countries on bivalve mollusc growing area sanitation programmes</i>

used to further develop capacity and capability at a national and regional level amongst interested FAO Member Countries.

*and the production of safe bivalves.*

- 2.4 Further to the above, develop and distribute a targeted questionnaire to African Responsible Authorities to assess capacity and capability building requirements in advance of the training event (section 2.3).

### **3. Provision of scientific and technical advice to FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division**

- 3.1 On request of FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, provide technical and scientific advice on issues, documentation review and specific projects related to bivalve mollusc sanitation, and on broader aspects of bivalve mollusc food safety (within the scope of Cefas competence).

*Specific requested support for FAO with respect to bivalve mollusc capacity and capability building activities*

### **4. Provision of scientific and technical to UK GOV funding partners on matters relating to bivalve mollusc sanitation**

- 4.1 On request of national (or devolved) administrations provide advice and interpretation of requirements on bivalve sanitation particularly as these relate to trade in live or raw bivalve molluscs.
- 4.2 Maintain national capability in analyses (including maintenance of staff competence) for microbiological testing of bivalve molluscs for hygiene requirements.
- 4.3 Provision on request, of support with investigations into human illness outbreaks linked to bivalve mollusc consumption.

*Specific requested support for UK GOV respect to bivalve mollusc sanitation and trade*

*Maintenance of national (UK) capacity and capability in live bivalve molluscs analyses*  
*Contributions within Cefas scope of expertise in epidemiological investigations where LBM are implicated as food vehicle*

### **5. Proficiency testing (PT)**

- 5.1 Distribute PT samples comprising laboratory constructed material for faecal indicator bacteria for FAO Member Country Official Laboratories, to enable implementation of faecal indicator methods and assess quality of test results. One laboratory constructed PT distribution will be free of charge for FAO Member Countries in the process of developing bivalve sanitation programmes in 2025/26.

*Building capacity and capability for microbiological safety of bivalve production at the Official Laboratory level in FAO Member Countries*

### **6. International Conference on Molluscan Shellfish Safety (ICMSS)**

- 6.1 Contribute, as the FAO Reference Centre for Bivalve Sanitation, to the planning and organisation of the International Conference on Molluscan Shellfish Safety (ICMSS) through, *inter alia*, membership of the local organizing committee at Cefas, including organisation of a dedicated conference session on the development of bivalve molluscs in Low Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). Provide regular updates to the International Advisory Committee (IAC) of the ICMSS on the progress of conference planning.

*Contribute to raising international scientific awareness with respect to the benefits and public health risks of bivalve mollusc consumption*

## 7. Reporting

7.1 Produce annual technical activity report and undertake other reporting requirements identified within the scope of the work programme and satisfy national funding body reporting cycles.

Plan approved by:

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07/03/25	07/03/25	07/04/25
		