SafeFish

Strategy and Performance Plan

2026 Version 1.3

Covering FRDC Project No 2024-046

Strategy and Performance Plan

This plan has been developed to monitor, evaluate and report on key activities and outcomes that SafeFish delivers to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our stakeholders, partner members and funders.

Specifically this framework aims to drive:

- **Monitoring of performance** – of the SafeFish progress against contracted activities
- **Demonstration of impact** – to determine the extent to which the activities have been achieved and the impact they have.
- **Accountability** – to our stakeholders, partner members and funders
- **Compliance** – with requirements set under our Project Agreement with the Fisheries Research & Development Corporation (FRDC)
- **Continual improvement** – regarding the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of resources allocated, partnerships, communication, governance and internal systems and processes.

This plan will be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure continued currency and alignment with contracted objectives and activities.

Our Vision & Objectives

SafeFish is a Partnership of seafood experts that assists industry and regulators to resolve technical trade impediments, especially in relation to food safety and hygiene.

The objectives of SafeFish are to:

- Deliver robust food safety research and advice to industry and regulators that underpins Australia's reputation as a producer of safe seafood.
- Maintain and enhance the capabilities in seafood safety in Australia.
- Implement governance and engagement of SafeFish to facilitate cost effective, efficient, and timely operations and maximise impacts.

About Us

The SafeFish platform began in 2010 as a response to the seafood industry looking strategically at trade and market access. The seafood industry realised that they needed to get involved in the development of internationally agreed standards to prevent 'technical barriers to trade'. They also needed to provide coordinated and robust technical advice to support Australian negotiators and delegations dealing with trade and market access issues related to food safety. While expertise was previously available from different sources, a more cohesive and collaborative approach was required to bring together all relevant stakeholders (industry, researchers, and government), and as such, the SafeFish program was born.

Today, SafeFish[1] is the leading platform in the FRDC program for dealing with food safety and trade and market access issues for the Australian fishing and aquaculture sectors. SafeFish fulfils the FRDC Mission (*"act as a national thought leader, facilitating knowledge creation, collaboration and innovation to shape the future of fishing and aquaculture in Australia for the benefit of the Australian people"*) in the food safety space.

SafeFish acts in a collaborative manner, drawing expertise from a variety of Australian and international sources. SafeFish builds a seafood sector that proactively addresses food safety issues in a robust and transparent manner.

SafeFish is now key to Australian involvement in seafood discussions at Codex Alimentarius (Codex)– the forum for developing international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice. Food safety standards developed at Codex form the basis for international trade and provide an agreed reference point for settling international disputes. By providing evidence based technical reports to Australian delegations to Codex, SafeFish enables Australia to argue for the development of standards that are commensurate with risk in the Australian context, preventing technical barriers from arising.

SafeFish has also become a trusted, independent source of food safety information to both industry and regulators. As a provider of technical advice, SafeFish does not participate in the monitoring or management of risk, or in analytical testing of product, rather we facilitate these actions to occur using the most appropriate techniques and current scientific knowledge. SafeFish is focused on issues that arise from food safety concerns only, and thus does not include aspects such as biosecurity, animal health or environmental sustainability.

SafeFish Alignment with FRDC RD&E Plan

SafeFish aligns with the following values and themes from the FRDC RD&E Plan 2025-2030.

Values:

- **People:** Recognising our network of people as our greatest asset. Empowering them to be their best, be brave, and contribute their unique strengths
- **Knowledge:** Dedication to growing knowledge through providing high-quality, objective scientific research, innovation, and data.
- **Trust:** Operating with a high degree of integrity and accountability, ensuring responsible stewardship of resources and maintaining the trust placed on us.

Themes:

- **Growing, resilient and innovative:** Enduring growth and resilience to challenges through innovation.
- **Best practices and production systems:** Diverse economic, ecological and social benefits through best aquatic resource use.
- **Capable and diverse people:** Promoting diversity, growing participation, and developing skilled, adaptable people.
- **Community trust, acceptance and value**: People share, use and feel positive about fishing and aquacultures products, services and experiences.

[1] The governance of SafeFish is outlined in the SafeFish Charter version 7.4 2026. The Strategy & Performance plan should be read in conjunction with this document.

SafeFish Activities

Ensuring the safety of seafood and sustaining access to markets provides significant benefit. SafeFish makes a substantial contribution to the Australian seafood industry by:

- Providing technical input to international multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations to open new markets or resolve trade disruptions.
- Providing technical input to Australian submissions on the development of seafood standards, guidelines and codes of practice at Codex Alimentarius.
- Providing research and technical support to food safety incidents to minimise trade disruptions, including supporting appropriate risk communication.
- Identifying emerging food safety issues and determining appropriate research and technical responses to protect Australia's continued access to markets.
- Conducting research on seafood hazards to support risk management decisions.
- Facilitating and coordinating national and international expert networks (including networks between researchers, industry and regulators).
- Developing and supporting food safety research and diagnostic capabilities.
- Supporting productive partnerships between industry and regulators to enable utilisation of research findings and to facilitate considered responses to food safety issues.
- SafeFish undertakes extensive communication activities, as outlined in the SafeFish Communication Plan 2025-2030 v1 2025.

The tables below detail the relevant activities, performance measures, resources and status for each objective.

Objective 1: Deliver robust food safety research and advice to industry and regulators that underpins Australia's reputation as a producer of safe seafood.

Strategy	Activity	Performance measure
Fore-sighting to identify food safety issues that impact on the safety of seafood and risk to trade.	Undertake a data driven situational scan to identify information gaps/risks affecting the Australian seafood industry. Engage with stakeholders to prioritise SafeFish research development and extension activities that provide the most benefit back to the seafood industry.	Identification and agreement by the SafeFish partners and funders for priority issues and associated research by July 2026.
	Building broader awareness on identified key issues to encourage other relevant organisations to work in this space.	• 3 articles published in industry relevant magazines across the grant cycle. • All stakeholders with registered interest are informed of key issues within a month of the relevant Partners meeting. • Communiques and project reports uploaded to the SafeFish website within a month.
Supporting evidence-based responses to food safety/trade incidents.	Provide technical advice to facilitate risk mitigation including: • Reviews of domestic and international technical information. • Risk communication support from a technical perspective.	• Feedback from stakeholders in the project stakeholder survey indicates 80% are satisfied. • Production (as appropriate) and updating FAQs or fact sheets once per funding cycle. • Requested technical reviews provided within allotted timeframe. • Participation in DAFF, FSANZ, industry and State Government technical working groups as requested. • Extension goal: change in policy and/or practice related to advice produced.

Strategy	Activity	Performance measure
	Respond to technical queries on all aspects of food safety & market access.	30 enquiries answered per year. Simple enquiries answered within 3 working days and all enquiries responded to within a week.
	Respond to food safety and market access incidents to support appropriate risk management and future research development.	Provision of technical information to support emergency incident response management in the timeframe required.
Fulfil research gaps on high priority issues with food safety and domestic/ international trade implications identified during fore-sighting by delivering high-quality research outputs.	Develop and delivery research projects in line with prioritization outputs.	• Research plan developed within 6 months of prioritisation process, covering scope and scale of initial research to be conducted and the potential topics for any future research relating to this funding cycle. • KPIs for research to be added to this strategy and performance plan once determined. • Extension goal: change in policy and/or practice related to research conducted.
	Peer review of research outputs.	• All major research outputs undergo appropriate review. • External review to be considered for highly technical or public facing documents. • Positive feedback received.
Engaging and influencing international food safety regulatory systems relating to hazards in seafood.	Review Codex communications and support an Australian response where relevant through technical submissions and attendance at meetings.	• At least 10 technical briefs submitted per grant cycle. • Support technical attendance at 1 relevant meeting or electronic working group per year.
	Ascertain impact and support an Australian response where relevant to SPS Agreement notifications.	• Assess trade impacts from relevant World Trade Organisation (WTO) notifications. • Respond when a negative impact on trade is identified, within the required timeframe.
	Maintain awareness and advise stakeholders of relevant Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO) activities.	Disseminate information to relevant stakeholders within a week of notification.

Objective 2: Maintain and enhance the capabilities in seafood food safety in Australia

Strategy	Activity	Performance measure
Educate and train participants in the Australian seafood industry to improve industry food safety practices.	Conduct workshops on a mock food recall scenario to build incident preparedness. Materials developed available on web.	Two recall workshops delivered per funding cycle
	Build knowledge and awareness of the current best practice and research on key topics through science workshops and webinars.	Three webinars per annum and one workshop per funding cycle
Creating training and development opportunities, enabling succession of key expertise.	Support new researchers by offering a PhD grant for students studying relevant seafood food safety issues.	One PhD per project cycle and operating support for two additional external students
Addressing laboratory capability and capacity, particularly when market failures occur	Work with government and laboratories to determine gaps in available methods of analysis and identify appropriate methodologies to fill these gaps. Encourage fit for purpose methods for key hazards as needed	Engage when a need is identified. Work with stakeholders to encourage uptake of appropriate testing methods.

Objective 3: Implement governance and engagement of SafeFish to facilitates cost effective, efficient, and timely operations and maximise impacts

Strategy	Activity	Performance measure
SafeFish governance aligns with contemporary Australian best practice for open, transparent and proper use and management of funds	Maintain contemporaneity for the SafeFish group by reviewing the charter and Strategy and Performance Plan every grant cycle and update as required.	Revised Charter and Strategy and Performance Plan available by January 2026
	Regular meetings with SafeFish Partners and funders to discuss SafeFish activities.	• Three meetings per annum • Independent Chair/s contracted for project term
	Review budget regularly and implement appropriate diligence regarding contracting.	• Budget report yearly in Annual report. • Quarterly reviews internally.
Communication with stakeholders is effective	Communication plan is developed, reviewed annually and updated as necessary	• Created for project cycle by June 2026 • Plan reviewed annually and updated as necessary • Progress against Plan is reported in milestone report
	Report activities regularly: • Partner meeting minutes & communiques • Milestone reports • Final reports distributed to stakeholder list as appropriate and put on website • Annual report to all stakeholders	Communications listed are distributed in accordance with Communications Plan.
	Survey stakeholders for effectiveness, satisfaction and preferred communications.	Survey distributed once per grant cycle.

Strategy	Activity	Performance measure
	• Attend Partner and funder meetings as requested. • Attend relevant seafood conferences and events.	Number of meetings attended to disseminate information and receive feedback.
Networks are maintained to enable action when needed	Support productive partnerships between industry, government and researchers to enable utilisation of research findings and to facilitate considered responses to food safety issues.	• Maintain communication list of key personnel and roles and update annually. • Participate in or run specific technical committees/working groups as needed. • Automate addition of new stakeholders to communications listing.
Collaboration to increase impact	SafeFish engagement is designed to include wide range of stakeholders	• All steering and working groups include a broad range of stakeholders.
	Strategic direction, decision-making and delivery is a shared responsibility.	• Stakeholder in-kind hours on steering committees, working groups, meetings, events and workshops during the project term captured.
	Provide technical representation to national committees and forums:	• Number of forums representing seafood safety. • Attendance at each.