

# Compliance Benchmarking: Aquaculture

**Governing authority:** Cost Recovery Implementation Committee (CRIC)

**Agency:** Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA)

**Agency responsibility:** Executive Director Fisheries and Aquaculture (PIRSA)

## 1. Background

The **Cost Recovery Implementation Committee (CRIC)** was formed to implement the recommendations of the Independent Cost Recovery Review Panel. Compliance benchmarking was a recommendation of this review to ensure that compliance activities and costs are transparent, risk-based and aligned with best practice.

Appropriate enforcement, aimed at maximising voluntary compliance and creating an effective deterrence, is delivered through intelligence driven, risk based and outcome focused compliance plans developed for the aquaculture sector utilising the three core strategies of education and awareness, effective deterrence and appropriate enforcement.

Section 8(1)(c) of the *Aquaculture Act 2001* prescribes the efficient and effective regulation of the aquaculture industry.

The Terms of Reference sets out the objectives, scope, and deliverables of the compliance benchmarking process for aquaculture within South Australia.

## 2. Objectives

This benchmarking exercise seeks to ensure the appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of compliance services across aquaculture as a whole, and at the individual sector level.

The primary objectives of the Aquaculture Compliance Benchmarking process are to:

1. **Evaluate current compliance frameworks** and cost structures within the aquaculture sectors to determine if these are appropriate risk-based and effective.
2. Ensure compliance costs are **transparent** and aligned with best practice.

3. **Identify efficiencies** in current activities and future opportunities for modernisation, particularly through digital transformation.
4. **Ensure Compliance with Legislation.** Confirm that compliance service provision aligns with the requirements of the *Aquaculture Act 2001*, where the aquatic resources of the State are to be managed in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

### 3. Scope and Process

The Aquaculture Compliance Benchmarking will include:

- **Sector Review:** The initial benchmarking phase will focus on the aquaculture sector as a whole, and then identifying individual sector needs for the oyster, mussel, yellowtail kingfish, southern bluefin tuna and abalone aquaculture sectors.
- **Review of Current Compliance Program:** Assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, and cost structure of existing compliance measures within aquaculture, including routine monitoring, audits, rehabilitation and enforcement. Determine if the current compliance activities are appropriate, risk-based and effective across the aquaculture sectors. Also, recommend a sustainable and risk-based compliance model that balances **regulatory effectiveness** with financial viability for industry stakeholders.
- **Digital Transformation Opportunities:** Assessing the potential of transitioning to or enhancing digital tools, and their impact on compliance costs and processes.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Where required, consulting with key stakeholders, including aquaculture lease and licence holders, commercial industry bodies, and PIRSA, to gather input on current compliance challenges and potential improvements.
- **Benchmarking with External Jurisdictions and Peers:** Comparing South Australia's compliance framework with other jurisdictions to ensure adoption of best practices.

#### Exclusions:

- Food safety: SASQAP (PIRSA South Australia Shellfish Quality Assurance Program).
- Inland aquaculture activities and seaweed.
- Aquaculture Zone Policies.

In achieving this task, the Contractor will be required to:

- Engage with PIRSA to identify the data, information, reports and policies necessary to undertake the review and analysis.
- If deemed necessary by the Contractor, undertake consultation with technical experts familiar with compliance cost recovery models used for aquaculture.
- Provide options that align with the principles of risk-catch-cost that promote best practice and identify opportunities for improvement to both industry and PIRSA within the current regulatory framework.

- Consult (online or face-to-face) with the aquaculture sector and relevant government agencies, as required.
- Maintain full records of all activities undertaken by the Contractor.
- Regular updates will be required by the Contractor to the CRIC.

PIRSA will provide relevant background information, any additional relevant information requested by the Contractor where such information exists, and access to PIRSA's files regarding relevant matters.

A draft report to be presented to the CRIC by 14 March 2025, subject to all necessary data and information being provided to the Contractor in a timely manner.

Following CRIC feedback on the draft report, a final report to be provided by 11 April 2025.

## 4. Confidentiality

All documents and other materials used and produced by the Contractor in the course of its activities remain the property of PIRSA.