

# Brief Information on the National Fisheries Inspection and Quality Assurance Center

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In order to strengthen competent authority on seafood safety and quality assurance and meet technical criteria as well as international trade harmonization in general and fishery industry in particular, the National Fisheries Inspection and Quality Assurance Center (NAFIQACEN) was setup in 1994 by the Decision of Minister of Fisheries (Ministry Decision No. 648 TS/QD dated 26 August, 1994). NAFIQACEN is the national competent authority to assist Minister of Fisheries on quality control and quality assurance in fishery production and trade in Vietnam from aquaculture, capturing and harvesting, transportation, storage, handling to processing of fishery products for import- export as well as domestic consumption throughout the country.

## ■ Main Responsibilities and Duties

1. To carry out inspection on health conditions of fish processing establishments throughout the country.
2. To inspect and issue quality / health certificates for import and export as well as for domestic consumption.
3. To implement monitoring programme on toxic residues in aquaculture animals and their products.
4. To carry out the monitoring programme on harvesting areas of bivalves.
5. To make proposals for building, supplementing as well as amending policies, regulations, guidelines on quality and safety of fishery products.
6. To conduct research and apply advanced methods for quality control and quality assurance for health conditions of fish processing establishments. To apply advanced analytical methods in order to improve constantly competencies on quality and safety control of fishery products.
7. To carry out international co-operation,

investigation and research programmes concerning seafood safety control and quality assurance as assigned by Ministry of Fisheries (MOFI).

## ■ NAFIQACEN Structural Organization

After referring to several models of structural organization of fish inspection and quality assurance authorities in several countries especially in ASEAN in early 1995, NAFIQACEN submitted a structural organization comprised of one central office located in Hanoi and six branches in six regions where most of the fishery products come from (Haiphong, Danang, Nhatrang, Hochiminh City, Cantho and Camau).

## ■ Facilities and Equipment

With support of SEAQIP Project, NAFIQACEN occupies spacious premises. Six branches have adequate equipment and instruments for analytical activities (approximately USD 2 million) that facilitate us to carry out organoleptic, chemical and microbiological requirements and specifications for safety and quality assessment. In addition, the laboratory of NAFIQACEN IV is equipped with AAS, HPLC, and GC equipment; for special chemical analysis such as heavy metals, antibiotic and pesticide residues as well as mycotoxin, toxic algae, and biotoxin (ASP, PSP, DSP).

## ■ Personnel

All the staff that works for NAFIQACEN have been carefully selected. The main criteria being, background, education, knowledge and behavior. Candidates with experience will have an added advantage.

Candidates who are accepted must go through a professional training scheme before being put in

Fig. 1: NAFIQACEN Structural Organization

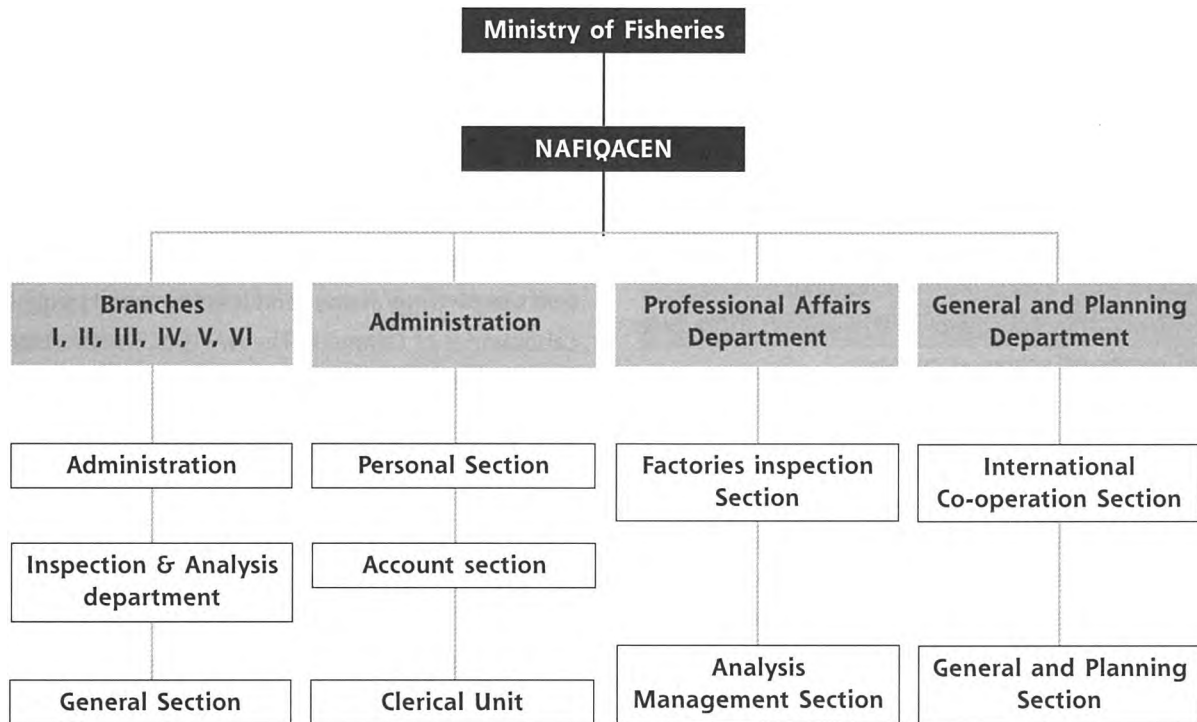
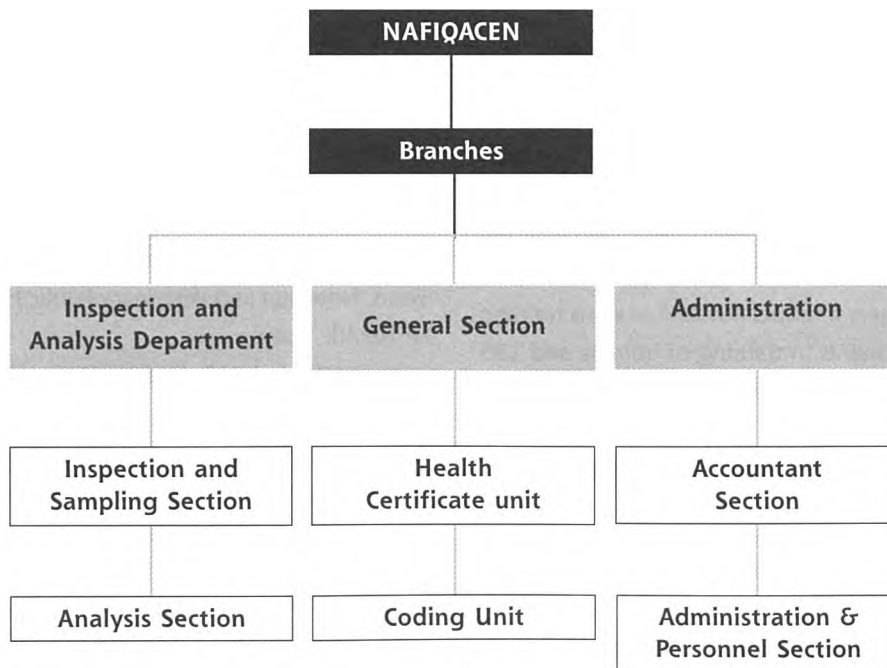


Fig. 2: Organization Chart of NAFIQACEN Branches



\* NAFIQACEN IV has almost the same structural organization as other NAFIQACEN branches. However, NAFIQACEN IV has two separate Department of Inspection & Sampling and the Analysis Department instead of one Inspection and Analysis Department.

charge of a certain task. NAFIQACEN leaders have considered manpower building as a decisive factor for the success of NAFIQACEN.

### 1. Criteria of NAFIQACEN staff

Inspector and analyst: must have university diploma related to the job he will be in charge of, such as background education on fish processing technology, food technology, microbiology, etc. In addition, computer skills and English are required.

Technician and other staff: must be a graduate from vocational school or college.

### 2. Recruitment procedures

Each employee has to go through a two-month probation period. The office that directly manages him will then make a report about his capability in relation to the criteria for his position that will be submitted to the Director of NAFIQACEN and the Director of the branch. If accepted, each one would have to be trained in several professional training courses and achieve acceptable results in each training course. Before carrying out his job independently, he needs to gain enough experience for the job. For inspectors, he will have to go through a period of on-the-job training with other seniors until he is considered experienced enough to perform his job independently.

### 3. Professional and HACCP training

Presently, NAFIQACEN have 177 staff with 68 inspectors, 46 analysts and 63 administrative staff. Almost all the NAFIQACEN staff are university graduates. It has been recorded that training courses held over the past few years have a total of 748 participants, of which, 580 participants were in inspection and analysis training courses, 25 participants in training of trainers and 135 staffs who were trained on HACCP.

#### ■ Quality Management in Laboratories

All the laboratories of NAFIQACEN apply Good Laboratory Practice. They are also in the process of applying for ISO/IEC/17025.

In order to ensure the accuracy in job performance, the laboratories have taken part in in-house split sample programmes and external programmes at the international level.

In 1997, the two laboratories of NAFIQACEN (NAFIQACEN II and IV) took part in ASEAN split sample programme under supervision of Canadian experts and obtained good results.

In 1998, a split sample programme between laboratory of NAFIQACEN IV and laboratory of Analytical Service Center, Ho Chi Minh City (an ISO 9002 certified lab.) was initiated for testing DSP, PSP and ASP in bivalve molluscs flesh.

In 1999, NAFIQACEN laboratories participated in split sample programme conducted by Alfred Jorgensen Laboratories of Denmark. The NAFIQACEN laboratories were evaluated as good laboratories.

#### ■ International Recognition and MOU

With NAFIQACEN's effort, on 16 November 1999, with Decision No. 1999/813/EC, the European Commission accepted Vietnam's first list of 18 establishments. The European Commission accepted the competence of Vietnamese authorities on fishery quality control, NAFIQACEN. On 25 April 2000, with Decision No.2000/331/EC, the European Commission accepted 22 more establishments adding up to 40 establishments with approval for export to EU market.

On 25 April 2000, with Decision No. 2000/333/EC, the European Commission allowed bivalve mollusc and marine gastropods from Vietnam into the EU market.

On 8 February 2000, with the Decision No.2000/159/EC, the European Commission approved the monitoring plan on toxic residues and other substances in aquaculture animals and aquaculture products of Vietnam.

On 7 July 2000, NAFIQACEN signed an agreement on co-operation programme with Italian Department of Food, Nutrition and Veterinary Public Health of Ministry of Health, Italy.

On 7 July 2000, NAFIQACEN and National Fishery Inspection Authority of South Korea signed an MOU on mutual recognition in fishery inspection for export and import between the two countries.

NAFIQACEN also has a good relationship with the United States Food and Drug Administration (US-FDA). Presently, NAFIQACEN is preparing necessary conditions for signing MOU concerning sanitary control in harvesting areas of bivalve molluscs with US-FDA.

NAFIQACEN is now a member of the International

Association of Fisheries Inspectors (IAFI).

From the time NAFIQACEN was established until now, under the close direction of MOFI and support of SEAQIP project as well as collaboration of other agencies both in the country and overseas, NAFIQACEN has constantly strengthened its competence as well as its position on safety control and quality assurance in Vietnam that is greatly appreciated by MOFI, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology and the authorities of importing countries as well as international organizations.

### References

- Decision No.648 TS/QD of Minister of MOFI dated 26 August 1994 on authorities and responsibilities assignment of NAFIQACEN.
- Decision No. 569 QD/TCCB-LD of Minister of MOFI dated 5 July 1995 promulgates regulations on principles of NAFIQACEN organization and activities.
- Nguyen Dinh Thu. 2000. HACCP development and implementation status in Vietnam (presented at the Seminar on ISO 9000, Ho Chi Minh City).