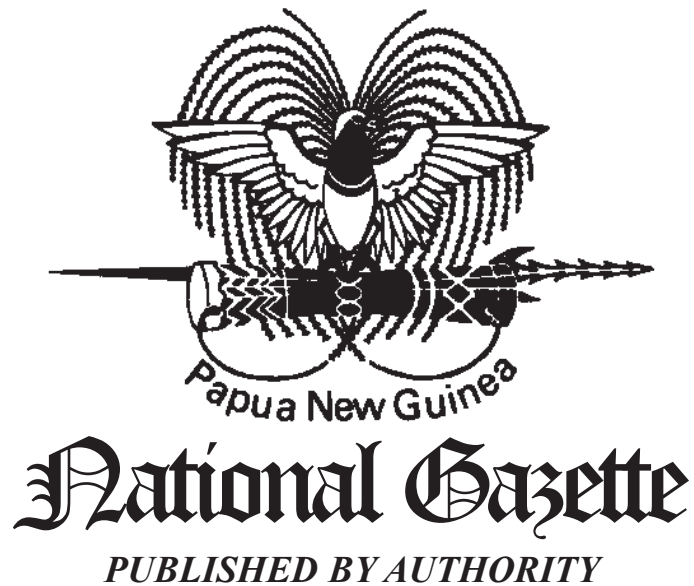




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PORT MORESBY, THURSDAY, 31st JULY

[2025



INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Fisheries Management Act 1998, as amended

**NATIONAL SEA CUCUMBER FISHERY AND BECHE-DE-MER
TRADE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Fisheries Management Act 1998 as amended

THE NATIONAL SEA CUCUMBER FISHERY AND BECHE-DE-MER TRADE MANAGEMENT PLAN

I, Jelta Wong, the Honourable, Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources, by virtue of the powers conferred by Section 28 of the *Fisheries Management Act 1998*, and all other powers enabling me, hereby give notice of my approval of the National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-de-mer Trade Management Plan. This plan supersedes the previous plan of 2018 (Gazetted on *National Gazette* No G368 and takes effect from the date of notification in the *National Gazette* No. G742_of 2025.

Dated 28th of July, 2025.

Hon. J. WONG,
Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources.

THE NATIONAL SEA CUCUMBER FISHERY AND BECHE-DE-MER TRADE MANAGEMENT PLAN**BACKGROUND**

Papua New Guinea (PNG) has a rich history of engagement in the sea cucumber fishery and beche-de-mer trade. This industry has played a significant role in the country's economy and livelihoods of the coastal and island communities of PNG. Over the years, PNG has developed expertise in harvesting and processing sea cucumbers, contributing to its reputation as a key player in the global market. As regulations and sustainability measures continue to evolve, PNG remains committed to responsible fishing and trade practices to ensure the long-term viability of this important industry.

The sea cucumber fishery and beche-de-mer trade in PNG dates back to the late 1800s. Average production for British New Guinea was 37.1 tonnes between 1878 and 1900, with a peak export of 96.8 imperial tonnes in 1883. From 1900 to 1937, the now Territory of Papua exported an average of 60 imperial tonnes of beche-de-mer per annum, while the Mandated Territory of New Guinea exported an average of 98 imperial tonnes per annum. White teatfish and black teatfish were the two main species targeted throughout this early period. Between 1960 and 1985, beche-de-mer production in PNG was relatively low, with an average annual production of 20 metric tonnes. Annual production increased significantly in 1986 to around 100 metric tonnes. Between 2000 and 2009, annual production averaged 556 metric tonnes per annum, with an average value of PGK 30 million per year. Annual production peaked in 2007, when 795 metric tonnes of beche-de-mer valued at PGK 52 million were exported. The Total Allowable Catch for the whole country at this time was set at 668 tonnes.

The fishery was closed for three years from late 2009 due to overfishing. Because of poor population recovery, the closure was further extended. The fishery was finally re-opened in 2017 under a revised and improved management plan. In 2018, the first year of reopening after nine years of moratorium, a total of 857 metric tonnes of beche-de-mer was exported, valued at PGK 100 million.

With increasing Chinese economic growth, there has been a continued demand for beche-de-mer, leading to widespread over-exploitation globally. Like other countries, PNG is working to reverse this trend by enforcing strict control measures on fishing and trade.

The sea cucumber fishery in PNG currently targets just over 22 recognized commercial species. In the past, only a handful of species were considered high value, but the rapid decline of these high-value species has shifted effort to lower-value species, increasing the number of species targeted.

As part of global conservation efforts, six sea cucumber species harvested in PNG have been listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendix II. These listings require stricter trade regulations to ensure that harvesting and exports are sustainable and do not threaten wild populations. PNG is implementing CITES non-detrimental findings (NDF) assessments and improved monitoring measures to comply with international conservation obligations while ensuring that communities continue to benefit from this valuable fishery.

Despite its importance in generating foreign revenue for PNG and providing cash income to approximately 500,000 fishers in coastal and island villages, the sea cucumber fishery and beche-de-mer trade face several management and monitoring challenges. Strengthening enforcement, improving data collection, and promoting responsible harvesting practices are key priorities to ensure the long-term sustainability of this vital industry.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—continued**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

The commercial species of sea cucumbers found in PNG's waters play a vital role in maintaining marine ecosystems through various ecological processes including bioturbation of the seabed and consuming algae and detritus. However, excessive harvesting of sea cucumbers can disrupt this natural cleaning process, leading to ecological consequences. Research suggests that the removal of too many sea cucumbers may contribute to the proliferation of cyanobacteria mats, which are harmful to both humans and coral reef habitats. The extent of the environmental and ecosystem impacts of over-harvesting sea cucumbers requires further studies to understand the effects of harvesting sea cucumbers on the health of various marine ecosystems.

The sea cucumber fishery has been documented to negatively impact mangrove and other fringing coastal and island forests in PNG as timber is needed to dry processed sea cucumbers into beche-de-mer. It is estimated that ten tonnes of wood is required to smoke one tonne of beche-de-mer. Beche-de-mer processing also results in the production of 'stick-water', which contains a toxin (holothurine) that originates from the skin of the sea cucumber. The toxin is released during the boiling process, and there is anecdotal evidence that the release of stick-water directly into the sea can result in fish kills.

Harvesting from healthy ecosystem to meet market access requirements. To assist with ensuring sea cucumber populations are protected, the PNG national standard for fish and fishery product 2019, under section 2 for Growing and Harvest Areas states that NFA will have in place a Monitoring Plan for monitoring of environmental contaminants. Subsequently, sea cucumber shall not be harvested from areas where the presence of potentially harmful agents such as pathogens, bacteria, bio-toxins and/or heavy metals could lead to an unacceptable level of such substance in Beche-de-mer (BDM) as food.

1. INTERPRETATION

In this Management Plan, unless the contrary intention applies:

“Act” means the *Fisheries Management Act* 1998 as amended from time to time.

“Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)” means an international agreement between governments which aims to ensure that international trade of specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species.

“CITES-listed” means in relation to a species included in CITES appendix I, II or III

“Convention of the Parties (CoP)”—means CITES Convention of the Parties held every three years.

“Fishery Data Collectors (FDC)” means the contracted NFA employees tasked with monitoring the provincial TAC's and collecting the fishery data as required.

“Maximum sustainable yield (MSY)” -means the highest possible catch of sea cucumbers that may be taken without impacting the ability of the stock to continue to replenish.

“National Management Advisory Committee (NMAC)” means the advisory committee established under Section 6 of this plan to provide advice to the National Fisheries Authority (NFA).

“Non-Detriment Finding (NDF)” means fishing and trade of specific sea cucumber species listed under CITES, are harvested in a way it will not harm its long-term survival in the wild.

“Precautionary Approach” means setting down restrictions to control harvesting in the absence of adequate scientific data; these restrictions may include the setting TACs, seasonal and area closures, and fishing effort controls.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued*

1. Interpretation—*continued*

“Ranching” means stocking of hatchery bred juvenile sea cucumbers into individually or communally established enclosures such as pens out at sea for them to feed and grow naturally.

“Regulations” means the Fisheries Management Regulations 2000 as amended from time to time.

“Sustainability” means the ability for a resource to maintain its stock at a fishable level given a level of effort or harvest.

“Total Allowable Catch (TAC)” means the set amount of catch that is allowed to be taken out of the fishery in an open fishing season; the TAC is to be set at a safe level based on the actual annual assessment of sea cucumber stocks.

“Traditional Management Practices” means methods of management of marine resources practiced by the indigenous inhabitants of a given area, that has been passed down from generation to generation, and which may not be formally recorded.

2. APPLICATION

- a) This National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-de-mer Trade Fishery Management Plan is cited as “the Management Plan”.
- b) This Management Plan applies to all species belonging to the Class Holothuroidea, commonly known as sea cucumbers in its live form, and beche-de-mer or trepang in its processed form; in ‘tok pisin’, both live and processed forms are known as ‘pislama’.
- c) This Management Plan applies to the sea cucumber fishery and beche-de-mer trade and includes all fishing and activities associated with the collection, processing, storage, buying, selling and exporting of beche-de-mer products.
- d) Nursery and hatchery farming activities shall be regulated in accordance with Sea cucumber Hatchery and Farming Guidelines.
- e) The Schedules attached to this Management Plan form part of the Management Plan and shall be read together.
- f) This Management Plan is to be interpreted in accordance with the Act and Regulations.
- g) Words and expressions used in this Management Plan shall have the same meanings as defined in the Act and Regulations.
- h) Where there is inconsistency between this Management Plan and the Act, the Act shall prevail in all instances.
- i) Where there is inconsistency between this Management Plan and Provincial, LLG, and community management actions, a hierarchical process of legal standing will apply, i.e., Provincial-level Management Plan will hold precedent over an LLG Management Plan, including any community-management plans, with this Management Plan prevailing overall.

3. REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- a) The Management Plan shall be reviewed as necessary when required by the NFA or at such earlier time as the NFA Managing Director or the NFA Board shall direct.
- b) Review of the Management Plan will include stakeholder consultation on the issues that affect the effective implementation of the Management Plan and any new and updated information on the biology, ecology and operations of the fisheries.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***3. Review of the Management Plan—*continued***

- c) Subject to prior approval of the NFA Board, any review of the Management Plan shall be made public by the NFA and due consultation will be conducted with relevant stakeholders.

4. OBJECTIVES

To sustainably manage sea cucumber stocks for long-term benefits while maintaining healthy marine ecosystem functions.

To maximize economic benefits and improve community livelihoods by promoting local participation in all aspects of the sea cucumber fishery value chain.

To promote collaborative implementation of this Management Plan between government agencies, relevant non-government organisations and civil society groups, local communities, research institutions, and industry stakeholders.

5. MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The management of the sea cucumber fishery and beche-de-mer trade will be consistent with relevant international fisheries instruments that PNG has formally ratified, as well as the objectives and principles of the Act. In addition, the following management principles will be applied:

- a) Resource owners and community participation are to be involved in the day-to-day management of the beche-de-mer fishery.
- b) Relevant government agencies, relevant non-government organisations and civil society groups, local communities, research institutions and industry stakeholders are also able to participate in the management of the beche-de-mer fishery.
- c) The ecosystem approach to fisheries management and the precautionary approach will be used to guide the review and implementation of the Management Plan.
- d) Conservation of non-target species and the protection of habitats of special concern will be considered in the review and implementation of this management plan.
- e) Implementation of the Management Plan at all levels will consider the latest scientific and other relevant information to refine management actions.

6. NATIONAL FISHERY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NMAC)

The National Management Advisory Committee (NMAC) shall be formed and be composed of members with a strong understanding or knowledge about sea cucumbers, the sea cucumber fishery and the beche-de-mer trade.

The NMAC will provide advice to the NFA Managing Director on management measures as the NFA Managing Director may specify, including TACs, closed seasons, reporting, restrictions, trade, and any other relevant issues that the NFA Managing Director and NFA board may direct from time to time.

The NFA Managing Director may direct the NMAC to examine a particular issue in the sea cucumber fishery or beche-de-mer trade or to review all or part of the Management Plan.

Role and responsibilities of the NMAC is to:

- i. Review the Management Plan as necessary and required in consultation with NFA or as required by the NFA Managing Director or the NFA Board.
- ii. Assess, review and recommend the annual Provincial TACs to the NFA Managing Director and the NFA Board before the opening of the season.
- iii. Recommend the upper limit on the number of exporters that is allowed for each province for each year.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***6. National Fishery Advisory Committee (NMAC)—*continued***

Role and responsibilities of the NMAC is to—*continued*

- iv. Recommend the upper limit on the number of buyers that can be employed by Provincial exporters for each province for each year.
- v. Review licensing guidelines and criteria for exporters as recommended by the NFA.
- vi. Review fishery survey results and advice provided by the NFA and Provincial Fisheries Administrations.
- vii. Review any Maritime Provincial or LLG Government, and community specific management strategies.
- viii. Review closed seasons, reporting, restrictions, trade, and any other relevant issues that the NFA Managing Director or the NFA Board may request from time to time.
- ix. Advise on the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management and the precautionary approach as part of the Management Plan.
- x. Review guidelines for best practices for sea cucumber aquaculture, ranching and associated activities.

The NMAC will consist of the following persons:

- i. Four (4) NFA representatives (one of who will be appointed the Chair).
- ii. One (1) reputable fishery scientist.
- iii. Three (3) industry representatives nominated by consensus by the beche-de-mer industry stakeholders involved in the buying and exporting of beche-de-mer for each of the three regions, Momase Region, New Guinea Islands Region and Southern Region.
- iv. Three (3) community resource owner representatives nominated by consensus by the community resource owners for each of the three regions, Momase, New Guinea Islands and Southern Region.
- v. Three Provincial Fishery Officers representatives from each of the three regions, Momase, New Guinea Islands and Southern regions.
- vi. One (1) representative from a relevant non-government organisation or civil society organisation whose objectives include conservation of the marine environment and management of fisheries resources.

The NMAC may invite other stakeholders to attend NMAC meetings on a needs basis to address specific issues.

No more than two (2) members may represent groups or government from the same province.

Elected political office holders are ineligible for membership of the NMAC. Should an NMAC member be elected to political office during their term he or she must resign their membership. Persons who nominate for provincial or national election must stand down.

The two representatives from the NFA will serve as permanent members. Other members to the NMAC will serve for three-year terms.

The NFA Managing Director will confirm the appointment of the NMAC members through a letter confirming the membership and the period of membership to the NMAC. Determination of allowances for NMAC member (excluding ex-officio) shall be based on a rate as set by the NFA and approved by the NFA Board.

The NMAC and its members will operate in accordance with the following procedures and such other procedures and standards as may be set by the NFA Board:

- i. A quorum requires two-thirds (2/3) of all members and must include two NFA representatives.
- ii. The NFA Managing Director shall, with the endorsement of the NFA Board, lay down operational procedures for the NMAC, including the place and dates for meetings, and the NMAC shall meet twice a year or as needed.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—continued**6. National Fishery Advisory Committee (NMAC)—continued**

- iii. Prior to taking up membership, representatives will be required to disclose any direct or indirect personal or pecuniary interests in the sea cucumber fishery or beche-de-mer trade, otherwise than as a member of, and in common with the other members of, an incorporated company consisting of not less than 25 persons. The nature of his or her interest shall be disclosed immediately to the NMAC. Such a disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the NMAC and submitted to the NFA Managing Director. The NFA Managing Director must be advised of any substantive changes in such interests, or new such interests of members. The NFA Managing Director will determine if a change in interests will affect that member's term.
- iv. Where a member who has an interest described in Sub-section 6(k)(iii), has not made a disclosure in accordance with that subsection, his or her vote shall be null and void retrospectively from the time such interest is considered and determined by the NFA Managing Director and the NFA Managing Director shall terminate the appointment of such a member.

7. JOINT MANAGEMENT

The sea cucumber fishery will be primarily managed by the NFA, in collaboration with respective Maritime Provincial Governments, and communities. Maritime provincial governments and communities must demonstrate the ability to manage the fishery at their respective levels by consulting and collaborating with NFA in the formulation of beche-de-mer fisheries management strategies and provincial fisheries policies.

The role of the NFA, respective Maritime Provincial Governments, and Maritime LLGs and communities will be as follows:

- i. The NFA will be responsible for formulating and implementing the Management Plan. It will provide resources for obtaining, analysing data and determining management measures which will include the minimum size limits, closed seasons, TACs, the maximum number of exporters and buyers per province, licensing criteria and guidelines for licences, aquaculture and sea ranching guidelines, as well as the establishment of the National Management Advisory Committee (NMAC).
- ii. The Maritime Provincial Governments will be responsible for implementing the Management Plan at their respective levels; this includes the ability to set lower TACs (only at the Provincial level or split amongst LLGs but only as long as it does not exceed the Provincial TAC), higher size limits, longer closed seasons, advising the NFA on the number of licenses to be issued, supporting resource owners and communities in their management actions and will also have the option to establish Management Advisory Committees at either or both, the Provincial and LLG level if they feel that this will enhance the legal and management framework at those levels for the sea cucumber fishery. Any LLG or provincial management strategies must not conflict with this Management Plan.
- iii. Communities and resource owners where feasible will be responsible for implementing the Management Plan at their respective levels, as well as developing management strategies at their level or with the support of the LLG or Provincial fisheries staff, relevant non-government organisations and civil society groups, local communities, or research institutions. Any management strategies developed by resource owners, must not conflict with this Management Plan.

8. MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The following management measures set out in the management plan shall have the force of law upon Gazettal.

8.1 OPENING OF THE FISHERY

- a) The opening of the fishery will depend on the results of stock assessments and the calculated stock levels done annually.
- b) In determining the stock level, the following must be considered;

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***8. Management Measures—*continued*****8.1 Opening of the Fishery—*continued***

- i. Species density
 - ii. Combine density
 - iii. Length frequency
 - iv. Habitats
 - v. Stock biomass
 - vi. ecosystem variables
- c) The fishery may be open based on species levels if stock assessment results according to section (b) (ii) confirm that those species are fully recovered, while ensuring that those species that are not recovered to remain closed.

8.2 LICENCING

- A) All licence applications will be assessed in accordance with the Act and Regulations, and the licensing criteria as set out in Schedule 1 of this Management Plan and must comply with the conditions set below. A call for licence applications will be made 90 days prior to 1st July each year. All licence applications will be considered as New Applications before any open season, including aquaculture and farm-based licences.

i) LICENCE TYPES

The following types of licences are required to participate in the fishery;

- 1) Fish Buyers Licence
- 2) Fish Storage Facility Licence
- 3) Fish Factory Licence
- 4) Fish Export Facility Licence

ii) LICENCE ALLOCATION

Licensing of operators will depend on the TAC of the Provinces and will be done in the following manner:

- a) Provinces with more than 20 tonnes TAC will be referred to as Tier 1 provinces. Provinces with less than 20 tonnes TAC will be referred to as Tier 2 provinces.
- b) Operators from Tier 1 provinces will be eligible to apply for all 4 licence types.
- c) Operators from Tier 2 provinces will be eligible to apply for Fish Buyers, Fish Storage and Fish Factory licence only.
- d) Operators from both Tier 1 and Tier 2 provinces are entitled to apply for 5 buyers' licences for employees of their company who will be involved in the buying of beche-der-mer products.
- e) Operators from Tier 2 provinces are encouraged to sell their products to any licenced exporter from a Tier 1 province.
- f) A Buyer's licence will only be valid for the duration of the open season. Operators are not allowed to buy after the closure of the season.
- g) Closure of season does not affect the validity of the Fish Storage or Fish Factory or Fish Export facility Licences.
- h) All operators are required to submit an end-of-season declaration form 7 days after the sea son closure date, declaring the products they have in their storage facility.
- i) Exports after the closure of the season must be equivalent to the weight declared on the end-of-season declaration form.
- j) Operators operating an Aquaculture facility are required to apply for an Aquaculture Licence.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—continued**iii) LICENSING ELIGIBILITY**

- a) Licence to participate in the Beche-de-mer trade are reserved for PNG citizens only.
- b) The trade of beche-de-mer or beche-de-mer products is restricted to licensed operators only.
- c) Licence to participate in the development of a sea cucumber hatchery can either be foreign owned and/or joint venture.
- d) Operators from provinces with more than 20 tonnes TAC are eligible to apply for an export licence, a storage licence, a factory licence, and up to five (5) buyers' licence.
- e) Operators from provinces with less than 20 tonnes TAC are eligible to apply for a storage licence, a factory licence, and up to five (5) buyers' licence.
- f) Operators from provinces with more than 20 tonnes TAC are allowed to apply for additional storage facility licence in another province to facilitate export.
- g) All BDM licence applications must be consistent with the operating procedures of the licencing requirements.

iv) LICENCE REQUIREMENTS

- a) All licence applications will be screened using the licencing criteria as set out in schedule 1 of this Management Plan.
- b) All licence applications will be considered new before any open season.
- c) Licenses will only be issued or renewed if NFA board is satisfied that the company has met all licencing conditions and complied with the conditions of this Management Plan.
- d) Approved export and buyers licence operators must allow authorised Fisheries Data Collectors (FDCs) or their equivalent to enter their facility/premises at any time for the purpose of undertaking beche-de-mer fishery sampling as part of the monitoring program.
- e) Licenced exporters and buyers must provide all purchasing data every week using the prescribed form (schedule 2), including their advertised buying prices.
- f) Licence exporters must provide all export data after each export, including declared export prices.
- g) All approved Export licence must pay a compliance bond of K50,000.00 to NFA.
- h) All approved buyers' licence with less than 20 tonne TAC must pay a compliance bond of K25,000.00 to NFA.
- i) Failure to comply with the Licence requirements would result in applications not granted licences.

v) LICENCE CONDITIONS

- a) All Licences except the buyer's licence will be valid for only one year.
- b) All Licences will be issued to start on the date approved by the NFA for the open season; however, the NFA Board may determine an earlier or later opening date depending on management needs. c) In such cases, licenses may be issued before the official opening date as approved by the Board.
- d) All Licenses, except export and storage licenses will become non-operational when the fishery is closed, either a provincial TAC is reached or by compulsory season closure, whichever occurs first.
- e) Operators are encouraged to clear out their declared end-of-season stock before their licence expires.
- f) In the instances where there is no infringement, the compliance bond or the outstanding balance of the compliance bond shall be reimbursed or rolled over to the next fishing season and held as a security.
- g) In the instances where the compliance bond is forfeited due to an infringement, the bond will be forfeited to NFA for further management purposes.
- h) If the fishery is closed by NFA for reasons outside of the normal closed season, the compliance bond or outstanding balance of the compliance bond will be refunded to the licensees.
- i) Licenses shall be terminated if the licensee is found guilty of any offence related to the conditions of this Management Plan or any provisions of the Act and Regulations.
- j) Licenses that are terminated are not eligible for reapplication.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***8.3 TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH****vi) TAC ALLOCATION**

- a)* The determination of the TAC for the sea cucumber fishery for a respective Maritime Province shall be based on the annual assessment conducted by the NFA and made available to the NMAC for review each year. Calculation of the TAC will be based on the number of harvestable size animals (sizes greater than the minimum size limits in Schedule 4) and taking into account the density of individual species. The NMAC will advise the NFA Managing Director on annual Provincial TAC's by species using information provided by the NFA. Provincial TACs by species will be calculated based on the current status of the sea cucumber stocks for that year and will be set at the lower confidence limit of the estimated Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for sea cucumber stocks for that respective Province.
- b)* NFA has the option to allocate the annual Provincial TAC by species or as the sum of the species TAC. The Provincial TAC will be the maximum upper limit which cannot be exceeded by any Province in any one year; and will be set after the yearly closure and prior to the opening of the fishery the following year. In circumstances where a TAC for a respective Province is considered too low for the fishery, it shall be recommended for an extended closure. The Provincial TACs for the year will be advertised in the media. If the allocated annual TAC by species for a Province is reached and exceeded, that excess amount will be taken off the next season's TAC for that Province.
- c)* The TAC allocation for all sea cucumber species listed under CITES will be managed separately and will be based on the outcomes of their respective Non-Detriment Findings (NDF).
- d)* Provinces with low density or no TAC allocated for any of the Cites-listed species will be banned from harvesting that particular species.

vii) TAC MONITORING

- a)* NFA, in consultation with the Provincial Fisheries Officers, will monitor Provincial annual TACs by species. The primary mechanism for monitoring the TACs will be the use of the electronic daily purchase records using the form as set out in Schedule 2 of this Management Plan.
- b)* The NMAC will review the TACs by species for each Province annually, taking into consideration any new and relevant research and information that is available.
- c)* The NFA will advertise in the media the final closure date of a Provincial fishery when it is estimated that 70 % of the Provincial TAC has been reached.
- d)* Monitoring of the sea cucumber species listed under CITES, including the teatfish (black and white) and Thelenota species (amberfish, candy canefish, and prickly redfish) will be consistent with their NDF.

8.4 EXPORTING

- a)* Licensed exporters will only export beche-de-mer in the sizes as set out in Schedule 4 of this Management Plan.
- b)* Export of frozen or vacuum packed beche-de-mer shall be consistent with the standards as prescribed in the PNG Standards for Fish and Fish Products 2019.F

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***8.4 Exporting—*continued***

- c)* Trade of undersized beche-de-mer as specified on schedule 4 or as specified in any other provincial, LLG, and community beche-de-mer management plan is prohibited, and any operator caught trading undersized product will be penalised in accordance with Schedule 8 of this Plan.
- d)* Trade of parts of, or broken beche-de-mer is prohibited, and any parts or broken beche-de-mer product will be confiscated, a fine incurred and the licence recommended for cancellation.
- e)* Beche-de-mer or products for export must be packed by species and clearly labelled with the name as set out in Schedule 4 of this Management Plan, grade and quantity of the species and product, the name and licence number of the exporter, and the name of the importer.
- f)* Beche-de-mer bound for overseas for personal use shall be limited to two (2) pieces and requires authorisation from the NFA Managing Director using Certificate for Personal Consumption of Fish and Fishery Products.
- g)* Exporters may sell or move products to an exporter in another province with the prior approval of the NFA Managing Director. The application and approval of special circumstances will use the form on Schedule 6.
- h)* Hatchery-produced beche-de-mer may be exported year-round, provided that records confirm they were harvested from approved grow-out farms, and that exports meet all conditions specified under aquaculture export licence conditions.
- i)* Exporters are not permitted to transfer hatchery-produced sea cucumbers that have been produced into beche-de-mer between provinces, except when directly transporting along an approved export route.
- j)* The export requirements of sea cucumber species listed under CITES must comply with the regulations established by the CITES Management Authority in PNG and shall include NDF requirements.

8.5 IMPORT AND RE-EXPORT OF SEA CUCUMBERS

- a)* Licensed exporters may import legally harvested sea cucumbers from other countries for processing, packaging, and re-export, subject to NFA approval.
- b)* All bdm products imported must be subject to the conditions of import requirements and biosecurity conditions under NAQIA
- c)* Imported sea cucumbers must have valid export permits from the country of origin, including CITES documentation where applicable.
- d)* Processing and re-export must take place in NFA-certified facilities, with proper labelling indicating the country of origin and processing details.
- e)* Imported products must comply with PNG's biosecurity, food safety, and trade regulations before processing and re-export.
- f)* Exporters must maintain records of imported volumes, processing activities, and re-export destinations, which must be submitted to NFA for monitoring.
- g)* The import and re-export of sea cucumbers will align with international trade agreements and sustainability measures to prevent illegal trade.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***8.6 OTHER USE**

- a) Restaurants wanting to serve beche-de-mer to their dining customers during the open season require authorisation from the NFA Managing Director using the form as set out in Schedule 3 of this Management Plan; this will include specific storage conditions. The restaurant must buy from a licensed exporter and will be required to furnish weekly buying reports indicating species using the names as set out in Schedule 4 of the Management Plan and weight using the form as set out in Schedule 2 of the Management Plan. Restaurants must declare all holdings of beche-de-mer within one (1) week of the fishery closure date. Restaurants may continue to serve dining customers using the declared holdings during the closure period on the condition they submit a weekly report on the usage of the declared holdings.
- b) The NFA Managing Director may issue a Harvest Training Permit for the harvesting of a limited amount of beche-de-mer up to 10 kg per species during the closed season for the purpose of training on how to process beche-de-mer. Only beche-de-mer export companies and NFA-endorsed institutions will be allowed to apply for a Harvest Training Permit. The Harvest Training Permit will be issued as an official signed letter from the NFA Managing Director informing the company that the company is allowed to harvest the specified amount of beche-de-mer for training purposes.
- c) The NFA Managing Director shall issue a written directive for the collection of broodstock sea cucumbers from the wild for hatchery purposes, subject to an official inspection and approval by an NFA-authorized business unit. The number of broodstock collected shall not exceed 200 individuals per approval and shall follow the Sea Cucumber Hatchery Guidelines.
- d) Buying prices of beche-de-mer products may be set by the Authority when necessary.

8.7 PROHIBITIONS

- a) The use of underwater breathing devices such as hookah and SCUBA for the fishing of sea cucumbers is prohibited.
- b) The use of underwater lights or surface lights for the fishing of sea cucumbers at night is prohibited.
- c) The taking of sea cucumbers and the trade of beche-de-mer is prohibited when a specific Provincial TAC has been reached, during the compulsory closed season, or in a prohibited area of harvest.
- d) Inter-Provincial Transfers of beche-de-mer products is prohibited except under special circumstances as specified on Section 8(c)(vii).
- e) The harvesting of undersized sea-cucumber is prohibited.

8.8 CLOSURE OF THE FISHERY

- a) A compulsory closed season for the harvesting of sea cucumber applies to all Provinces and will occur each year, from the time TAC of each province is reached and compulsory closure period is publicly announced through the media.
- b) Harvesting and buying of CITES-listed species will cease when the species-specific TAC for the province is reached in the cases where the TAC for the province is set according to species.
- c) The NFA will close the sea cucumber fishery when the cumulative species TAC for the Province is reached, irrespective of whether some species-specific TAC have been reached.
- d) The NFA will provide written communication to operators advising of the closure date of the fishery as well as publicize the closure through the media, once it has been estimated that 70 % of a Provincial TAC has been reached, or when the compulsory season closure date has been reached.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—continued**8.8 Closure of the Fishery—continued**

- e)* All declared beche-de-mer products held by an Operator in their storage facility following the closure date of a specific province or the annual compulsory closure must be exported before the export and storage licence expires.
- f)* Province, LLG, or community-specific management strategies, endorsed by Provincial administrations, Districts, LLGs, or established through other legislation, may designate no-harvest areas.
- g)* Reporting standard trade names as specified on Schedule 4 of this plan must be used in all reporting of species bought and exported.
- h)* Licensed exporters and buyers must submit the daily purchase record using the form on Schedule 2 on a weekly basis to Provincial Fisheries Administrations and the NFA on all beche-de-mer or beche-de-mer products purchased from fishers.
- i)* Exporters shall declare all beche-de-mer or beche-de-mer products they intend to export on the form as in Schedule 5 of this Management Plan to the NFA before the NFA will issue an approval for export.
- j)* Once a closure notice has been given for a respective Province or nationally in the case of the compulsory seasonal closure, exporters must report all holdings of beche-de-mer or beche-de-mer products to Provincial Fisheries Administrations and the NFA on the form set out in Schedule 6 of this Management Plan. This report must be furnished ten (10) days after the fishery closure date.
- k)* Failure to submit the required reports within ten (10) days, or submitting incorrect data, including incorrect trade names, may result in the confiscation of the holdings of beche-de-mer or beche-de-mer products, a fine incurred, and the licence cancelled.

8.9 PIRACY

- a)* Piracy is a big emerging challenge for the sea cucumber and beche-de-mer trade in PNG, which is depriving fishers the opportunity to maximise their income from the fishery. It also increases the risk and expenses for licensed holders. To minimise the negative impact of piracy, the following restrictions and prohibitions will now apply to the fishery.
- b)* Knowingly or unknowingly, possessing, transporting, buying, storing, and exporting of sea cucumbers and beche-de-mer which has been subjected to piracy or any form of theft or illegal activities is prohibited.
- c)* All boats and vessels used in the fishery to transport and move sea cucumbers and beche-de-mer products must have clearly marked at the side of the vessel the Buyers Licence number.
- d)* All products in storage, being transported or exported by licensed Buyers and Exporters but all be accounted for with buying receipts. Any products that as no matching receipts will be deemed to have been obtained illegally.

9. RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENTS**9.1 STOCK ASSESSMENT AND FISHERIES DATA COLLECTION**

- a)* Annual Stock Assessment will be conducted in the Provinces to establish the status of the sea cucumber stock in relation to the impact of the fishery. This will be done in collaboration with the Stock assessment information will be supplied to the NFA to refine the annual Provincial TACs.
- b)* NFA will collaborate with Provincial Fisheries Administrations to analyse fishery data using the beche-de-mer buyers and exporters' purchasing records using the form as set out in Schedule 2 of this Management Plan.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***9. Research and Assessments—*continued*****9.1 Stock Assessment and Fisheries Data Collection—*continued***

- c) NFA will commission or encourage research to identify negative environmental impacts of the sea cucumber fishery and the beche-de-mer trade and develop mitigation methods against them.

9.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

- a) Provincial Fisheries Administrations, with the assistance of relevant non-government organisations or civil society organisations, and research institutions, and with the technical support from the NFA, will commission and encourage socio-economic research to establish socio-economic baselines and if there are already some forms of baselines, make comparisons to later assessments.
- b) Provincial Fisheries Administrations, with the assistance of relevant non-government organisations or civil society organisations, and research institutions, and with the technical support from the NFA, will monitor the changing socio-economic profiles of the coastal and island communities as a result of the fishery and management actions.

10. SEA CUCUMBER HATCHERY FACILITY AND SEA-BASED FARMING

This Management Plan recognises the National Aquaculture Code of Practice and Management Guideline as the overarching national policy and framework guiding aquaculture development in Papua New Guinea. The provisions outlined in this Plan relating to aquaculture and hatchery activities are intended to support and align with these national instruments; however, they do not override or supersede the strategic directions, principles, or regulatory requirements set out in the National Strategy or Guideline.

i) Hatchery

- a. Hatchery must be located near the sea with the availability of good quality seawater
- b. The hatchery must have an endorsed and approved floor plan indicating certain vital operational features such as electrical cable pathway and seawater intake and circulation, freshwater and aeration plumbing, and most importantly, drainage within the facility.
- c. Hatchery must meet the Occupational Health and Safety Standards for an Aquaculture Facility
- d. Hatchery must have access to utilities such as power supply, fresh water supply, and be accessible by either land or sea transport
- e. Hatchery must have a standard operating procedure for when quarantine issues occur.
- f. Hatchery must have an area isolated for quarantine holding.
- g. Importation of feed must meet all quarantine guidelines.
- h. Hatchery must have mechanisms/tools in place to effectively manage feed loss.
- i. The hatchery must have a wastewater treatment tank before the dumping of seawater circulated in the hatchery.
- j. The hatchery must have an approved Culture Manual and Field Husbandry Protocol for sea cucumber production.
- k. Hatchery must have culture and holding tanks.
- l. Hatchery must have a trained technical team.
- m. Collection of wild broodstock must be supervised by NFA (FMU and AIFU), a maximum of 200 broodstock be collected for spawning. Should there be more required, a new request has to be submitted for approval for collection.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—continued**10. Sea Cucumber Hatchery Facility and Sea-Based Farming—continued****i) Hatchery—continued**

- n.* Spawning of sea cucumber should be done in a licensed hatchery facility, where the broodstock are induced through thermal shocks or any other non-lethal spawning induction method.
- o.* The hatchery should strictly keep a logbook of juveniles produced; mortality and number distributed to the grow-out ponds.

ii) Pond Farming of hatchery produced sea cucumber

- a.* Must be located on the coastline unaffected by human influence (e.g. Plantation, logging etc.)
- b.* Hatchery operator must have a legal land development title from authorized agency and or customary land own
- c.* Must have successfully undergone soil testing without any issues
- d.* Have approval for the addition of any kind of fertilizer for enriching the soil for food for sea cucumbers.
- e.* Have water treatment and discharge plan
- f.* Have a pond management and husbandry protocol/guideline
- g.* Have a quarantine holding area.
- h.* The farm should have a log book recording the number of juveniles stocked in the ponds, mortality and growth (length and weight) over time until the time of harvest
- i.* Provide production report to NFA for traceability and monitoring.

iii) Sea Ranching of hatchery-produced sea cucumber

- a.* There is harmony among the community members supporting this activity
- b.* The area contains at least 60% habitat that is known to support said sea cucumber species
- c.* Stocking hatchery produced sea cucumbers must be according to an acceptable stocking density.
- d.* Declare wild existing species before stocking.
- e.* A permit to stock any habitat need to be obtained from NFA prior to any stocking exercise.

iv) Sea Pen Culture of hatchery produced sea cucumber

- a.* Site must be suitable for pen culture of the sea cucumber species of interest
- b.* At least stock below 500 juveniles weighing 3-5g per 100 square meters
- c.* Farmer must be trained with husbandry skills required to successfully rear juveniles in captivity in a limited enclosed area.

v) Licensing conditions

- a.* The operator/farmer must strictly keep a logbook record of juveniles produced per hatchery run and report to NFA
- b.* The operator/farmer must update NFA on the number of hatchery-produced sea cucumbers every 6 months after stocking the pens, cages, and ponds.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—continued**10. Sea Cucumber Hatchery Facility and Sea-Based Farming—continued****v) Licensing conditions—continued**

- c.* The operator/farmer must provide a record of hatchery-produced sea cucumber harvested and processed from the pens, cages, and ponds.
- d.* The operator should only purchase and process hatchery-produced produced sea cucumbers
- e.* Hatchery-produced Sea cucumbers are exempt from the minimum size requirements outlined in Schedule 4 of this Management Plan.
- f.* Owners of grow-out farms must be either a registered group or individual and must have a signed agreement with the hatchery owner.

vi) License Requirements

- a.* Stakeholders interested in hatchery production, pond culture, pen or cage culture and sea ranching of sea cucumber will apply through the normal process for an Aquaculture License, as well as any other relevant license to participate in this fishery
- b.* Prior to issuance of license, the operator has to work closely with the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority (CEPA) to produce an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), obtain an Environment Permit and produce an Environment Management Plan.
- c.* Licence will only be renewed or issued if the NFA Board is satisfied that the company has met all the licencing conditions and will comply or has complied with conditions of the management plan.

vii) Prohibitions

- a.* Collection of wild sea cucumber to stock the pens or ponds is prohibited.
- b.* The hatchery operator/farmer is prohibited from purchasing, processing and exporting wild-harvested sea cucumber.
- c.* Killing and removal of gametes of large number of brooders for fertilization is prohibited
- d.* Inter province shipment of brood stock and juveniles is prohibited to prevent potential genetic contamination and quarantine issues
- e.* Import and export of live brood stock and juveniles is prohibited
- f.* Restocking or releasing hatchery produced sea cucumbers into wild habitats is prohibited.
- g.* Direct discharge of hatchery wastewater into the environment/sea is prohibited

11. CUSTOMARY RIGHTS

- a)* Customary management measures which are consistent with the Management Plan will be encouraged. Resource Owners are encouraged to notify the NFA and Provincial Fisheries Administrations of such measures so NFA and the Provinces can be incorporated into Provincial and LLG management strategies.
- b)* Customary open seasons that are inconsistent with the closed seasons as set out in Section 8(f)(ii) are prohibited under Section 30 of the *Fisheries Management Act* 1998.

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***12. SPECIES LISTED UNDER CITES**

- a)* The management plan recognises the sea cucumber species listed under Appendix II of the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The management objectives and the principles remain the same with those specified with Articles III and IV of the convention. As NFA is the CITES Scientific Authority for PNG, a non-detrimental finding document will be developed for the purpose of co-management with the CITES Management Authority, CEPA.
- b)* Until additional species are listed under CITES Appendix II, the following species are currently regulated under this listing:
 - i. White teatfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*)
 - ii. Black teatfish (*Holothuria whitmaei*)
 - iii. Amberfish (*Thelenota anax*)
 - iv. Prickly redfish (*Thelenota ananas*)
 - v. Candy cane fish (*Thelenota rubralineata*)
- c)* NFA will advise CEPA of the TACs for each CITES-listed species through the NDFs.
- d)* Species with very low stock density will be strictly prohibited from harvesting and trade.
- e)* Export permit for CITES-listed species will only be issued by the NFA once CEPA has approved the CITES export permit.
- f)* The export process for CITES-listed species will require exporters to first obtain approval from CEPA for a CITES export permit. Once CEPA grants the permit, NFA will then issue the final export approval, ensuring all regulations and trade conditions are met.

13. LIST OF SCHEDULES

Schedule 1. Licensing Criteria

Schedule 2. Buyers Daily Purchase Records

Schedule 3. Certificate of Authorisation to Serve Beche-de-mer in a Restaurant

Schedule 4. Minimum Size Limits

Schedule 5. End of Season Exporters Holding Form

Schedule 6. Beche-de-mer Product Movement Application and Approval Form

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—continued

14. SCHEDULE 1. LICENSING CRITERIA

DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED..... FILE NO.....

NAME OF COMPANY..... TYPE OF LICENSE.....

ADDRESS

.....

CRITERIA	Status (put tick for yes, x for no)	POINTS	POINT SCORE
Company Registration			
Citizen Company Registration & License		5	
Bank remittance advice		5	
Foreign Company	Reject Application		
		Subtotal	
License Status			
Renewal of Export License		5	
New Applicant for Buyers/Export License		3	
		Subtotal	
Fishing Industry Investment			
Investment in Other Fishery that benefit Communities		3	
Investment in Aquaculture		3	
Investment in Sea Cucumber Aquaculture		5	
Investment in Sea Cucumber Hatchery		5	
Investment in Sea Cucumber Aquaculture-Ranching		5	
		Subtotal	
Ownership			
Foreign Owned company	Reject Application		
Citizen Owned Company		4	
Community run Co-operative Society		5	
Community Owned Company		5	
		Subtotal	
Compliance			
Submitted all reports for the season		5	
Submitted some reports for the season		2	
Cited for breach of offence		1	
Breach of licensing terms and conditions	Reject Application		
Breach of licensing terms and conditions	Reject Application		
Associated with Blacklisted Individual	Reject Application		
Company is Blacklisted for previous breaches	Reject Application		
Breach of Fisheries Act and Regulations	Reject Application		
		Subtotal	
Reporting			
Timely submission of buyers receipts		5	
Accurate recording of buyers receipts		5	
Late submission of log buyers' receipts		2	
Non submission of buyers receipts	Reject Application		
		Subtotal	
Transport and Marketing			
Company owns boat to buy and transport products from remote locations		4	
Company has Business plan		4	
Company has no Business Plan		2	
Company made minimum of one export (Export Licenses)		4	
Company made no export (Export Licenses)	Reject Application		
Company made no export for 2 consecutive years	Reject Application		
		Subtotal	
		TOTAL POINTS	

POINTS COMPILED BY..... CHECKED BY.....

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***15. SCHEDULE 2. BUYERS DAILY PURCHASE RECORDS**

NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITY

Beche-de-mer Daily Purchase Record

Name of Buyer: _____ Buyer License No. _____

Day/Month/Year: _____ Location Purchase Made _____ Prov. _____

Fishermen Name	Village	LLG	Species	Grade	Weight (kg)	Value (Kina)

Send or Fax form to:

Manager,

Licensing & Information

Facsimile: (675) 3202069

P O Box 2016

Telephone: (675) 3090444

PORT MORESBY

Email: nfa@fisheries.gov.pg

Papua New Guinea

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***16. SCHEDULE 3. CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORISATION TO SERVE BECHE-DE-MER IN A RESTAURANT**

The Independent State of Papua New Guinea
National Fisheries Authority

Fisheries Management Act, 1998.

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORISATION TO SERVE BECHE-DE-MER IN A RESTAURANT

NAME OF RESTAURANT.....

LOT NUMBER

SECTION

Certificate Valid Start Date.....

Certificate Valid End date.....

Total Amount of Beche-de-mer allowed

CONDITIONS

Only buy from a licensed Exporter

Only buy during the bech-de-mer fishery open season

No buying during beche-de-mer fishery closed season

Beche-de-mer meal preparation and serving using declared stock bought from Licenced Exporters during the closed season.

Store beche-de-mer as specified by NFA

.....

Approved by NFA Managing Director.

Date Certificate Approved

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued***17. SCHEDULE 4. MINIMUM SIZE LIMITS**

	COMMON NAME	SPECIES	LIVE MINIMUM SIZE (CM)	DRY MINIMUM SIZE SIZE(CM)
1	Deepwater redfish	Actinopyga echinites	25	15
2	tone fish	Actinopyga lecanora	15	10
3	Hairy Blackfish	Actinpyga miliaris	15	10
4	Surf redfish	Actinopyga mauritiana	20	8
5	Blackfish	Actinopyga palauensis	20	10
6	Tigerfish	Bohadschia argus	20	10
7	Chalkfish	Bohadschia marmorata	20	10
8	Brown sandfish	Bohadschia vitiensis	20	10
9	Lollyfish	Holothuria atra	25	10
10	Snakefish	Holothuria coluber	25	10
11	Pinkfish	Holothuria edulis	25	10
12	Tigertail	Holothuria hilla	25	10
13	Red snakefish	Holothuria roseomaculata	30	15
14	Labuyo	Holothuria fuscocinerea	30	15
15	White teatfish	Holothuria fuscogilva	35	15
16	Elephant trunkfish	Holothuria fuscopunctata	45	15
17	Golden Sandfish	Holothuria lessoni	22	10
18	White threadfish	Holothuria leucospilota	25	10
19	Black teafish	Holothuria whitmaei	22	10
Q				
CX	Sandfish	Holothuria scabra	22	10
21	Flower fish	Pearsonothuria graeffei	25	10
22	Greenfish	Stichopus chloronatus	20	10
23	Curryfish	Stichopus herrmanni	25	10
24	Dragonfish	Stichopus horrens	20	10
25	Pink Curryfish	Stichopus naso	25	10
26	Ocellated curryfish	Stichopus ocellatus	25	10
27	Brown curryfish	Stichopus vastus	25	10
28	Prickly Redfish	Thelenota ananas	30	15
29	Amberfish	Thelenota anax	20	10
30	Candy canefish	Thelenota rubralineata	25	10

18. SCHEDULE 5. END OF SEASON EXPORTERS HOLDING FORM

Province: Product Type:

[illegible]

Name of Inspecting Fisheries Officer Signature

P O Box 2016
PORT MORESBY
Papua New Guinea

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—continued

19. SCHEDULE 6. BECHE-DE-MER PRODUCT MOVEMENT APPLICATION AND APPROVAL FORM

NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITY
BECHE-DE-MER PRODUCT MOVEMENT FORM

=====

Name of Company Export Licence Number

Originating Province Originating Port Port Code.....

Receiving Province Receiving Port Port Code

Receiving Company Name Export Licence Number

Date Application Lodged Date Received

Date Products Intended to MoveShipping Method. Ship/Air (circle)

Flight Number Shipping Freight Code

Reason For Moving Products:

.....

.....

.....

TRADE NAME	GRADE	QUANTITY AT PORT OF ORIGIN (Kg)	QUALITY AT RECEIVING PORT (Kg)	VALUE (KINA)

TRADE NAME	GRADE	QUANTITY AT PORT OF ORIGIN (Kg)	QUALITY AT RECEIVING PORT (Kg)	VALUE (KINA)

Name of Applicant Signature of Applicant Date

The National Sea Cucumber Fishery and Beche-De-Mer Trade Management Plan—*continued*

Name of Inspecting Officer at Port of Origin Signature Date
Inspecting Fisheries Officers Comment

.....

Executive Manager Monitoring Control and Surveillance Comment
.....
.....
.....

Managing Directors Approval (Signature)

Date

Inspecting Fisheries Officer at Receiving Port Signature
COMMENT.....
.....
.....

Dated this 28th day of July, 2025.

Hon. J. WONG,
Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources.