

Self-Declaration of Aquatic Animal Disease Freedom in the Republic of Korea

Regional Workshop for WOA H Focal Points for Aquatic Animals

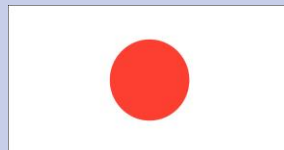
Dr. Jae-Ok Kim

7 – 9 July 2026 | Tokyo, Japan

Aquatic Disease Control Division (ADCD),
National Fishery Products Quality Management Service (NFQS),
Ministry of Ocean and Fishery (MOF), Republic of Korea



World Organisation
for Animal Health



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry



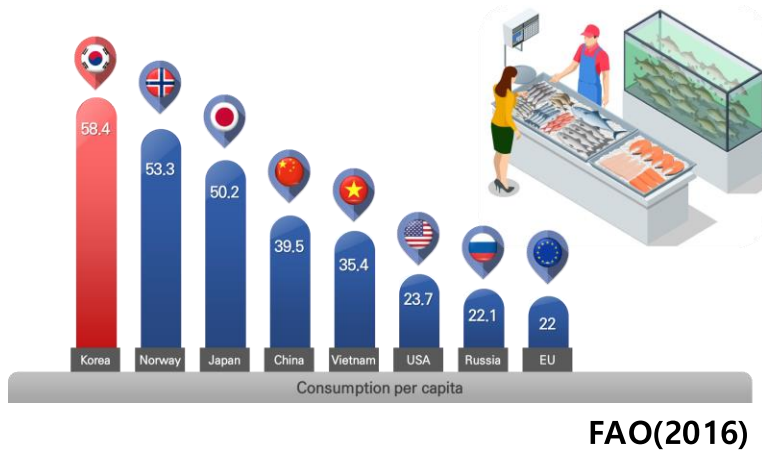
国立大学法人
東京海洋大学
Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology



Aquaculture production in ROK

Together with growth of global aquaculture industry, ROK's aquaculture production continue to increase.

Annual average consumption: **58.4 Kg**



licensed farms: **13,265**



10,938



2,327

Statistic of ROK(2022)

Local production rate: **72.4%**

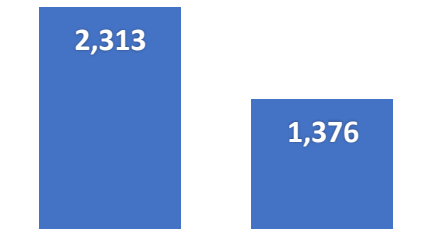


> 47 species



> 29 species

~ **3.7 million tonnes**



Aquaculture Capture
FAO(2023), KREI(2022)

**Also, aquatic animal disease is increasing
with the continuing growth of aquaculture in Korea**



Aquatic Life Disease Control Act

In 2008, the ROK has established a systematic national disease control and quarantine infrastructure along with financial resources to support the system.



<Quarantine>



<Disinfection>



<Surveillance>



<R&D>



<Education>

Listed aquatic disease in the Act: 29

Type	Aquatic disease
Type I	Spring Viraemia of carp, Acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease
Type II	Epidemic Ulcer Syndrome, Epizootic Haematopoietic Necrosis, Infectious Salmon anemia, Infection with <i>G. salaris</i> , Crayfish plague, Yellowhead disease, Infectious myonecrosis, White tail disease, Infection with <i>B. ostreae</i> & <i>B. exitiosa</i> , Infection with <i>P. marinus</i> , <i>M. refringens</i> , infection with <i>X. californiensis</i> , Abalone herpesvirus, Hypodermal and hematopoietic necrosis, Salmonid alphavirus, Necrotizing hepatopancreatitis, Infection with Decapod iridescent virus 1, Tilapia lake virus disease, Infection with <i>B. sal</i>
Type III	Red sea bream iridovirus disease, Viral haematopoietic septicaemia, Koi herpes virus disease, White spot syndrome virus diseases, Taura syndrome, Infection with Ranavirus, Infection with <i>B. denrobatidis</i>

Korean Law



The rationale for the self-declaration of disease-free status



	Japanese abalone	Rainbow trout	Whiteleg shrimp
Total farms	670 farms	160 farms	340 farms
Issue	Top export item among live aquatic animals - High cost for every export health certificate	Most eyed eggs are imported from other countries (Denmark and Poland) Atlantic salmon farming has begun in the country - The risk of pathogen introduction is on the rise	Once outbreak occurs, it causes massive mortality and serve economic losses - lower biosecurity level compared to other species - Diseases can be easily introduced from other countries

To prevent transboundary transmission and support sustainable aquaculture, the ROK has declared country freedom from aquatic diseases since 2019.



Aquatic Code Chapter 1.4.

The ROK operates an early detection system that fulfils the requirements specified in Article 1.4.7 of the *Aquatic Code*.

- Stakeholder awareness, professional training, national response capacity, diagnostic expertise, reporting obligations

Article 1.4.7

 World Organisation for Animal Health

Early detection system

The *early detection system* of a *Competent Authority* is important to generate evidence for claims of *disease* freedom and to provide assurance that a change in *disease* status would be rapidly discovered.

A *self-declaration of freedom from disease* needs to document that the *early detection system* fulfils each of the requirements below:

1. observers (e.g. the personnel of *aquaculture establishments*, processors, transportation services) have broad awareness of the characteristic signs of *listed diseases* and *emerging diseases*;
2. *veterinarians* and *aquatic animal health professionals* are trained in recognising and reporting suspicion of *listed disease* and *emerging disease* occurrence;
3. the *Aquatic Animal Health Services* have capacity to undertake rapid and effective *disease* investigation based on a national chain of command led by a *Competent Authority*;
4. the *Aquatic Animal Health Services* have access to sufficient diagnostic capability (from a laboratory with a quality management system that meets requirements of Chapter 1.1.1 of the *Aquatic Manual*) to confirm or exclude *cases of listed diseases* and the capacity and expertise to investigate *emerging diseases* as described in Article 1.4.10;
5. *veterinarians*, *aquatic animal health professionals* and others with an occupational role with *aquatic animals* have a legal obligation to report suspicion of the occurrence of *listed diseases* or *emerging diseases* to a *Competent Authority*.

WOAH *Aquatic Code*

To demonstrate the Korea’s freedom from aquatic diseases, the pathway-3 was selected and designed accordance with Article 1.4.16. of the *Aquatic Code*.

Pathway	Primary evidence	Secondary evidence	Apply
1. Absence of susceptible species	Surveys of species, historical data, import records	None	Country, zone
2. Historical freedom	Passive surveillance	Targeted surveillance	Country, zone
3. Targeted surveillance	Targeted surveillance	Passive surveillance	Country, zone, compartment
4. Returning to freedom	Targeted surveillance	Passive surveillance	Country, zone, compartment

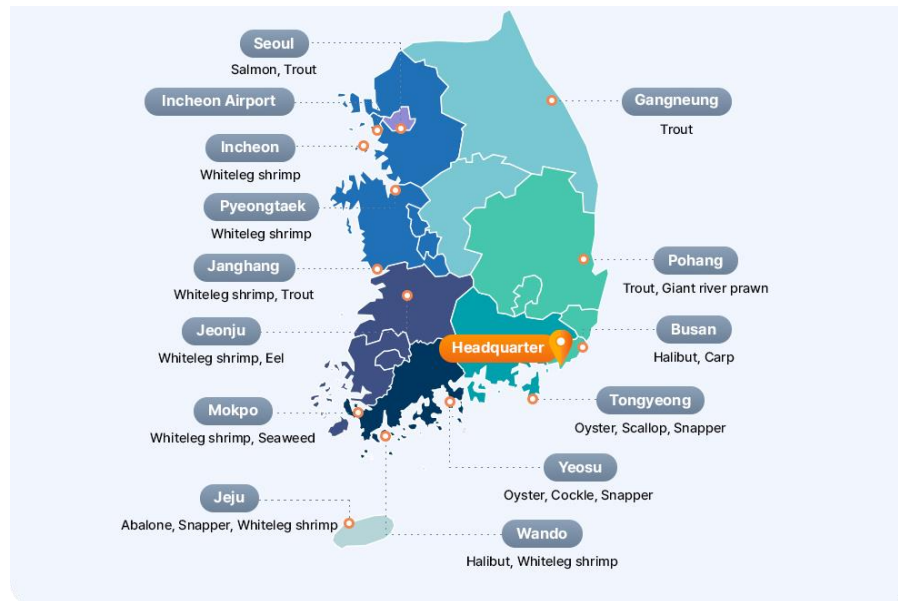
Can be provides scientifically accurate evidence



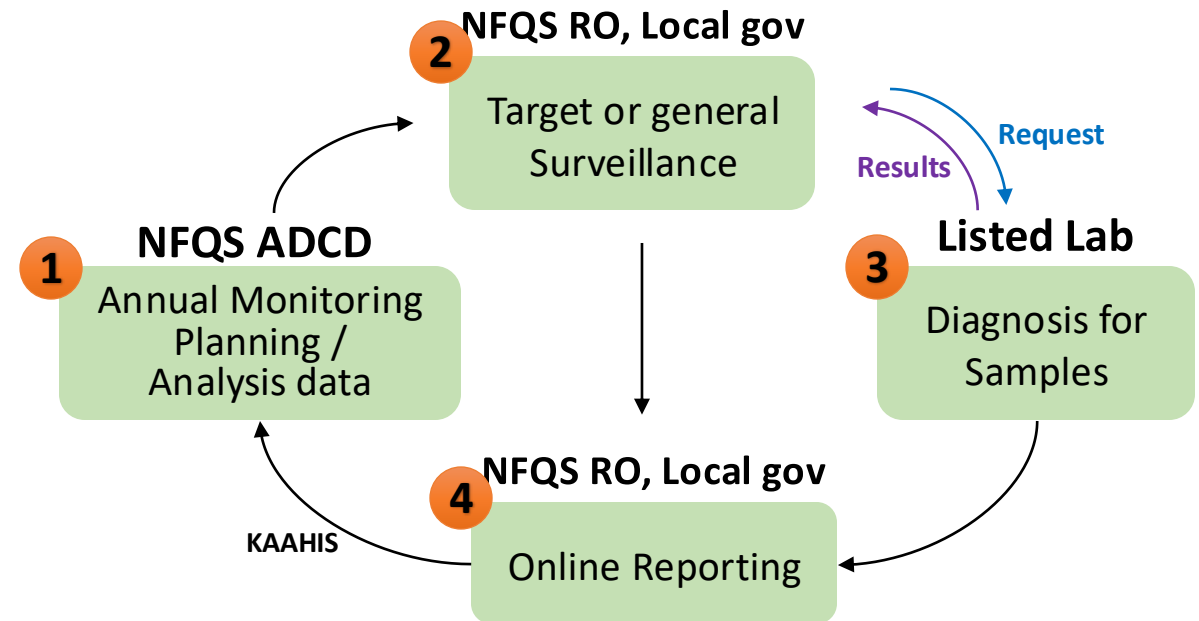
Systematic surveillance of disease in aquatic animals

The Aquatic Disease Control Division (ADCD) of NFQS makes annual plans for surveillance and/or monitoring of aquatic animal diseases.

Surveillance is conducted by NFQS regional offices (NFQS RO) and local governments, and all surveillance data will be reported in the Korean Aquatic Animal Health Integrated System (KAAHIS).



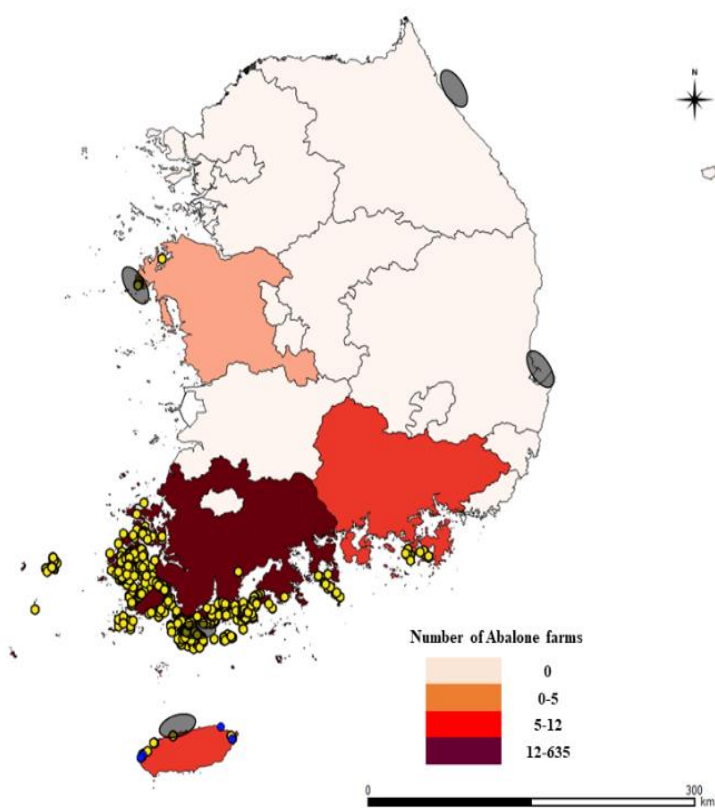
ROK's aquaculture species, and NFQS RO



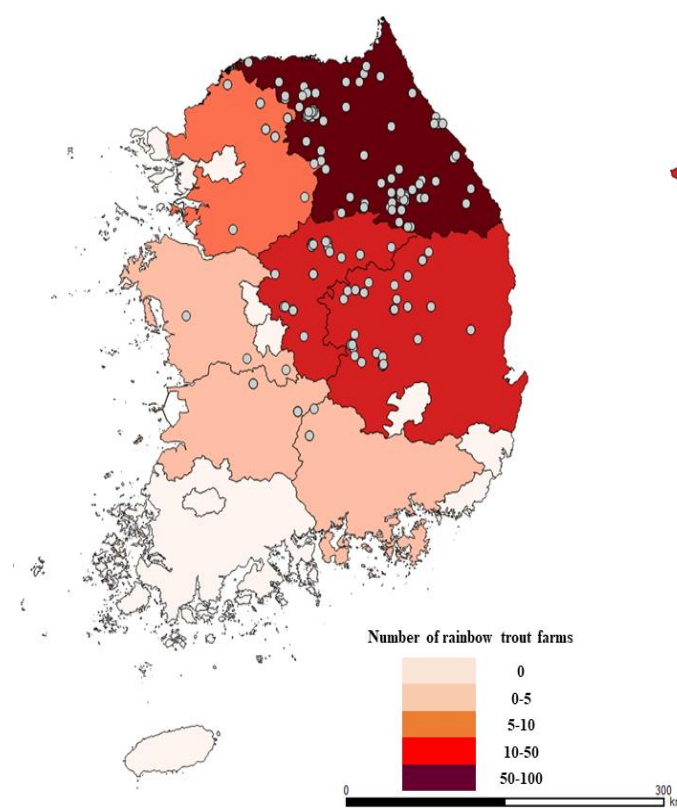


Target surveillance of aquatic animal disease

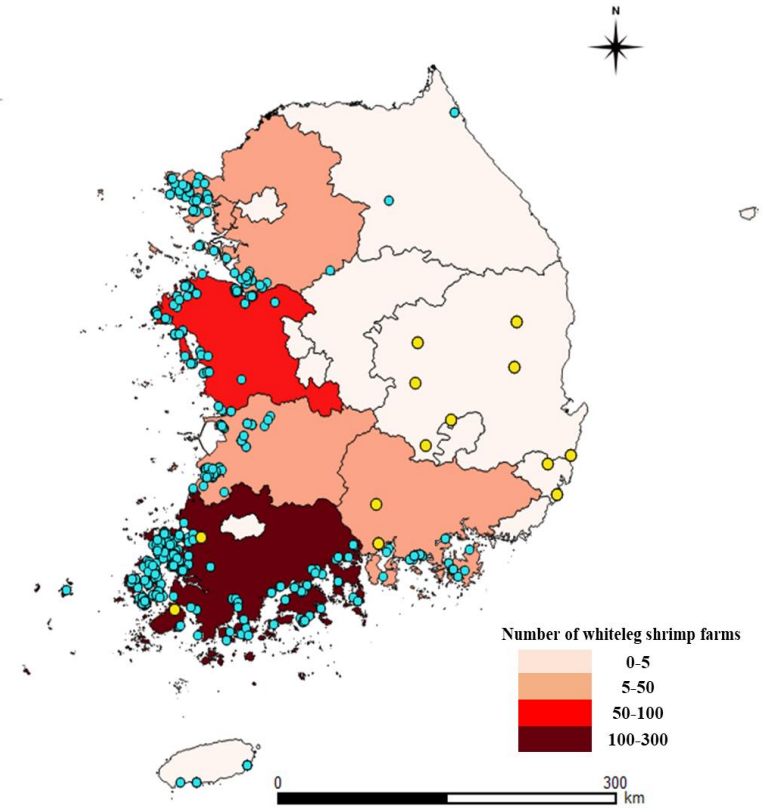
Approximately 150 of abalone farms, 100 of salmonid farms, and 150 whiteleg shrimp farms are tested annually for aquatic animal diseases, with 95% confidence level for all survey.



Targeted surveillance of abalone



Targeted surveillance of salmonid



Targeted surveillance of whiteleg shrimp



Preparation of the self-declaration

The documents should be prepared in accordance with the WOA SOP.

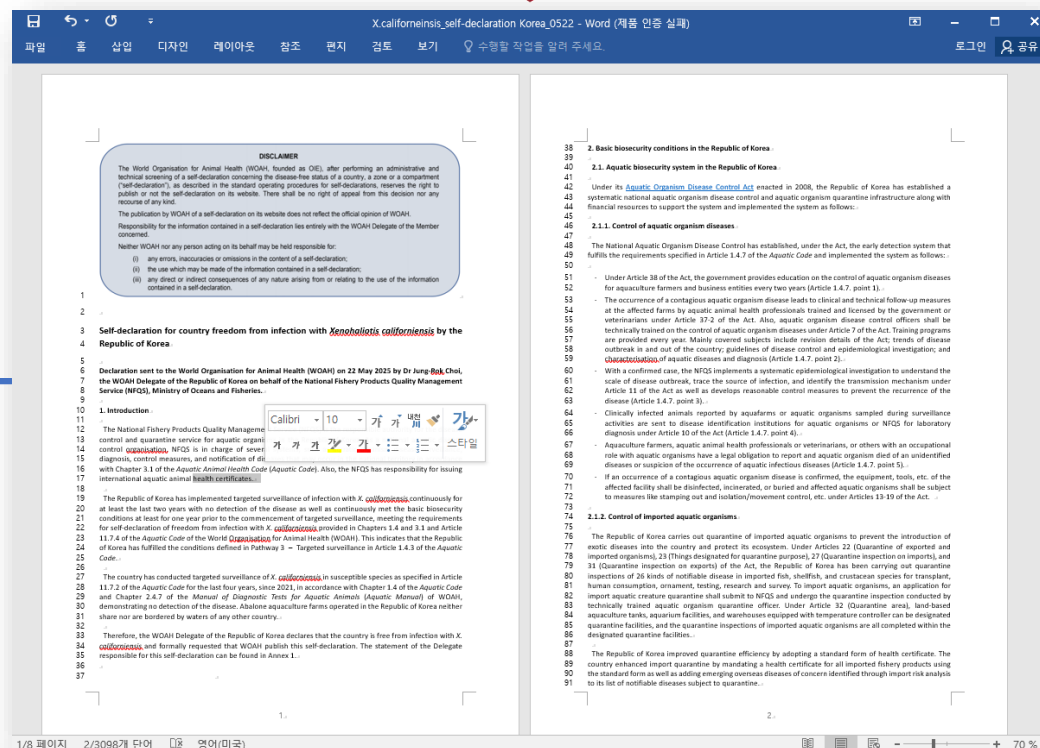
Procedure for the application for the publication of a self-declaration of Animal Health Status¹

1. Introduction

- Details responsible authority
- Which disease for freedom?
- Brief of BBC and pathway
- Geographic description
- Start date of declaration

2. Basic biosecurity conditions

- Early detection system
- Import and domestic control



3. Control and management

- Susceptible species, production, Total farms...
- Design for Targeted Surveillance
- No. of surveys required and completed (map)
- Analysis and results
- 2nd evidence (Passive surveillance)

4. Quarantine

- Import count of host species

5. Maintenance of freedom

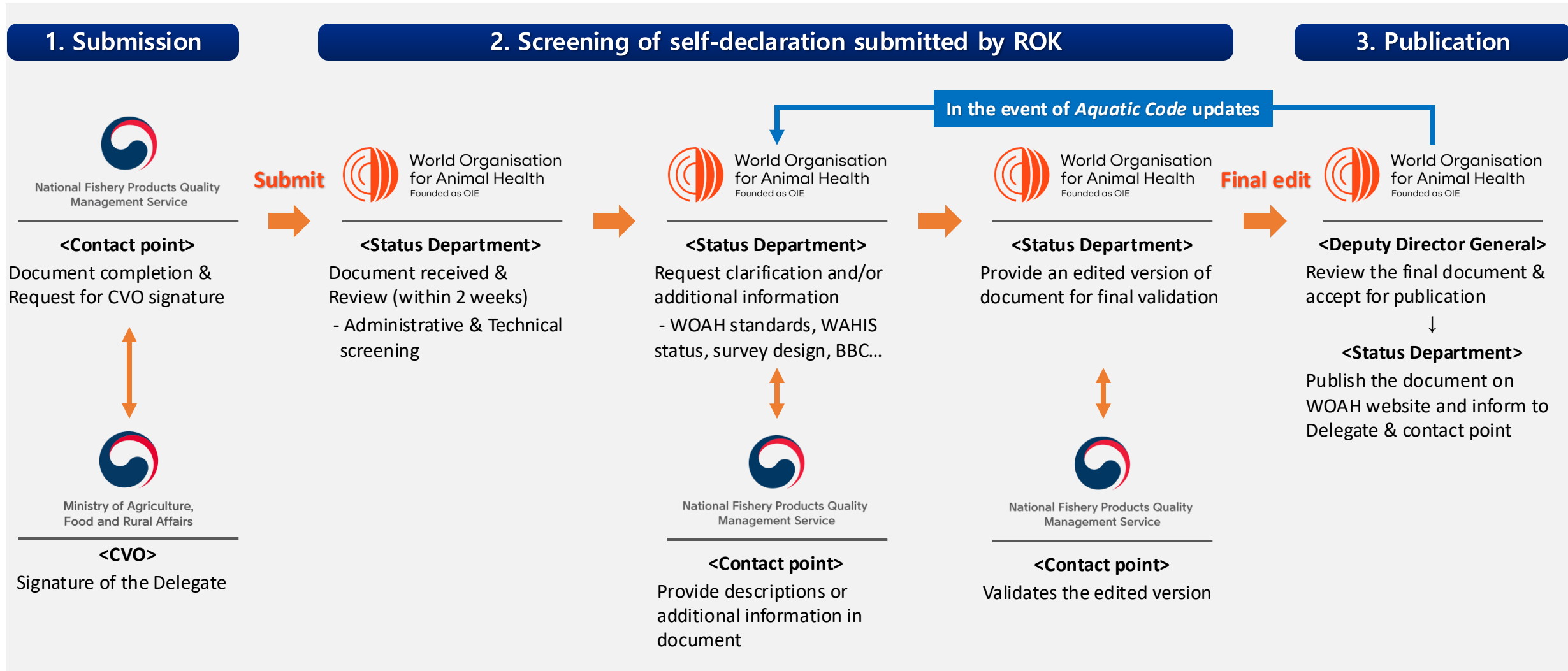
- Ongoing surveillance
- Disease investigation, response

6. Conclusion

- Brief results
- Reference of Code or Manual



Procedure for self-declaration of aquatic animal disease freedom





Achievements & Benefits

Since 2019, Korea has successfully published self-declaration of freedom for seven aquatic animal diseases (Fish: ISA, *G. salaris*, SAV; Molluscs: AbHV, *X. californiensis*; Crustaceans: IHHN, YHV1) on WOAHP.

These results demonstrate transparency in disease occurrence information, boost global animal and public health globally, and strengthen trust with fishery trading partners and the international community.

Published document

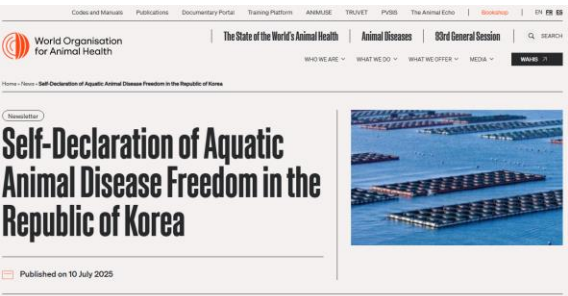


Self-declared Disease Status

In accordance with the provisions of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code) or the Aquatic Animal Health Code (Aquatic Code), Members may wish to self-declare the freedom of their country, zone or compartment from a disease. A Member wishing to publish its self-declaration for disease-free status, should provide the relevant documented evidence of compliance with the provisions of the relevant chapters of the Codes.

Member	Self-declared freedom from	Category	Publication date	Coverage
Korea (Rep. of)	<i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i> (ref. with)	Aquatic	2025년 8월 19일 4시 00분	Member
Korea (Rep. of)	Infectious salmon anaemia virus (ref. with) (HPRI-deleted or HPRI/penicillins)	Aquatic	2025년 8월 19일 4시 00분	Member
Korea (Rep. of)	<i>Xenohalosis californiensis</i> (ref. with)	Aquatic	2025년 8월 19일 4시 00분	Member
Korea (Rep. of)	Yellow head virus (penicillins) (ref. with)	Aquatic	2025년 8월 17일 17시 00분	Member
Korea (Rep. of)	<i>Abalone herpesvirus</i> (ref. with)	Aquatic	2025년 8월 29일 17시 00분	Member
Korea (Rep. of)	<i>Salmonid alphavirus</i> (ref. with)	Aquatic	2025년 8월 29일 17시 00분	Member
Korea (Rep. of)	Infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis virus (ref. with)	Aquatic	2025년 10월 13일 14시 00분	Member

Introduced Newsletter



Self-Declaration of Aquatic Animal Disease Freedom in the Republic of Korea

Published on 10 July 2025

Young-Jin Yang¹, Min-Gyeong Kwon², Joo-Ok Kim³
¹ National Fishery Products Quality Management Service (NFPQS)

The Republic of Korea implements comprehensive disease management of aquatic organisms in accordance with WOAHP standards to protect its aquatic ecosystem and ensure a sustainable aquaculture industry. As a result, it has become the first country to have published self-declarations of freedom from diseases not only in fish, shellfish or crustacean species but in all three, and covering the entire territory.

This achievement can be a model for advancing international efforts in aquatic organism disease management.

WOAHP website



Abalone: Expanded exports
Reduced export costs by over \$ 1M/year



Salmonid: Groundwork for aquaculture industry
Established biosecurity to support the growth of the Atlantic salmon industry



Shrimp: Block for exotic disease
Strengthened border controls to protect the domestic shrimp industry



Challenge & Overcome

1. Data collection

Challenge: Lack of an integrated system, resulting in insufficient surveillance data.

Overcome: Established KAAHIS in 2014. data is now collected and analyzed systematically.

2. Stakeholder cooperation

Challenge: Aquaculture farmers were initially not friendly regarding survey data.

Overcome: Built trust through persistent seminars highlighting the rationale and benefits to farmers.

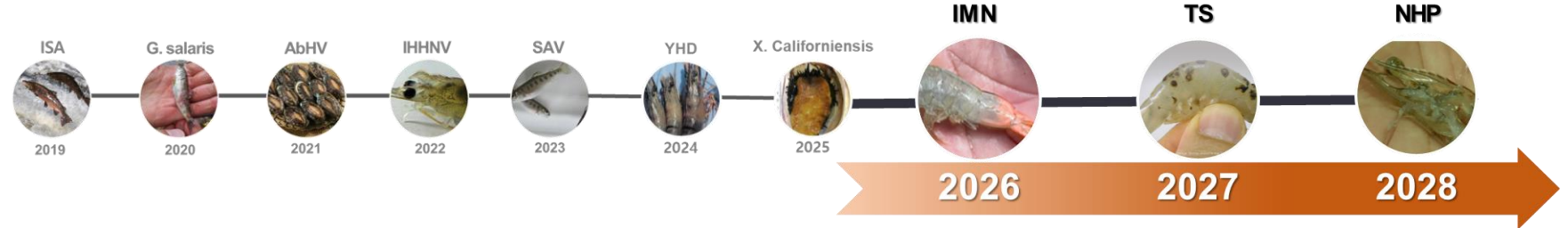
3. Awareness of local officials

Challenge: Variations in the level of understanding of WOAHA guidelines (BBC, survey) among local officials.

Overcome: Developing a national SOP manual based on the WOAHA *Aquatic Code* and conducting training regular and simulation exercises.



Closing Remarks



Further Goals in ROK

The country plans to expand its status of disease freedom to a total of ten types of diseases by 2028

Sustaining disease free status

Initial disease freedom may be simple, but maintaining it is a complex, long-term commitment (ROK updates at least every three years with the latest information).

It should be strategically implemented by considering pathway selection, cost-efficiency, and synergy with the domestic aquaculture industry.

Value of WOAHA screening

While some members self-declare independently without WOAHA screening.

Though WOAHA does not provide official endorsement for self-declarations, obtaining their formal technical screening is a crucial step in ensuring international trust and verifying our disease-free status objectively.

Thank you

