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ACP–EU fisheries: Market access and trade

1. Background and key issues

There is a growing focus in the ACP on enhancing the contribution of the fisheries sector to national development. In some countries, the focus is on the development of small-scale fishing activities; in others, it is on the development of local value-added processing linked to industrial or semi-industrial fishing activities; while elsewhere the focus is on securing improved access for all fish caught in the national exclusive economic zones (EEZs).

Rules of origin are still highly contentious in the fisheries sector. Although some agreements with ACP countries have granted concessions to allow 'global sourcing' for certain products, they are not generalised across the ACP, nor have the concessions been applied to a wider

range of fisheries products.

In addition, given the EU's stricter application of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards and food safety requirements, these play a major factor in securing effective market access, particularly for the small-scale fisheries in ACP countries.

"China is playing an increasing role in global fish trade both as an importer – after further processing – and as an exporter"

Nevertheless, the EU remains the major market for ACP fisheries exports, although it supplies only around 11% of EU fish imports (excluding fish caught in ACP waters and directly exported). However, China is playing an increasingly

important role in the global fish trade, both as an importer and, after further processing, as an exporter. This potential creates new market opportunities for the structural development of ACP fisheries sectors.

Throughout 2012–13, the debate continued on the future regulation for the common organisation of the market for fisheries products. There is a growing focus on sustainability within the EU's fisheries policy, with efforts in progress to link sustainability requirements to access to the EU market, in terms of both environmental and social sustainability. The rise of sustainability concerns, however, can leave policy making subject to divergent pressures from competing interests in the EU fishing sector.

At a time of budgetary constraints and increasing competitive pressure on the EU fisheries sector, there would appear to be a need for international harmonisation of approaches to the promotion of sustainable fishing practices through the use of market access requirements, if these pressures are not to lead to protectionist measures or to political manipulation to secure fishing access for EU fleets in ACP waters.

“There is a need for international harmonisation of the use of market access requirements, in order to avoid protectionist measures and political manipulation”

Concerns exist over the proliferation of private standards and eco-labelling schemes and their potential to become new barriers to access to particular market components. In addition, issues arise as to the consistency of private labelling requirements and their relationship to emerging official standards and requirements (e.g. private labelling of certain fisheries as sustainable, while

the same fishery is placed on the official lists denoting unsustainable fishing practices).

New EU free-trade agreements (FTAs) potentially increase both the trade and investment competition facing ACP fisheries sectors (e.g. the issue of the future treatment of tuna under an EU–Ecuador FTA and its effects on investment in Papua New Guinea/PNG), thus eroding the value of traditional fisheries sector preferences.

While aquaculture is playing a growing role in the international fish trade (about half of the global fish trade), the sector is relatively underdeveloped in the ACP regions. There is, however, growing investment interest in aquaculture development within the ACP nations from both EU and Chinese investors.

There remain, therefore, many market access-related issues of concern to ACP governments, with numerous potential areas for action to strengthen the contribution of the fisheries sector to national economic development.

2. Latest developments

Developments in the ACP policy focus in 2012–13

In response to global developments, there is a growing ACP policy focus on maximising the contribution of the ACP fisheries sector to job creation (in both the catching and fish processing sectors) and food security, including through the reduction of discards and of use of inappropriate handling and conservation methods. There is also a focus on improving the efficiency of fishing operations, for example, by reducing fuel use to help maximise the net economic benefits.

“A key requirement to increase small-scale fish producers’ participation in global fish trade is access to trade and market information”

One avenue being explored in this context is the increased participation of small-scale fish producers (e.g., fishers, fish processors and traders, and fish farmers) in the international fish trade. However, this brings new challenges in meeting specific requirements on international markets and improving the efficiency of small-scale fishing operations. One of the key requirements for tackling these challenges is to ensure that producers have access to the relevant trade and market information (see *Agritrade* article ‘[Role of gender in global fishery value chains](#)’, 28 January 2013).

Developments in the ACP–EU fish trade in 2012

A study published in 2012 shows that in 2011 the EU27 (the European Union of 27 member states) formed the world's largest market for fish and seafood products; fish consumption reached 13 million tonnes, reflecting both population growth and increased per capita consumption, particularly in East European countries.

“In 2011 the EU27 was still the world’s largest fish market, reflecting population growth and increased per capita consumption”

The major part of the European market is still supplied by imports. In total, imports have grown by around half a million tonnes since 2006, reaching a new peak of 9.548 million tonnes in 2011. Overall reliance on imports has risen to 65%, the highest figure since the EU was formed.

A few species have established themselves as essential to European markets:

- whitefish (wild-caught, e.g. hake);
- freshwater species (e.g. farmed pangasius);
- tuna (wild-caught);
- salmon (mainly farmed);
- shrimps (mainly farmed).

There are also certain preparations of fish that provide key raw material for further processing, where EU manufacturing capacity is limited, as in industrial blocks or as a base ingredient for surimi. Imports of those products have become essential.

The growing role of farmed products in EU imports is linked to the greater reliability of supply for the importers and retailers, both in terms of the quantity and quality. This is an important incentive for investment in both capital equipment and market development for such products.

While some ACP countries like Namibia and South Africa remain among the top 10 suppliers (of hake) to the EU market, overall China has become the largest supplier of fish products to the EU market. Imports from China are often derived from raw material sent by the EU fisheries sector to China, where they undergo primary processing before re-export to the EU (see *Agritrade* article '[The EU remains the largest world market for fish](#)', 19 November 2012).

China is also becoming an important fisheries trading partner for ACP countries, contributing to a diversification in the markets served by ACP fish exporters. Indeed, in 2012, analysts sug-

gested that China could soon replace the EU as Africa's biggest trading partner, with fisheries becoming a key area for developing investment and business links between China and Africa. Chinese investment in African fisheries currently provides 500,000 tonnes of fish products. Half of this is processed and sold on the EU market, and one-third of it sold in China, mainly as raw material for further processing (see *Agritrade* article '[Chinese investors call for African governments to remove "restrictions on fisheries"](#)', 29 January 2013).

The aquaculture sector is a growing focus of both EU and Chinese investment in ACP countries. In 2012, a new EU-funded project managed by the FAO was initiated in Uganda, Kenya and Zambia to promote aquaculture as an instrument to combat hunger. This forms part of a broader policy aimed at assisting low-income food-deficit countries in developing sustainable aquaculture policies (see *Agritrade* article '[New EU funded project to help develop aquaculture against hunger](#)', 22 October 2012).

Developments in EU legislation

The reform of the EU Common Market Organisation for fisheries products

As part of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the European Parliament voted in 2012 on the future EU Common Market Organisation (CMO). Given divergent positions in the European Commission (EC), Council and Parliament, a trilateral dialogue ('trilogue') has been launched to reach a consensus on the new fisheries CMO regulation.

The text approved by the European Parliament emphasises the importance of labelling that provides consumers

with information on all fisheries products as regards the stocks and area where they were fished or farmed, as well as the date of landing for fresh fish products. Fish products previously frozen, but sold as fresh, will also have to carry the words 'defrosted product' on their labels.

The European Parliament also called on the EC to table a legislative proposal by 1 January 2015 to introduce a new EU eco-labelling system for fisheries products (see *Agritrade* article '[EP Fisheries Committee votes on Common Market Organisation](#)', 13 August 2012).

New sustainable fishing legislation

In 2012, the EU adopted new legislation imposing trade and non-trade-related sanctions on third countries "that do not abide by international rules on sustainable fishing methods".

"The EU has new legislation imposing trade and non-trade sanctions on third countries that don't abide by international rules on sustainable fishing methods"

The regulation concerns any fish stocks where the geographical distribution makes them available to the fleets of both EU member states and non-EU states.

The legislation defines a country allowing unsustainable fishing as one failing to cooperate in the management of resources covered by the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and either fails to adopt the management measures needed, or adopts management measures without due regard to the rights, interests and duties of other countries and the EU.

The measures proposed are wide ranging – many of them similar to or

building on measures contained in the EU's illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) regulation. Measures are included that, if applied to an ACP country, would affect its capacity to trade fish products into the EU market, either directly (by the imposition of quantitative restrictions on imports) or indirectly (by limiting the possibilities for increasing the volume of fish products that can be considered 'originating', e.g. by prohibiting "the conclusion of private trade arrangements between nationals of a member state and those of countries allowing non-sustainable fishing in order for a fishing vessel flying the flag of that member state", preventing that country from using "the fishing possibilities of such countries") (see [Agritrade article 'EP Fisheries Committee backs market-related measures against countries allowing unsustainable fishing'](#), 24 June 2012).

The EU Fisheries Commissioner highlighted the intention of this new legislation to help create "a level playing field" between the EU and third-country fishers. However, considerable legal elaboration will be required before the proposed new trade instruments can be deployed (see [Agritrade article 'EP votes for trade measures against countries allowing non-sustainable fishing'](#), 8 October 2012).

Implementation of the IUU regulation

In 2012, the implementation of the EU regulation to combat IUU fishing continued to spark concerns as a potential non-tariff barrier to trade. Particular concerns were expressed by Pacific ACP (PACP) governments. Most Pacific islands have no competent authority to deliver catch certificates proving the legality of the fish catches – de facto, they cannot comply with the IUU regulation requirements, and cannot

supply Pacific island processors with proven legally caught fish for export to EU markets. In some cases, the costs of setting up a competent authority would exceed some Pacific islands states' national gross domestic product (GDP) (see [Agritrade article 'PNA director questions PACP approach of EPA negotiations on fisheries'](#), 28 January 2013).

In mid November 2012, 10 countries – including five ACP countries (Belize, Fiji, Guinea, Tanzania and Togo) – were notified that they could face EU trade sanctions for lack of cooperation in fighting IUU fishing. In particular, shortcomings were identified regarding the monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities. According to the EC, these are linked to the lack of proper legal instruments, particularly specific provisions in the national legal framework referring to measures to combat, deter and eliminate IUU fishing activities (see [Agritrade article 'Several ACP states are warned over lack of cooperation against IUU fishing'](#), 16 December 2012).

Subsequent to the publication of the EU list, the US administration in charge of fisheries (NOAA) submitted a report that identified 10 countries engaged in IUU fishing, including a number of ACP and EU countries (Ghana and Tanzania, Italy and Spain). Interestingly, the EU and the US lists identify different countries, with very little overlap. Given that there is an FAO international plan of action, providing a common framework for countries such as the US or the EU to define countries not combating IUU, this raised questions about why some countries are on one list and not on the other (see [Agritrade article 'NOAA identifies 10 countries, including in EU and ACP, that conducted IUU fishing'](#), 11 February 2013).

Meanwhile, the Fiji Albacore Tuna Longline Fishery received sustainability certification from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). This offers opportunities to develop new markets in regions such as the EU where demand for certified sustainable seafood is high. For some observers this raised questions about how an MSC-certified fishery – which supposes a high degree of traceability and sustainability – could at the same time be barred from the EU market for not complying with the IUU fishing regulation (see [Agritrade article 'Fiji Albacore tuna to get MSC certification, but will it be allowed on the EU market?'](#), 28 January 2013).

These questions strongly suggest that there is a need to harmonise international approaches to combat IUU fishing. In the context of the CFP reform to promote an international catch certification scheme proving that a fish product has been caught legally, the EC proposal may assist in the development of such a harmonised approach.

"An international catch certification scheme – such as that promoted by the EU – may assist in the development of the international approach against IUU fishing"

Some progress was made on this issue during 2012, when a joint statement was signed between the EU and Japan to cooperate in combating IUU fishing. The EU and Japan rank first and second as the world's top seafood importers, both importing fish products from ACP countries. The joint statement commits the EU and Japan to systematically exchange information on IUU activities and to promote measures that strengthen monitoring, control and surveillance (see [Agritrade article 'EU and Japan sign an agreement to fight IUU fishing'](#), 9 September 2012).

Economic Partnership Agreement-related developments

The Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region

The Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) concluded by the EU with four ESA countries in 2012 included three tuna processing and exporting countries: Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles. Beyond providing duty-free, quota-free access to the EU market for tuna exports, the agreement includes provisions on rules of origin, development cooperation and the promotion of sustainable fisheries. Support to sustainable fisheries is also emphasised in the latest bilateral Fisheries Partnership Agreements signed between these three ESA countries and the EU, in which a new article focuses on encouraging the establishment of an environment favourable to the development of business and investment, and promoting “the setting-up of joint enterprises... which should systematically comply with both parties’ legislations” (see *Agritrade* article ‘[IEPA taking effect in East African tuna-exporting countries](#)’, 24 June 2012).

The Caribbean region

The Caribbean was the first region to sign an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU in 2008. One positive development since then has been the deployment of European Development Fund financing in support of improved SPS control systems in the Caribbean, given that meeting SPS requirements is a prerequisite for exporting fisheries products to the EU.

However, the rules of origin applied to fisheries products remain a matter of concern to Caribbean governments, with this issue having been flagged at the time of the signing of the CARI-

FORUM–EU EPA through a unilateral declaration attached to the signed EPA (see *Agritrade* interview ‘[Caribbean Common Fisheries Policy: Strengthening ecosystems resilience and supporting livelihoods](#)’, 17 September 2012). This issue may well re-emerge as part of the formal 2013 review of the CARIFORUM–EU EPA.

“Rules of origin issues remain a concern for Caribbean governments, and may re-emerge when the EPA is reviewed”

The Pacific region

Issues around rules of origin remain a key concern in the EPA negotiations between the PACP group and the EU. Currently Fiji and PNG are the only countries in the Pacific to have signed an IEPA, providing them with a derogation in the area of fisheries for ‘global sourcing’ for their tuna raw material, thereby expanding the scope for duty-free exports to the EU market.

In 2012, other PACP members reiterated their desire to see such global sourcing provisions extended to fresh and chilled tuna products, thereby allowing them to source their fresh and chilled tuna products from sources other than local or EU fleets (principally Taiwanese, Japanese, Korean and Chinese longline tuna fleets present in the region). It was considered that this would mainly benefit small island states that do not have canneries or processing facilities (see *Agritrade* article ‘[Pacific wants to extend global sourcing to facilitate longline operations](#)’, 22 October 2012).

However, concerns were raised by the director of the Parties of the Nauru Agreement (PNA) (which includes PACP countries) that while the IEPA did not include any fishing access rights, “in the haste to get global sourcing for

fresh and chilled tuna products” some PACP states were proposing to grant EU fleets 5% of total access rights to the region’s tuna resources. The director also argued that if the longline fleets currently operating in Pacific waters were reflagged to the Pacific islands, the region would get enough originating fish without needing a global sourcing derogation (see *Agritrade* article ‘[PNA director questions PACP approach of EPA negotiations on fisheries](#)’, 28 January 2013).

“Proposals to tie further trade concessions to fishing rights in the EU–Pacific EPA negotiations are raising concerns”

Proposals to tie EPA negotiations to the granting of fishing rights for the EU tuna purse-seine fleet within partner countries’ EEZs are strongly supported by the Spanish tuna sector. In their view, investment in local processing capacity in countries such as PNG, Seychelles and Mauritius will increase local demand for raw material, leading to increased procurement difficulties for the Spanish canning sector. Spain therefore considers it essential that steps be taken to guarantee access for EU fleets to raw material supplies for Spanish canneries (see *Agritrade* article ‘[Pacific leaders urge the EU to show flexibility in EPA](#)’, 23 September 2012).

The issue of global sourcing for PACP fish products and its impact on economic development in terms of foreign investment in local tuna processing capacity was the subject of a European Parliament study published in October 2012. The study highlighted the measurable economic development benefit, in terms of the rapid development in PNG–EU trade in cooked tuna loins. The loins are mainly exported to Spain and Italy, where processors are moving away from labour-intensive processing of whole frozen tuna into using cooked

loins (see *Agritrade* article ‘[Extending global sourcing for Pacific ACP fish products](#)’, 19 November 2012).

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region

Establishing 1 October 2014 as the date for the lapsing of market access regulation (MAR) 1528(2007) – which has provided transitional duty-free, quota-free access for ACP countries whose governments have initialled an IEPA – raises particular concerns in the Namibian fisheries sector. Currently, Namibia mainly exports raw hake to Spain. The Namibian government’s aspirations to a development-friendly EPA would require arrangements that promote increased fish processing that adds value locally. The development of such a processing industry is not favoured by the current conditions offered by the EU under the IEPA. Current rules of origin limit originating status to fish caught in Namibia’s 12-mile limited territorial waters, or fish caught by either local or EU vessels. This is an important issue for Namibia, as no fishing is allowed within the 12-mile zone for conservation reasons, while the major fish stocks – such as horse mackerel and hake – swim outside the 12-mile zone. Namibia has therefore requested that all fish caught in its EEZ and landed in Namibian ports for processing should be given originating status, thereby qualifying for duty-free access to the EU market. Currently the EU accepts this only in cases of vessels leased or chartered by Namibian operators, where EU operators have been given the right of first refusal. This applies even in cases when non-EU operators are cheaper or operate under more favourable commercial conditions.

Another key concern for Namibia is the way its hake is marketed in Europe by Spanish importing companies,

and whether it is done in a way that maximises benefits and strengthens the position of Namibian hake on EU markets (see *Agritrade* interview ‘[Lack of Namibian control over its resource value chain affects its benefits from fisheries](#)’, 11 January 2013).

Developments in fish trade relations between the EU and third countries

Fisheries in third-country FTA negotiations

The European Parliament study of October 2012 highlighted the role of Ecuador, with its lower production costs, as one of the main competitors with PNG’s tuna products. The trade treatment accorded to Ecuadorian tuna products is thus of considerable importance in terms of the relative competitiveness of PNG and Ecuadorian products. With PNG production costs for canned tuna and tuna loins far more expensive than for similar Ecuadorian products, Spanish firms have shown little interest in investing in PNG’s onshore processing facilities. Lower productivity rates, higher costs for freight and utilities in PNG, and the cultural proximity between the Ecuadorian and European tuna industries have all been cited as reasons for the lack of investment interest in PNG (see *Agritrade* article ‘[Extending global sourcing for Pacific ACP fish products](#)’, 19 November 2012).

The EU tuna canning sector has supported the rapid signing of a trade agreement between the EU and Ecuador, the leading supplier of tuna loins to the EU and the second largest supplier of canned tuna to EU markets. Delays in concluding an FTA led to Ecuador being granted an extra year to benefit from the EU’s enhanced Generalised System of Preferences scheme (GSP+), thus allowing Ecua-

dor to export its products to the EU with no duty imposed until the end of 2013. While negotiations continued through 2012 and into 2013, no FTA has yet been concluded. The lack of an agreement is seen as a blow to Spanish investors in the Ecuadorian fisheries sector, since this means that the 24% most favoured nation (MFN) duty applied to pre-cooked tuna loins and the canned tuna supplying Spanish canneries hangs over the current trade (see *Agritrade* article ‘[The tuna sector pushes for a trade agreement between Ecuador and the EU](#)’, 16 December 2012).

EU industry pressures to establish a level playing field

Given the launch of bilateral FTA negotiations with ASEAN members, the EU fisheries sector has been continuing to draw attention to the “unfair” production conditions in some ASEAN countries.

There have been criticisms of the Thai tuna sector for its failure to fully comply with EU health standards (22 violations in 2012), resulting in ANFACO, a group that represents Spanish tuna canners, calling on the EC to withdraw its approval of Thai health authorities as competent to issue EU-recognised health certificates. Such a move would effectively close the EU market to Thai tuna exports unless EU-based certification agencies were used, a process which would greatly increase costs (see *Agritrade* article ‘[Spanish processing sector wants EU doors to be closed to Thai canned tuna](#)’, 11 February 2013).

In the Philippines, allegations of forced labour throughout the production chain for tuna (on boats and in processing facilities) have been highlighted by ANFACO. However, ANFACO has been cautious in its handling of this issue, maintaining that while it will exercise

“extreme controls of the raw material from Philippine companies that do not respect labour standards” set by the International Labour Organization, its members will not stop importing tuna from the Philippines (see *Agritrade* article ‘[Spanish processors are to examine labour conditions of tuna imports](#)’, 16 December 2012). Instead, emphasis is being placed on government ratification of international agreements for the protection of workers’ rights and elimination of child labour that are required under the EU’s GSP+ regulation.

“The Spanish canning sector requested that tuna be considered a sensitive product in all trade negotiations”

At a more general level in terms of trade negotiations, ANFACO has requested that tuna should be considered a ‘sensitive product’, rather than a bargaining chip in all trade negotiations (see *Agritrade* article ‘[International trade negotiations should contribute to establishing a level playing field, says EU canning industry](#)’, 8 October 2012).

Developments in the application of private eco-labels and other standards

A feasibility study was undertaken in 2012 to examine how the 2010 EU regulation that governs the EU eco-label scheme could be extended to fish products. It underlined the fact that most existing labels (e.g. the MSC) concentrate on the environmental impacts of primary production and not on the whole life cycle of the product. However, for fisheries, this primary production stage is responsible for between 70 and 95% of the total environmental impacts over the products’ life cycles. The study suggested that an extension of the EU eco-label scheme to fish products might only be advantageous for products that have a sig-

nificant environmental impact during the processing, transportation or consumption stages of their life cycle. Otherwise, the environmental impacts of primary production could be dealt with by cooperating with existing fishery eco-labelling schemes (see *Agritrade* article ‘[Potential for extending EU eco-label to fish products is assessed](#)’, 28 May 2012).

In 2012, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) commissioned an analysis of four eco-labelling schemes for marine fish products – Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, Friend of the Sea, Iceland Responsible Fisheries and the MSC. The study found that none of the four schemes are complying with all of the WWF sustainability criteria. The MSC is compliant on 93% of criteria, while other schemes have scores ranging between 46 and 54%, with low scores particularly on implementation procedure and transparency (see *Agritrade* article ‘[MSC remains the best eco-label scheme for fish products, according to WWF](#)’, 8 October 2012).

The option of using existing private eco-labels as a benchmark for developing an EU eco-label scheme were highlighted during the European Parliament debate on the CMO reform, where it was stated that the introduction of an EU eco-label could possibly take place “in association with the Marine Stewardship Council and Aquaculture Stewardship Council” (see *Agritrade* article ‘[EP Fisheries Committee votes on Common Market Organisation](#)’, 13 August 2012).

However, for ACP fisheries, obtaining MSC certification is complex for a number of reasons, including data deficiency and inadequate support from existing institutions. Against this background, in 2012, the MSC developed a risk-based approach for use in the assessment of data-poor fisheries,

including ACP small-scale fisheries.

“Eco-labels do not provide price premiums but rather help solidify existing markets and open up new markets”

However, carrying this eco-label does not provide a price premium to the producer; rather, it helps solidify the presence in existing markets and may facilitate the opening up of new markets as more and more processors and retailers insist on MSC certification from their suppliers (see *Agritrade* interview ‘[The MSC assessment process: Providing benchmarks for charting progress towards sustainability](#)’, 16 May 2012).

Some private initiatives, such as Naturland (Germany), have developed standards for not only environmentally but also socially sustainable capture fisheries. Yet even these combined standards do not attract price premiums to primary producers, leading to a questioning of the long-term socio-economic impacts on fishing and fish farming communities of such eco-labelling schemes (see *Agritrade* article ‘[Certified Nile perch has increased its popularity in Europe](#)’, 28 May 2012).

3. Implications for ACP countries

Ensuring EU sustainability standards are internationally compliant

One of the main stated objectives of regulations adopted in 2012 is to create “a level playing field” between EU and imported fisheries products. However, any new EU legislation needs to be in line with internationally agreed standards, otherwise third countries may be able to challenge these new regu-

lations as trade distorting. This in part explains why the EU is promoting an international catch certification scheme as a tool to fight IUU. In 2012, the EU made progress in bringing Japan and the US (both important markets for ACP products) into this international initiative.

“ACP governments need to monitor whether EU standards applied to fisheries imports comply with internationally agreed standards”

In this context, ACP governments will need to establish mechanisms to monitor both the elaboration of these international standards and whether new EU regulatory standards applied to fisheries imports are compliant with internationally agreed standards and conventions.

Getting to grips with the challenge of sustainability standards compliance

The difficulties ACP products will face in finding alternative international markets if they are not in line with emerging EU standards gives added importance to enhancing the capacities of ACP coastal states to effectively manage their fisheries resources in line with the increasingly strict international environmental and social standards.

Potentially, getting ahead of policy developments in this area could provide opportunities to promote the environmental and social production qualities of ACP products in ways that give ACP suppliers a competitive advantage over some other suppliers.

Appropriate support – financial, technical, information, etc. – also needs to be provided to ACP small-scale fish producers, men and women, to maximise the contribution of fisheries to local and

regional food security, and increase their capacity to access international markets with high-quality products.

Taking advantage of the rules of origin or supporting alternatives, such as reflagging

For many years, ACP countries have been asking for a relaxation of fisheries rules of origin to allow the use of any fish caught in their EEZs. Some years ago, PACP countries were granted the ‘global sourcing’ derogation for canned tuna under the Pacific–EU IEPA. It now appears increasingly clear that such global sourcing is of little interest when other EU standards are not complied with, such as IUU, etc.

Moreover, any future potential relaxation of EU fisheries rules of origin may be linked to new EU demands for access to fisheries resources. In 2012, the request by PACP countries to extend global sourcing to other products was met with a demand to provide guaranteed access for EU fleets to Pacific tuna.

“An alternative to relaxing the rules of origin – as is being pursued in the Pacific – is the reflagging of foreign vessels”

An alternative means of approaching rules of origin challenges is through the reflagging of foreign vessels to ACP jurisdictions. This is being pursued in the Pacific. Some ACP countries are also looking for more flexibility in terms of definitions of origin of fish coming from chartering operations. However, this alternative path requires substantial investment from ACP countries into fisheries management, to ensure that these reflagged/chartered vessels comply with national and international legislation, including environmental and social standards, as these standards

become a prerequisite for accessing key international markets.

Capitalising on growing Chinese demand to increase ACP processing

In 2012, China became the main fisheries trade partner for many ACP countries, particularly in Africa, involving the export of fisheries raw material to China for processing and re-export. Although there is a need for ACP countries to take advantage of possibilities to diversify their markets for fisheries products, the main issue remains: how to increase local value addition to ACP fish products prior to export.

A detailed market analysis is required to identify how further-processed ACP products can find their own niche on traditional EU, US and even emerging export markets such as China. On the basis of detailed market analysis, the investment required to facilitate value addition to certain fish products (where fresh fish exports are not the most profitable form of export) prior to export can then be identified.

Developing regional fish trade in the ACP

Regional markets for ACP fish products are also growing, including for processed products. This is an alternative which is increasingly important for ACP producers, particularly small-scale producers, as regional marketing channels are often well known to them and more easily accessible.

“Existing barriers to regional trade should be dismantled to promote ACP intra-regional trade in fisheries products”

The promotion of such regional markets needs to be supported through political action to dismantle existing

barriers to regional trade in fish products and promote investment in the necessary logistical infrastructure to

facilitate regional trade in fisheries products.

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About this update

This brief was updated in October 2013 to reflect developments since September 2012. Other publications in this series and additional resources on ACP–EU agriculture and fisheries trade issues can be found online at <http://agritrade.cta.int/>.



The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) is a joint ACP–EU institution active in agricultural and rural development in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Its mission is to advance food and nutritional security, increase prosperity and encourage sound natural resource management.

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