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The issue

Fish is one of the most traded food commodities globally. Some 45 percent of all fish and fish products, worth more than USD 143 billion, is traded internationally each year. While most of this fish originates in developing countries, much of the value generated is not captured there. In addition, more than 35 percent of global fish and seafood production is lost or wasted – almost double the level of meat products. To realize the 2030 Agenda for the 3.2 billion people globally who get more than 20 percent of their protein intake from fish, efforts need to be made to add value and reduce food loss and waste along the entire seafood value chain, from harvest to consumer.

At the country level, good governance and strong policies based on adherence to international regulations, tools and guidelines are weak or lacking. Countries recognize that these deficits also limit opportunities for international and intra-regional trade and have requested FAO's support to address them. Filling these gaps will help to improve livelihoods, create decent employment opportunities, promote efficient resource management and poverty alleviation, empower vulnerable communities and create incentives for investment and innovation.

The action

Targeted actions across the Blue Trade platform focus on marine-based food systems and value chains through: (i) support for national participation in the formulation of global trade instruments; (ii) the translation and incorporation of instruments into national policies and regulations; and (iii) the development of technical capacities, so that participants along the value chain can benefit from new opportunities. This requires capacity building for stakeholders at all levels and access to technology to improve seafood safety, quality and adherence to market requirements. Together, these will increase profitability and trade volumes. Solutions include scaling up mainstream technologies, promoting best practices and understanding the needs of local communities and engaging them in decision-making. Other solutions lie in the creation of Blue Growth incubators to foster technical innovation, knowledge sharing and the upscaling of fisheries-related businesses at all levels. When integrated with existing and planned interventions, these value-added actions can enhance project impact. The benefits include greater entrepreneurship, more enabling environments, decent work opportunities and access to finance, especially for women and youth, as well as lower carbon footprints.

BLUE GROWTH

Blue Trade

Creating a more sustainable
seafood value chain

The issue in numbers



60 million

people globally directly employed in the fisheries and aquaculture sector



USD 143 billion

in fish and seafood products traded internationally every year



35%

of fish catches lost or wasted

Programme targets



3

innovative value chains sustainably developed



50%

reduction in food loss and waste in project value chains



500

fish workers trained on food quality and safety

The budget



USD 20 million



4 years



16 countries

Expected results

- Support to small and medium-sized enterprises enhanced to promote more effective trade and competition;
- Effective and efficient government food-control systems enhanced, contributing to improved seafood safety and quality of aquatic food products;
- Illegal, unreported and unregulated fish prevented from entering trade;
- Mainstreaming and increased use of eco-labelling and other certification systems, creating trade opportunities and reducing fish fraud along the seafood value chain.

Geographic focus

The Blue Growth Initiative is global in scope, but will target least developed countries in Africa and Small Island Developing States that have prioritized the development of marine and aquatic-based economies in their national strategies.

Africa: Algeria, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Tunisia and Zambia

Asia Pacific: Bangladesh and Kiribati

Caribbean: Barbados, Grenada and St. Lucia

In partnership with

The Blue Trade platform provides a common framework and approach to streamline support at the local, national, regional and global levels, building on shared technical and financial resources. In particular, FAO will work with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Trade Organization, The Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), international financial institutions such as the World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB), regional economic commissions, regional fisheries bodies, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and other technical and financial partners.

The African Package for Climate-Resilient Ocean Economies is a joint initiative by FAO, the World Bank and the AfDB to leverage coordinated technical and financial support to coastal and island states throughout Africa as they develop their ocean-based economies.



SDG contribution



Technology for women in Côte d'Ivoire

Simple, inexpensive technologies can have tremendous effects on the value chain, in particular, by increasing the earnings of rural fishers and processors. More efficient fish-smoking kilns in Côte d'Ivoire have increased profits for women's cooperatives, improved the health and working conditions of women smoking the fish and met EU standards for dried-fish imports, allowing the women to access new markets. More efficient kilns have reduced food loss and waste, in addition to lowering the operations' carbon footprint, as they require less fuel. At the University of Ghana, the use of the kiln is now included in the final-year 'Animal Products Processing Technology' course.



Why invest?

Realizing sustainable fish value chains and improving trade requires the development, uptake and upscaling of Blue Growth tools and best practices, not only in the post-harvest and processing sectors, but also in packaging and transport. Here, the need is greatest among micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which lack the capacity, technology and access to finance, but also among governments and public-sector authorities, so that they can provide an enabling environment.

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