



FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI:FT)

Seventeenth Session
Vigo, Spain
25-29 November 2019

SIDE EVENT

WTO Environmental Database (EDB)

An online tool for sustainability measures affecting fish trade

28 November 2019 (time to be announced)

Objective

To present the new online WTO Environmental Database (www.wto.org/edb) and other relevant work on sustainable fisheries trade in the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE).

This side event will provide interested parties with a better understanding of the database as a tool to track sustainability measures affecting fish trade. Trade and environmental measures of over 160 countries or separate customs territories covering the period 2009 to 2018 are captured in the EDB.

EDB data is extracted from WTO notifications and the Trade Policy Reviews of WTO Members. With search functionalities to filter data by member/country, sector (e.g. fisheries), objective (e.g. sustainable fisheries management), agreement, region, keywords, and type of measure, this dataset offers a potentially useful tool for policy makers, the private sector and other interested stakeholders.

Programme

Presentation/Demonstration of WTO Environmental Database (EDB)

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Q&A Session

Background

The relationship between trade and sustainable development has received increased attention with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For the fisheries sector, SDG 14 ("Life below Water") is of particular relevance. There are several trade-related targets in SDG 14 and trade itself is considered as a means of implementation of the SDGs.

The WTO has sustainable development among its founding objectives and a specific forum to examine the relationship between trade and environmental measures to promote sustainable development: the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE). The CTE has served as the forum to discuss issues ranging from the market access effects of environmental policies such as environmental standards, packaging and labelling requirements, especially in relation to developing countries exports, to how trade can contribute to addressing specific environmental challenges such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. With respect to fish trade, one of the issues that have been high on the global agenda, the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations, was born out of discussions in the CTE.

For transparency, the EDB portal, provides a powerful tool to better understand environmental trade measures and requirements in foreign markets. The EDB has recently been updated and relaunched with a wealth of information regarding trade measures adopted for environmental purposes. The information has been systematized based on harmonized categories covering the environmental objective pursued, the type of trade measure adopted, and the sectors affected by the notified measures and programmes.

An increasing number of environment-related trade measures affect the fisheries sector. Since 2009, WTO members have notified over 600 measures and there are also over 640 environmental TPR entries specifically related to the fisheries sector. And for both notifications and TPRs, the numbers have been increasing over the years. About 75 % of the notified measures affecting the fisheries sector pertain to sustainable fisheries management as the underlying environment-related objective.

This side-event will provide interested participants an opportunity to delve deeper and discuss concrete examples that highlight the mutual supportiveness and the intertwining of trade, fisheries and environmental policies.