

Impact of technical measures on fish and fishery products export in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lankan seafood offers a variety of products to the international market contributing 2.2% to the Sri Lankan total merchandise exports. Non-tariff measures (NTMs) bring numerous difficulties to access to the international seafood market and the most of companies in the seafood industry have to encounter with these NTMs. This study aims to unravel the present status of technical measures applied on fish and fishery products export in Sri Lanka which would be useful for the seafood exporting companies with wider potentials. Out of seventy fish and fishery product exporting companies registered in the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR), 30 companies were selected using simple random sampling technique. Pre-tested questionnaire survey (n=30), key informant discussions (n=4) with the National Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA), the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development (MFARD), and Export Development Board (EDB) officers were conducted for primary data collection. Secondary data were collected from reports and records of DFAR and EDB, research and survey reports published by NARA and MFARD and the international database as Trade map. Majorly Sri Lanka exports fish and fishery products to 15 countries. EU countries have imposed the highest frequency of technical measures on Sri Lanka and the second is USA while the highest frequency of technical measures are required for Tuna. Mostly required types of technical measures are health certificate (55%), ISO 22,000 (50%), histamine test (36%) and heavy metal test (32%). The average cost range for the procedural fee and the annual renew fee of certificates are 600,000 – 90,000 and 130,000 – 45,000 respectively while the average annual cost range for tests is 172,000 – 18,000. Pre-shipment Inspection (PSI) is done by import companies especially at harbours as weighing and checking labels. The main difficulty that exporters face is unaffordable high cost of certificates and tests. According to 98% of companies, the places to conduct tests are not enough and appropriate, therefore long queue and delaying to do tests decrease the profit margin. Although tariff barriers lessen due to free trade, NTMs hinder the export process specially shrink profit from western sea food market.

Keywords: Fish and fishery products export, Technical barriers for trade, Technical measures

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