



Port State Measures Agreement: What Questions Should Seafood Buyers Ask Authorities and Suppliers?

Questionnaire can cut the risk of selling illegally caught fish

Seafood, both wild and farmed, is among the most valuable food commodities in the world, accounting for \$143 billion in global trade each year, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.¹ Yet up to \$23.5 billion worth of seafood destined for world markets is stolen from the seas each year through illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Strong port controls—regulations governing fishing vessels' access to ports and inspections upon landing or transshipping fish—are needed to curb this illicit activity. The Port State Measures Agreement² (PSMA) is a cost-effective tool to combat IUU fishing that takes advantage of the natural bottleneck created by ports and ensures that illegally caught fish cannot make its way to market. As more nations implement port State measures, IUU fishing will no longer be a low-risk, high-reward enterprise.

The seafood industry can provide assurance that it is not inadvertently contributing to illegal fishing by supporting the adoption and implementation of the Agreement. And by conducting due diligence, retailers and seafood industry buyers can ensure that the fish they sell is legally sourced and influence other sectors of the seafood industry, including processors and wholesalers.

An easy way for industry players to assess their risk is to obtain and analyze inspection reports on the vessels they source from.

They can also ask about the implementation of port State measures using a guided questionnaire. Below is a list of questions they could ask their suppliers, port authorities during port visits, and relevant government agencies. By asking these questions, the industry would also demonstrate to governments that seafood buyers support effective implementation of port controls to reduce IUU risks in seafood supply chains.

Key Questions for Seafood Supply Chain Stakeholders

1. Is the port State a Party to the PSMA?

a. If not, what is preventing the port State from joining?

2. Are ports designated for use by foreign-flagged vessels to land or transship fish?

a. If so, are the designated ports publicized?³

b. If so, are the ports used by nondomestic vessels that you source from listed as designated ports?

3. Must vessels seek permission before entering port to land or transship fish?

a. Is there a standard form for this request?

b. Do vessels you source from seek permission before entering port (as required)?

4. Is there an IUU-related risk-based procedure for controls on vessels that request entry into port to land or transship fish?

a. Is the procedure documented?

b. Can industry stakeholders obtain copies of the procedure?

5. What percentage of vessels that land or transship fish are subject to documentary checks or physical inspections?

a. How are selections made for which vessels to check/inspect?

b. Have the vessels you source from been selected for documentary checks/inspections?

6. Are there standards for documentary checks or physical inspections on vessels landing or transshipping fish?

a. If so, are these standards documented?

b. Can industry stakeholders obtain copies of this information?

c. Which of the following are covered by such checks or inspections?

- Vessel identification, construction, and registration documentation
- License and authorizations to fish or transship
- Catch and bycatch documentation
- Processing and transshipment reports
- Vessel monitoring systems and/or automatic identification systems
- Fishing gear
- Fish species and quantities
- Safety certificates
- Crew documentation

7. Are records kept of port entry requests, denials, documentary checks, and/or inspections?

a. If so, are these records public?

b. Is there a protocol to notify foreign port authorities of such information?

c. Is an electronic information system used to collect, store and exchange this information?

d. Can industry stakeholders obtain copies of this information?

8. Have any instances of bribery or corruption been identified in the implementation of port controls in the past five years?

a. If so, how have these been handled?

b. Are these instances made public?

9. Are fisheries authorities involved in examining notifications/requests for entry into port, authorizing or denying access to port, and conducting documentary checks and physical inspections on vessels landing or transshipping fish?

a. If not, which other authorities have responsibility for these tasks, and do the fisheries authorities play a role?

10. Is information on port controls shared among relevant administrations, including maritime authorities, fisheries authorities, customs authorities, the navy or coast guard, and food safety agencies?

Note: This list does not consider issues involving captains and crews. A separate questionnaire is available for fisheries inspectors.

Endnotes

- 1 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018" (2018), <http://www.fao.org/3/I9540EN/i9540en.pdf>.
- 2 The Port State Measures Agreement is formally known as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2009 Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing: <http://www.fao.org/port-state-measures/resources/detail/en/c/1111616/>.
- 3 Designated ports should be publicized through the PSMA Application for Designated Ports and Contact Points: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/port-state-measures/psmaapp/?locale=en&action=qry>.

For further information, please visit:

pewtrusts.org/endillegalfishing

pewtrusts.org/psma

Contact: Leah Weiser, associate manager, communications

Email: lweiser@pewtrusts.org

Project website: pewtrusts.org/internationalfisheries

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