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**XUẤT KHẨU THỦY SẢN CỦA VIỆT NAM SANG EU DƯỚI VIỆC
THỰC HIỆN EVFTA: CƠ HỘI VÀ THÁCH THỨC**

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Tóm tắt

Việc triển khai Hiệp định Thương mại Tự do EU-Việt Nam (EVFTA) đã tạo ra những cơ hội đáng kể cho ngành xuất khẩu thủy sản của Việt Nam. Kể từ khi được ban hành, xuất khẩu thủy sản của Việt Nam vào EU đã có sự tăng trưởng đáng kể, mặc dù phải đối mặt với những thách thức từ đại dịch COVID-19. Do đó, nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm phân tích tác động của EVFTA đối với xuất khẩu thủy sản của Việt Nam, trong đó tập trung vào phân tích cả cơ hội và thách thức. Nghiên cứu sử dụng các phương pháp phân tích, tổng hợp và đánh giá để so sánh tiến trình và tiềm năng xuất khẩu thủy sản của Việt Nam tại thị trường EU, đồng thời đưa ra các khuyến nghị nhằm nâng cao tính bền vững và khả năng cạnh tranh của ngành thủy sản Việt Nam trên thị trường toàn cầu.

Từ khóa: EVFTA, EU, Việt Nam, thủy sản, xuất khẩu

**VIETNAM'S FISHERY EXPORT TO EU UNDER THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EVFTA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

Abstract

The implementation of the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) has provided significant opportunities for Vietnam's fishery export industry. Since its enactment, Vietnam's fishery exports

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to the EU have seen considerable growth, despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper analyzes the impact of the EVFTA on Vietnam's fishery exports, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges. The research employs analysis, synthesis, and evaluation methods to compare the progress and potential of Vietnam's seafood exports in the EU market, while providing recommendations to enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of Vietnam's seafood industry in the global market.

Key words: EVFTA, EU, Vietnam, fishery, export

Introduction

The EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) represents a pivotal development in Vietnam's economic integration with the global market. Coming into effect on August 1, 2020, the EVFTA aims to strengthen economic ties and trade relations between Vietnam and the EU. The agreement offers a comprehensive framework for reducing tariffs, enhancing market access, and promoting regulatory coherence. For Vietnam, the EVFTA presents a unique opportunity to boost its fishery exports by leveraging the EU's vast market potential and favorable trade conditions. However, the agreement also poses challenges, including stringent compliance with EU standards and increased competition. This paper delves into the current status of Vietnam's fishery exports to the EU, examines the benefits and obstacles brought by the EVFTA and provides strategic recommendations for sustainable growth.

1. Overview of EVFTA and its regulations affecting fishery exports of Vietnam

1.1. Overview of EVFTA

The European Union-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) is a landmark trade deal aimed at bolstering economic relations between the EU and Vietnam. Signed in June 2019 and taking effect in August 2020, the agreement eliminates most tariffs on goods traded between the two regions, eases market access for services and investments and promotes regulatory alignment. The EVFTA is designed to create substantial opportunities for businesses, boost bilateral trade and drive economic growth in both regions. As stated by the European Commission, the EVFTA is "the most ambitious trade agreement ever concluded with a developing country."

1.2. EVFTA's regulations about fishery export

Firstly, the agreement eliminates 50% of tariffs immediately, with the remainder phased out over 3 to 7 years. For example, frozen and whole tiger shrimp are subject to a 0% tariff from the outset. Other shrimp products see tariff reductions over 3-5 years, while processed shrimp tariffs are reduced over 7 years. Tra fish tariffs are reduced over 3 years, with exceptions like smoked tra fish, which take 7 years to reach 0%. Canned tuna and surimi fish paste have EU tariff quotas of 11.5 thousand tons and 500 tons, respectively.

Secondly, regarding origin rules: Vietnamese fishery exported to the EU must meet one of three criteria: (1) Purely Vietnamese origin; (2) Cumulated origin, made from EU/Vietnam materials and processed in Vietnam; (3) Fully produced in Vietnam, using some non-origin materials. The EVFTA also allows self-certification of origin alongside traditional Certificate of

Origin issuance, streamlining the export process.

Thirdly, regarding technical trade barriers (TBT) under the EVFTA: Vietnam and the EU will collaborate on standardization and conformity assessments to streamline trade. They will align technical standards with international norms like ISO, IEC, ITU, and Codex and consider each other's standards for equivalence as needed.

Fourthly, under the EVFTA, Vietnam and the EU adhere to WTO SPS rules and international standards (Codex, OIE, IPPC). They exchange lists of compliant food exporters and allow flexibility for Vietnam to meet SPS requirements, either through grace periods, proposing equivalent measures, or receiving technical support for gradual compliance improvements.

Fifthly, concerning trade defense measures, anti-dumping, and countervailing measures: Vietnam and the EU agree that these measures may be used based on fairness, transparency, and compliance with WTO regulations while considering the interests of the party subject to these measures.

Sixthly, regarding intellectual property rights (IPR) commitments: The agreement addresses issues to prevent misrepresentation of product origin and outlines procedures for complaints regarding trademark violations and geographical indications. The EU will protect 39 geographical indications from Vietnam, including Quang Ninh oysters, Ha Long squid, and Phu Quoc fish sauce.

Seventhly, regarding labor commitments: Labor used in fishery production for export must comply with International Labour Organization (ILO) regulations and its Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. This includes promoting and implementing basic workplace rights principles effectively.

1.3. Commitments of Vietnam's fishery export to EU market

1.3.1. Tariff Barrier

From the EU Perspective:

Fundamentally, the majority of tariff lines are committed to being eliminated either immediately when the Agreement takes effect or progressively within seven years. For sensitive products, the EU commits to open market access under tariff rate quotas, with in-quota import duties set at 0% (accounting for 0.3% of export turnover). Specifically:

- +) Products with immediate tariff elimination upon the Agreement's effect: coffee, natural honey, fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, fruit juices, fresh flowers, etc.
- +) Progressive elimination within 3-7 years: broken rice, etc.
- +) Tariff rate quotas application: 80,000 tons for milled rice, 5,000 tons for sweet corn, 30,000 tons for cassava starch, etc.

From the Vietnamese Perspective:

Vietnam commits to eliminating tariffs immediately after the EVFTA takes effect on goods from the EU covering 65% of the tariff lines in the tariff schedule. Currently, Vietnam applies high

MFN tariffs on key EU products. Under the EVFTA, Vietnam also commits to eliminating tariffs progressively within 4-11 years on various agricultural and food products such as beef, poultry, sausages and meat products, dairy products,...

1.3.2. Non-tariff Barrier

Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)

Both parties agree to enhance the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement), with Vietnam committing to increasing the use of international standards in issuing its TBT regulations. Vietnam also agrees to accept the "Made in EU" label for non-agricultural products (excluding pharmaceuticals) while continuing to accept specific origin labels within an EU member state.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)

EU's agricultural management policies are stringent, particularly its technical barriers on agricultural food products, which tend to become increasingly stringent. The EU maintains a firm stance on SPS issues and has no intention of lowering these standards in FTAs, including the EVFTA. Specific provisions include:

For plant-based products, exporting countries must comply with EU SPS regulations during cultivation and production. While these products are not subjected to stringent inspections like animal-based products, they are still subject to random checks by member states upon entry or after being marketed.

The EU maintains a rapid alert system where any food safety issues in a shipment will be immediately notified throughout the EU, preventing the product from circulating in the region.

Vietnam and the EU have agreed on certain SPS principles to facilitate trade in animal and plant products.

Vietnam recognizes the EU as a single entity when considering SPS issues.

Intellectual Property Rights

Regarding copyright and related rights, Vietnam must join the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) within three years from the EVFTA's entry into force

For trademarks, the right may be terminated if not "genuinely used" within five consecutive years in the relevant territory for the registered goods or services without a justified reason.

For geographical indications, Vietnam commits to protecting 160 EU geographical indications and the EU will protect 39 Vietnamese geographical indications. These Vietnamese geographical indications mainly relate to agricultural products and foodstuffs, providing a pathway for notable Vietnamese agricultural products to establish and affirm their brands in the EU market.

Rules of Origin

This area has been extensively discussed by both parties. In the EU, state-issued certificates of origin are no longer used; instead, businesses self-certify the origin of all products. Through

negotiations, the EU expects Vietnam to at least accept this mechanism, as the EU cannot change its entire certification system for an agreement with Vietnam. Additionally, Vietnam is gradually implementing and participating in pilot projects for self-certification of origin within ASEAN, aiming to facilitate business operations.

Other Non-Tariff Measures

The Agreement includes commitments to reduce other non-tariff barriers, such as customs procedures and commitments regarding import/export licensing, to facilitate trade between both parties.

1.4. Impact mechanism related to commitments of Vietnam's fishery export to the EU market

The preferential tariff commitments Vietnam extends to the EU have significantly contributed to boosting the export of agricultural products to the EU market.

Since the EVFTA took effect in August 2020, Vietnam's agricultural exports to the EU have increased markedly. The EVFTA creates opportunities for Vietnamese agricultural products to deeply integrate into a large, high-value market. However, it also presents significant challenges requiring production and export enterprises to undergo substantial changes to achieve sustainable export growth to the EU market.

2. Vietnam's fishery export status to EU market after the implementation of EVFTA/ since the execution of EVFTA

After 5 years of efforts to address the issues warned by the EC, Vietnam's fishery exports to the EU, although still affected, are gradually improving. In 2021, Vietnam's fishery export to the EU market was around \$1.077 billion, up 12.3% compared to 2020, making the EU the third largest market after the US and Japan.

According to statistics from Vietnamese Customs, by the end of the third quarter of 2022, the EU market accounted for 12% of the value of Vietnam's fishery exports, ranking 4th after the US, Japan and China-Hong Kong. In the export picture of \$8.5 billion with all shades of growth green in the first 9 months of 2022, the EU market contributed a bright color with a value exceeding \$1 billion, an increase of more than 40% compared to the same period in 2021. This can be considered a positive result in the second year Vietnam implemented the EVFTA, as enterprises have been able to take good advantage of the preferential conditions brought about by this Agreement. This figure could have been even higher if Vietnam's fishery production in the third quarter had not been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

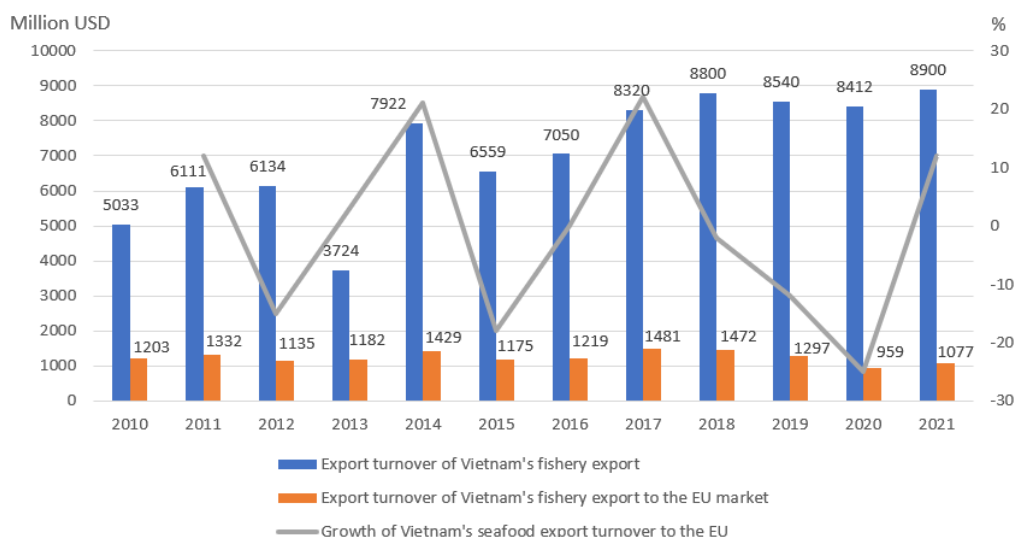


Figure 1: Vietnam's fishery export turnover to the EU market compared to Vietnam's total fishery export turnover in the period 2010-2021

Source: Calculated from the statistics of VASEP

Vietnam exports a diverse range of fishery products to the EU market. The items generating the highest foreign currency earnings are shrimp valued at over \$500 million; various tuna species worth \$128 million; sutchi catfish and yellowtail catfish valued at \$123 million; clam species worth \$55 million; frozen fish products valued at \$39.4 million; squid species worth \$31.8 million; and surimi bringing in nearly \$10 million.

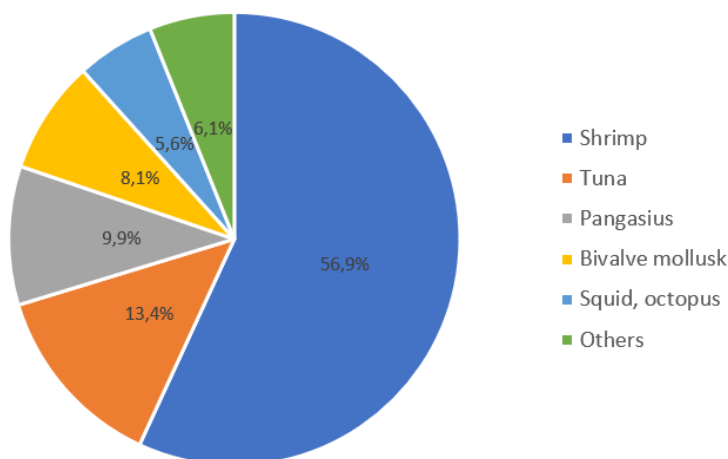


Figure 2: Structure of fishery products exported to the EU in 2021

Source: VASEP's Report on Vietnam's fishery exports 2021

Export data reveals that since the EVFTA came into force, shrimp, clams, tuna and squid have been the fishery products that have benefited the most from the tariff reduction preferences under this free trade agreement.

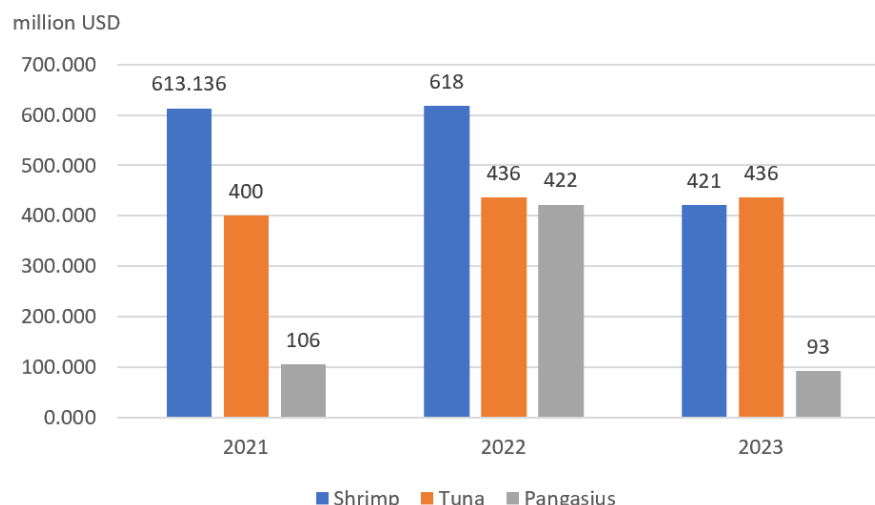


Figure 3: Export value of top 3 products to the EU market

Source: Calculated from the statistics of VASEP

For the past three consecutive years, **shrimp** has always been the key export product leading Vietnam's fishery export structure to the EU market. In 2021, shrimp exports reached \$613.136 million, an increase of 18.6% compared to 2020 (\$517.108 million). Of which, exports to the Netherlands increased by 10%, to Germany increased by 25% and to Belgium increased by 19%. In 2022, Vietnam's shrimp exports to the EU market experienced significant fluctuations. For the first five months of 2022, shrimp exports to the EU surged by 45%, reaching approximately \$562 million. This growth was partly driven by increased imports of vannamei and black tiger shrimp, with notable rises in exports to key markets such as Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. Specifically, exports to the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium recorded growth rates of 58-91%

However, later in the year, the situation changed. By October 2022, Vietnam's shrimp exports to the EU had decreased by 35% compared to the same period in the previous year, bringing the total value to \$618 million, which still marked a 28% increase over the same period in 2021 due to strong performance earlier in the year.

In 2023, Vietnam's shrimp exports to the EU faced challenges, mainly due to economic instability in the region. As a result, exports to the EU dropped significantly by 39% compared to 2022, amounting to \$421 million. European consumers shifted towards cheaper food options and smaller shrimp sizes due to economic pressures and rising prices

Ranking second in this structure is **tuna**, with a share of 13.4%, up 6.4% compared to 2020. Exports of processed tuna products increased significantly, while fresh tuna exports showed signs of decreasing by 18%. This gradually demonstrates the value of Vietnam's fishery export products. Tuna exports to the EU in 2022 grew by 9%, with notable increases in processed tuna products.

Pangasius still holds a position as one of the main exported products to the EU (accounting for nearly 10% of the share). However, over the past 3 years, this share has continuously decreased. In 2020, pangasius exports reached \$127.778 million, by the end of 2021, this figure only reached

\$106.190 million, a decrease of nearly 17% in growth rate. One of the reasons for the decrease in pangasius export value to the EU market is the relatively high competitiveness of this product, with consumption not increasing in many markets, coupled with a significant increase in logistics and transportation costs. Pangasius exports initially showed a strong recovery in early 2022, particularly to Germany and other European countries, but faced difficulties due to global inflation and high inventories.

Table 1: Vietnam's fishery exports to the EU (by Key Products)

Year	Product	Growth Rate (%)	Notes
2020	Shrimp	-	-
	Pangasius	-	-
2021	Shrimp	+18.6	Netherlands: +10%, Germany: +25%, Belgium: +19%
	Tuna	+6.4	Processed tuna increasing significantly, fresh tuna: -18%
	Pangasius	-16.9	2020 value: \$127.778 million
2022	Shrimp	+0.8	First five months: +45%, \$562 million; Netherlands: +58-91%, Germany: +58-91%, Belgium: +58-91%; Year-end: -35% in October but +28% YoY due to strong early performance
	Tuna	+9.0	Processed tuna increasing significantly, fresh tuna stable. EU: 12%, \$68 million. Netherlands: +59%, Belgium: +70% and +100%.
	Pangasius	-35.0	Early recovery, difficulties due to inflation and high inventories
2023	Shrimp	-39.0	Economic instability, shift to cheaper food options, smaller shrimp sizes
	Tuna	-	Processed tuna increasing significantly, fresh tuna stable

	Pangasius	-5.1	Continued decline due to stagnant consumption in key markets
2024	Shrimp (April)	+28	Cumulative value for first 4 months: \$119 million

Source: Calculated from the statistics of VASEP

Shrimp exports to the EU reached \$38 million in April 2024, up 28% compared to the same period. The cumulative value for the first 4 months was \$119 million, nearly equivalent to the same period last year. In April, shrimp exports to the EU were quite active. The export value to major individual markets in the block all saw double-digit growth. Exports to Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium increased by 29%, 37%, and 39% respectively, while exports to Denmark surged by 88% (VASEP, 2024).

Table 2: Vietnam's Shrimp Exports to Major EU Markets (April 2024)

Market	April 2024 Export Value (\$ million)	Growth Rate (%)
Germany	9.2	+29
Netherlands	8.3	+37
Belgium	6.5	+39
Denmark	2.1	+88

Source: VASEP

According to statistics from Vietnamese Customs, Vietnam's exports of tuna product groups to the EU increased across the board in the first month of the year compared to the same period. Notably, exports of fresh, frozen, and dried tuna under HS code 03 (excluding frozen tuna meat/loins under HS_0304) surged 317 times. Exports of other processed tuna products, mainly frozen pre-cooked tuna loins, increased more than 9 times. This shows that the tariff preferences under the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) are creating a strong pull for Vietnamese tuna products in the first month of the year.

In January 2024, Vietnamese tuna was exported to 21 EU member countries. Among them, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands remained the top three import markets for Vietnamese tuna. Currently, exports to all three of these markets are growing well compared to the same period, especially to Italy.

Along with Italy, tuna exports to Poland are also rising sharply. If in January 2023, Vietnam had hardly any orders to this market, in 2024 Poland is currently the 4th largest tuna import market in the bloc with sales of over \$1.6 million. In addition to Poland, exports to Sweden, Belgium, and Cyprus are also skyrocketing, increasing 11 times, 2 times, and 5 times respectively.

3. Opportunities and Challenges to Vietnam's fishery export since the execution of EVFTA

3.1. Opportunities

Market Access

Firstly, Vietnam has the opportunity to access a vast fishery consumption market. The EU, with its 28 member countries, represents a large and potential market with a population of over 500 million people and a total GDP exceeding 15 trillion USD, accounting for approximately 22% of the global GDP. The per capita income in the EU has reached 22.03 kg/person, which is 5.34 kg/person higher than the global average. This high-income level is coupled with a preference for fishery products due to their superior nutritional and health benefits. Consequently, the annual demand for fishery in the EU is significant.

In recent years, the EU's fishery resources have fallen below the biological safety limit, necessitating restrictions on fishing and fishery harvesting while the demand for fishery continues to rise. Therefore, both theoretically and practically, it can be affirmed that the EU remains a significant potential market for Vietnamese fishery exports, provided that Vietnamese products meet the increasingly stringent quantity, quality, and variety requirements of the EU market.

Preferential import tariffs and Competitive Pricing:

According to the Vietnam Association of fishery exporters and Producers (VASEP), in addition to older generation FTAs, Vietnam's participation in new generation FTAs like the EVFTA brings numerous opportunities for export sectors such as the fishery industry, particularly through tariff preferences.

Under the EVFTA, nearly 50% of tariff lines with base rates of 0-22% (most of which are high tariffs from 6-22%) will be reduced to 0% immediately upon the agreement's effect (approximately 840 tariff lines). The remaining 50% of tariff lines with base rates of 5.5-26% will be gradually reduced to 0% over a period of 3 to 7 years. Specifically, the EU has allocated tariff quotas for Vietnam of 11,500 tons for canned tuna and 500 tons for fish balls.

Once the EVFTA takes effect, most Vietnamese fishery products will benefit from immediate or scheduled tariff reductions, making Vietnamese fishery more competitively priced in the EU market and potentially increasing market share. This is particularly advantageous in the current context of economic hardship and rising unemployment rates, where EU consumers are likely to tighten their spending and prefer competitively priced products.

Enhancing Competitiveness and Attracting Investment in Aquaculture and Fishery Processing

The EU is currently the second-largest market for Vietnam's fishery exports, following the United States. This market consistently accounts for over 17-18% of Vietnam's total fishery export value. Specifically, the EU market comprises 22% of Vietnam's shrimp exports, 11% of its pangasius exports, and 30-35% of other fishery products.

Beyond the basic benefits of export-import tariffs, participation in new-generation FTAs like the EVFTA provides Vietnam's fishery sector with opportunities to expand its export markets and enhance its competitiveness compared to rivals without FTAs with the EU, such as

India and Thailand.

EU enterprises can leverage Vietnam's existing fishery development advantages without the need for extensive market research and exploration, thereby minimizing investment risks and additional costs. They can tap into the abundant fishery resources that are difficult to farm in the EU due to environmental conditions, such as pangasius, basa fish, and mackerel, or those that need to be imported due to biological limits, like tuna. Additionally, they can utilize Vietnam's existing aquaculture and fishery processing infrastructure, upgrading it as needed rather than building from scratch.

EU investors can also make use of by-products from fishery processing to create value-added products, such as converting pangasius and basa fish fat into diesel, extracting omega-3 from tuna by-products to make fish oil, or producing fish and shrimp feed from squid liver powder. These products can then be sold in the local market, increasing profitability. This strong incentive encourages European countries to invest more capital into Vietnam's fishery industry.

Improving Product Quality

The EVFTA offers significant opportunities for Vietnam's fishery sector by attracting investment and enabling access to advanced science and technology through technology transfer agreements. This includes the provision of fishery processing machinery, the application of biotechnology in aquaculture to develop high-quality breeds, learning high-tech and high-yield farming models and sharing expertise in management, processing, and preservation of seafood. The benefits derived from the FTA will substantially contribute to enhancing the quality of aquaculture, modernizing processing technology, and thereby improving the quality of exported fishery products.

Joining the EVFTA also means Vietnam has agreed to comply with commitments regarding Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures for its exported fishery products. To be more specific, TBT covers the use of technical regulations and standards to set out specific characteristics of a product. Unlike TBT, SPS is the process of organizing production and the substances in the product. SPS relates to quality requirements, packaging requirements, packaging procedures, means and methods of transporting animals and plants, quarantine, sampling methods,... About TBT, conformity with standards are voluntary, with regulations are required, while both of those aspects are required by SPS. Meeting stringent requirements and standards for food safety and animal quarantine will be mandatory for Vietnamese fishery to overcome technical barriers. This will drive fishery enterprises and the entire industry to improve, eliminate weaknesses, and reform to meet the EU's high standards.

3.2. Challenges

Intense Competition in the EU Fishery Market

Firstly, there is intense competition in the EU fishery market. The EU is a large market, with an average per capita fishery consumption of 24.35 kg per year. Given the substantial consumption and market size, many countries are eager to boost their fishery exports to the EU. Consequently,

Vietnam faces fierce competition from numerous rivals. The Vietnamese fishery industry is still characterized by small-scale, fragmented production, lack of standardization and insufficient planning. Additionally, the range of fishery products is limited and does not offer high added value.

Low Level of Technological Advancement

The low level of technological advancement in the industry results in inadequate environmental control. Moreover, the requirements from the market and importers such as quality standards, environmental regulations, labor conditions, sustainable production practices, and social responsibility are becoming increasingly stringent.

Challenges for Vietnam's fishery export industry facing with EU regulations

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing: In the past, due to limited resources, inadequate management, and improper reporting, Vietnam committed several violations in its fishing practices. On October 23, 2017, the EU officially issued a yellow card to Vietnam. This yellow card meant that all fishery exports from Vietnam to the EU would be subjected to 100% inspection, unlike the previous random checks. A more severe penalty, shifting from a yellow to a red card, would result in a complete ban on Vietnamese fishery imports by all 27 EU member states. According to the Vietnam Association of fishery exporters and Producers (VASEP), since the EC issued the yellow card warning against Vietnam's fishing practices, the country's fishery exports to the EU have significantly declined.

Food hygiene: Vietnam has faced numerous instances of fishery exports being rejected and returned due to non-compliance with food hygiene standards, causing financial losses for businesses and damaging the overall reputation of Vietnamese seafood. In 2018 alone, about 80 shipments of Vietnamese fishery were rejected by the EU and other importing markets due to quality issues, doubling the number of rejected shipments from 2017.

Rules of Origin: According to the World Bank, one of the main challenges for Vietnam is complying with the rules of origin requirements. Even if products are manufactured in Vietnam, EU importers might not recognize them as Vietnamese due to the heavy reliance on imported materials. Currently, domestic sources supply only about 40-45% of the processing capacity, necessitating imports of fishery raw materials worth billions of dollars annually. This heavy dependence on imported inputs reduces the likelihood of qualifying for tariff preferences, as the EVFTA stipulates that non-originating materials must not exceed 10% of the final product's value. Additionally, the strict EU standards for traceability and production conditions, including environmental requirements, pose significant hurdles for many enterprises.

Public debt crisis in EU countries:

The final challenge arises from the adverse effects of the public debt crisis in EU countries on smaller economies within the region, leading to a reduction in fishery import demand in the EU market. This situation has significantly impacted the export activities of countries, including Vietnam, to the EU.

4. Recommendations

In addition to creating opportunities and challenges, the EVFTA also imposes strict requirements for Vietnamese fishery export companies. The approach and implementation must aim for sustainable development in terms of economy, society, and environment, without sacrificing the environment for economic gains.

Expanding Vietnam's fishery exports to the EU Market

This is considered a good opportunity for Vietnam to boost export scale and introduce its products to the EU. The government needs to implement investment policies and promote the development of fishery export production. Moreover, they should introduce supportive policies and create favorable conditions for Vietnamese enterprises to participate in the supply chains and value chains of fishery products in the EU. This will help create a positive environment and encourage localities to improve their products by reducing costs through the reduction of production intermediaries, meeting the demands of consumers both domestically and internationally.

Furthermore, enterprises should strengthen production links between enterprises, cooperatives and fishermen. At the moment, fishermen face many limitations in accessing production techniques and technologies to enhance the production of Vietnamese fishery products. Therefore, enterprises and cooperatives need to focus on strengthening these links to enable Vietnamese fishery products to achieve significant breakthroughs.

Vietnamese farmers should grow different types of fish and seafood to cater to the varied tastes of EU consumers. Additionally, developing value-added products, such as pre-cooked meals and high-quality seafood, can attract a broader market. Improving cold storage and transport systems is crucial to maintaining the freshness of the fishery products during export.

Thoroughly Researching the EU Market

To facilitate the export of Vietnamese fishery products to the EU market in the context of EVFTA implementation, the government needs to strengthen efforts to anticipate and remove difficulties from the EU; carrying out market analysis and making forecasts, so enterprises can quickly and easily grasp market information. They need to develop mechanisms and policies for building and protecting brands to support enterprises in bringing Vietnamese fishery products to the EU market. It is necessary for the government to implement policies that support enterprises in building and promoting their brands both domestically and internationally and in participating in global value chains. This will significantly contribute to building the Vietnamese brand in the challenging EU market.

Enterprises need to research and understand the EU market, including its culture, trends and consumer demands. They must determine the needs of the market and what the specific requirements are, in order to produce the products that the EU market demands, rather than just selling the products they already have.

The Vietnamese Fishery Association should inform farmers and exporters about compliance

requirements and changes in regulations. They should guide farmers to adapt their products to meet these evolving trends. Additionally, organizing training sessions and workshops will help farmers stay informed about the EU market.

Understanding the commitments of Vietnam and the partner markets is crucial. Enterprises need to be well-versed in factors such as the CE mark, food safety regulations, quality and origin requirements to avoid investigations into product quality or the application of trade defense measures if they do not thoroughly follow these standards.

In the future, the EU will tighten the use of practice and production standards associated with social and environmental responsibility. Therefore, Vietnamese enterprises need to continuously update and comply with mandatory market regulations, in accordance with EU standards to create added value and take advantage of preferential tariffs during the EVFTA implementation process

Understanding and applying flexibly and honestly rules of origin and ingredients

The EU market has made traceability a prerequisite for member countries since 2005. Traceability is considered a superior and necessary solution for Vietnamese goods to establish and expand their presence in the EU market. The government and regulatory agencies in Vietnam need to make traceability a mandatory and standardized regulation in the near future.

Comprehensive policies should be quickly implemented to ensure regulations meet international standards on food hygiene and environmental standards. Strengthening chain link cooperation to improve productivity and quality while maintaining good food safety control is essential. This requires enterprises to proactively seek and develop domestic raw material sources.

The fisheries industry, in particular, should note the ban on the use of antioxidants to preserve aquatic feed products, ensuring that products meet quality and safety standards for export to the EU.

Applying modern science and technology in fishery production

It is necessary to encourage investment in the fishery industry, especially investment in innovation in production technology, machinery, and equipment aimed at clean fishery products, green transformation, and meeting international standards.

In the 4.0 technology era, the government has continuously supplemented and improved policies to accelerate and apply science and technology in fishery production, but the scale of application is not yet wide and widespread.

The government needs to further supplement and improve the mechanisms and policies on research and application of science and technology in fishery production. Moreover, enhancing cooperation in science and technology for fishery production between countries can increase opportunities for domestic enterprises to access advanced and modern products. This will enable Vietnam to improve its research capacity and master science and technology comprehensively and synchronously for both domestic and international products.

Regarding Intellectual Property, Brand Building, and Competing with Domestic Products

Building a brand in a demanding market like the EU has never been easy. Beyond ensuring

quality and meeting set standards, Vietnamese enterprises need to change their mindset to develop appropriate and strategic communication and marketing plans.

The state needs to promulgate policies to support enterprises in building and promoting their brands domestically and internationally as well as through promulgating policies to support enterprises participating in the global value chain, this will make a major contribution

Apart from promoting brand building, it is necessary to strengthen the role and provide solutions to support the Anti-Counterfeit and Brand Protection Association of Vietnam, as well as economic organizations. These entities should apply traceability technology to build a reputable image of Vietnamese export fishery products and protect intellectual property rights.

For Business Development

Vietnamese enterprises not only need to ensure they meet requirements from technical barriers related to quality standards, food hygiene and safety, environmental certification, and comply with commitments but also need to understand that investing in building a brand is an inevitable and correct decision. However, it must be continuously maintained, persevered, and willing to forego short-term benefits for the brand to come widely. Along with government support, enterprises need to proactively and positively build their core values because proactively improving quality and building brands will increase competitiveness, ensuring the position of the fishery sector in the international market.

Improving the competitiveness of enterprises and export products requires understanding regulatory information and market barriers, as well as timely preparation and responding promptly to trade disputes. Enterprises also need to proactively build business plans for the medium and long term. Regarding human resources, special attention should be paid to regulations and standards on labor and the environment.

Finding multilateral cooperation opportunities requires enterprises to seek cooperation directions with foreign partners and participate in global supply chains. Enterprises need to firmly grasp Vietnam's commitments, not only in their direct field but also change their business mindset in the new context. Enterprises need to actively participate in specialized international fairs and exhibitions, especially in France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Spain to enhance product promotion and expand trade with importing partners in the European market.

The EVFTA agreement also means participating in continuous, long-term and increasingly fierce competition. Therefore, improving the competitiveness of goods and enterprises to survive and develop must be recognized as a regular, long-term, continuous, and fundamental task of all sectors at all levels. However, in that competition, to survive, fishery enterprises must know how to cooperate closely under the direction of the government for a common goal.

5. Conclusion

The EVFTA has provided substantial opportunities for Vietnam's fishery export industry, facilitating market access, tariff reductions, and increased competitiveness. However, the industry

must navigate several challenges, including stringent EU standards, competition, and economic fluctuations. To sustain and enhance growth, Vietnam needs to focus on improving product quality, adhering to international standards, and fostering innovation. Collaboration between the government and enterprises is crucial to overcome obstacles and leverage the full potential of the EVFTA. By doing so, Vietnam's fishery industry can achieve sustainable development and strengthen its position in the global market.

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