**Interview guide for operators along the supply chain**

***Interviewer should only ask questions that are relevant for the interviewee, based on the company’s activities and products.***

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| **Country** |  |
| **Company name** |  |
| **Interviewee name** |  |
| **Interviewer name** | **C** |
| **Date** |  |

Introduction

*Interviewer to briefly introduce the objective of the evaluation and this interview*

The objective of the evaluation is to examine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value of the current marketing standards for fishery products, in accordance with the Better Regulation Package Guidelines. The regulatory framework under evaluation is:

* Council Regulation (EEC) No 2136/89 of 21 June 1989 laying down common marketing standards for preserved sardines;
* Council Regulation (EEC) No 1536/92 of 9 June 1992 laying down common marketing standards for preserved tuna and bonito;
* Council Regulation (EC) No 2406/96 of 26 November 1996 laying down common marketing standards for certain fishery products; and
* Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products – Chapter III – Common Marketing Standards;

The questionnaire includes the following sections:

* Presentation of the company
* Awareness and relevance of criteria used in EU marketing standards
* Implementation of EU marketing standards (only for companies that buy or sell products covered by EU marketing standards)
* Benefits and costs of EU marketing standards (only for companies that buy or sell products covered by EU marketing standards)
* Simplification of marketing standards (only for companies that buy or sell products covered by EU marketing standards)
* Other standards and norms
* Conclusion

Short presentation of the company interviewed

1. Please describe the main activities of your company (fishing, farming, processing, wholesale, retail, imports, etc.)?
2. What are your main products (main species and product forms)?
3. Who are your main clients (wholesalers, foodservice, processing industry, retailers, final consumers,...)? How do you sell (collective contracts, bilateral contracts, auctions)?
4. If relevant, what are your main sources of supply for fish (wild fish/aquaculture, imports/domestic)?
5. Where do you procure them (through auctions, wholesale markets or directly from producers, etc…)?
6. Can you approximately provide your market share in your main markets?

Awareness and Relevance of criteria used by EU marketing standards (for all companies)

1. Do you know the different criteria used for EU marketing Standards? Can you provide an example?

*Interviewer should briefly present and provide examples of the relevant criteria (for fresh or preserved products if necessary before pursuing with the next questions)*

1. What are the main criteria you use to assess the quality of fish and fish products you buy/sell? If relevant, do you rely on EU marketing standards to measure the quality of the products you buy/sell?
2. How are prices set up with your suppliers/buyers of fish and fish products? Are EU marketing standards used for this purpose? If relevant, are EU marketing standards mentioned in contracts?
3. Do you think that EU marketing standards are relevant for final consumers?

Implementation of EU marketing standards (only for companies that buy or sell products covered by EU marketing standards)

1. Can you please briefly describe the tasks involved in the implementation of EU marketing standards at your level (e.g. checking the compliance of sold/purchased fish, controlling content of cans…)? How long do these tasks take and how often do they take place? Can you roughly assess the costs involved in the implementation of marketing standards?
2. Who is primarily responsible for ensuring that the standards are complied with? Please describe the role and responsibilities of the person in charge.
3. FOR BUYERS: What happens if you assess that products from your suppliers are not compliant with marketing standards, e.g. not correctly sorted/classified/wrong trade description...?
4. FOR SUPPLIERS: What happens if your buyer assess that your products are not compliant with marketing standards, e.g. not correctly sorted/classified/wrong trade description...?
5. Have you ever been inspected for compliance with EU Marketing Standards? Y/N

**If YES, ask the following questions**

* 1. When was the last time?
  2. In a 5-year period, how often would you expect to be inspected?
  3. Do you remember the last time inspection resulted in sanctions? How long ago was it? What were the sanctions on that occasion?

1. Do you think that most operators generally comply, or are there big differences in compliance rates between operators? If so, what might account for such differences?
2. Do you think that compliance has been improving or deteriorating? Do you have an explanation why?
3. Are you aware of any specific issues related to the application of EU marketing standards to imported products (from non-EU countries)?
4. What are the factors that have most impacted how EU marketing standards are or should be implemented over the past 10 year (regulatory changes, development of other norms and standards, sustainability issues, technological changes)? Please explain.

Benefits and costs of EU marketing standards (only for companies that buy or sell products covered by EU marketing standards)

1. In what ways do you think EU Marketing Standards are beneficial for your activity?
2. In what ways do you think EU Marketing Standards impose costs on your activity?
3. On balance, do you consider that the benefits outweigh the costs?
4. Apart from any effects on your activity, do you think there are benefits or costs in terms of broader social considerations, such as fairness of competition, sustainability, food waste reduction or environmental considerations?

Simplification of marketing standards (only for companies that buy or sell products covered by EU marketing standards)

1. Would it be possible to simplify the existing criteria without compromising the effectiveness of marketing standards? Please provide specific examples.
2. What do you think would change in your activity and in general if there were no more EU marketing standards? Would you or your clients require new standards (e.g. private ones)?

Other standards and norms

1. Do you use other types of standards or norms (e.g. private certifications, other private or public standards, codes of practices)? Please specify the names, scope (products, criteria, geographical scope), if they are voluntary or mandatory, if they are public or private, how they are set up and controlled and the relevant markets.
2. When those standards/norms apply to products already covered by EU marketing standards, do you consider these standards/norms to be complementary, redundant or in conflict with EU standards? Please explain, and please explain what is the incentive to use them in addition to EU marketing standards?
3. When those standards/norms apply to products NOT covered by EU marketing standards, do you think they are sufficient? Are there shortcomings? In your view, what difference would it make if there were EU marketing standards for these products? Please explain.
4. In your opinion, how do these norms or standards perform compared to the EU marketing Standards? What are the advantages and the shortcomings?
5. For products currently not covered by EU marketing standards, do you think your company would benefit from having EU marketing standards for products currently not covered (*i.e*. fresh fish not under Annex I, aquaculture, frozen fish, processed fish other than canned sardines, tunas and bonitos)? Please explain.

Conclusion

1. On balance, do you think the benefits outweigh the costs involved? Do you think EU marketing standards should be kept as they are, or that they should be modified/updated, or that they should be removed? If you think that there should be changes, what are the two or three changes that should be given the highest priority?
2. Would you be interested in being involved in the consultation that will be carried out to test the recommendations on marketing standards?
3. Do you have any other comment?