

Seafood sector set to benefit as UK starts Greenland trade talks

Negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement were formally launched today (27 January) seeking to reduce or remove tariffs on seafood, as well as strengthen other aspects of the relationship between the two countries.

Trade between the two countries was worth £10 million in 2020, with coldwater shrimp – worth an estimated £49 million – additionally shipped from Greenland to the UK.

The deal will provide a platform to deepen cooperation on ensuring regional stability in the Arctic as well as collaboration on UK priorities including science, technology, climate change and development.

Talks were launched at a meeting in Copenhagen between British Embassy Copenhagen's Head of Political, Katherine Dark, and the Prime Minister of Greenland, Múte Bourup Egede.

Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

A deal with Greenland will be a boost for our fish and seafood processing sector – a key industry for Yorkshire and Scotland.

Greenland also has a vital geo-strategic location in the Arctic, and as such, I look forward to bringing our two countries closer together.

The trade agreements we have agreed so far with 70 countries will help us level up every part of the UK.

Greenland is a major exporter of seafood to the UK. Cutting tariffs of up to 20% on Greenlandic specialities like prawns and cod fillets would benefit UK supermarkets and catering and hospitality businesses and ultimately consumers, by making room for a reduction in wholesale prices.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) plans to begin negotiations in parallel to gain fishing opportunities in Greenland's waters, which could bring significant benefits to the UK's fishing industry.

International Trade Minister Ranil Jayawardena said:

We want to support the many brilliant British businesses that rely on fish from Greenland – and cut costs for the British people.

Together, we can bring our two nations closer together than ever before.

Head of Political, British Embassy Copenhagen, Katherine Dark said:

This deal underlines our commitment to Greenland and the Arctic region. I was delighted to explore several areas of bilateral cooperation during my first visit to Nuuk and Ilulissat in September and look forward to deepening our partnership with Greenland.

Martyn Boyers, CEO of Grimsby Fish Market, said:

The launch of FTA negotiations with Greenland is positive news for Grimsby as much of their product, particularly frozen prawns and white fish, are brought here for packing by local seafood businesses.

An agreement would take away any uncertainty of the continuity of supply, benefiting the local processors who repack product from Greenland. The knock-on effect substantiates continued local jobs and employment as well as benefiting local hauliers who provide onward distribution into caterers, restaurants and food service.

Background:

In 2020, total UK trade with Greenland amounted to £10 million, and DIT estimates that a further £49 million of coldwater shrimp coming into the UK predominantly originated from Greenland that same year.