B **Boreal Trade**

MARKET ACCESS ASSESSMENT · SAMPLE 01

Frozen Atlantic lobster into Vietnam and Singapore

Prepared for Tidewater Shellfish Co., Shelburne, Nova Scotia · 6 September 2026

Illustrative worked example, not a client engagement. Tidewater Shellfish Co. is a fictional company invented to show the shape of this deliverable. Every regulatory value below is real: each was read off the primary source listed at the end and carries the date it was read. The commercial situation is invented; the regulation is not.

What you asked

Whether frozen Atlantic lobster from your Shelburne plant can enter Vietnam and Singapore, what it costs at the border, and which of the two to enter first.

Answer in one line

Vietnam first, and the duty position is worth more than the whole cost of this assessment. Vietnam charges 27 per cent on this line at the general rate and nothing at all under CPTPP. Singapore charges nothing either way, which makes it a channel rather than a duty opportunity.

Classification and duty position

MARKET	MFN DUTY	PREFERENTIAL	BASIS
Vietnam	27%	Free (CPTPP)	CPTPP in force between Canada and Vietnam
Singapore	Free	Free (CPTPP)	CPTPP in force; Singapore applies no duty on this line either way

HS CLASSIFICATION · 0306.12 · LOBSTERS (HOMARUS SPP.), FROZEN

Live, fresh or chilled lobster is a different subheading, 0306.32, and carries its own rate. If you intend to ship live as well as frozen, that line needs its own answer and this one does not cover it.

WHAT THE VIETNAMESE PREFERENCE IS ACTUALLY WORTH

The gap between 27 per cent and nothing is the largest single number in this report. On a CAD 3 million annual programme at customs value, that is CAD 810,000 a year in duty you either pay or do not, decided entirely by whether the origin documentation accompanying each consignment is correct. It is not decided by the agreement existing. An importer without a valid origin claim pays the applied rate and nobody at the border argues the point on your behalf.

What decides the timeline

Origin documentation, which is where the money is

CPTPP preference is claimed at import, in the destination, by or on behalf of your buyer, and it rests on documentation that originates with you. Canadian-landed lobster processed in a Canadian plant is not a marginal origin case, so the substance is straightforward and the risk is procedural: the claim has to be made correctly on every consignment, not once at the start of the relationship. Build the origin declaration into your shipping pack before the first container rather than after a rejected claim.

Establishment approval and export certification

Neither market takes fish and seafood on the strength of a commercial invoice. Your plant has to be in a position to obtain the CFIA export certification the destination expects, and that is a condition of your establishment rather than a document you request per shipment. This is the item most likely to move your first ship date, because closing a gap in the plant runs on the plant's calendar rather than yours.

Singapore is procedure rather than tariff

Singapore's importer holds a licence from the Singapore Food Agency and takes out a permit for each consignment, with fees attaching per consignment rather than per relationship. That structure quietly decides your shipment sizing: a small trial consignment carries much the same procedural cost as a full one. Treat Singapore as a proving ground for documentation and a re-export channel into the region, not as the volume market that justifies the programme.

Who holds what

Settle before you appoint anyone: in whose name the import licence and any product filing sit, and what happens to them if the relationship ends. Where the distributor holds them, changing distributor can mean starting again while somebody else holds your position in the market.

Not yet verified

Three things this assessment does not answer, and would in a full engagement:

- *Whether your Shelburne establishment currently meets the conditions for the certificates each destination expects, which is a question about your plant rather than about the market.*
- *Vietnamese import value-added tax and any local levies, which sit on top of the customs duty shown above and are not included in the CAD 810,000 figure.*
- *Named, licence-checked importers in each market. We do not publish a distributor list we have not qualified.*

Recommendation

Enter Vietnam first, and spend the money on getting the origin claim right. The tariff advantage is already granted and is large enough to fund the entry several times over, which is unusual and makes this an easier internal case than most. Use Singapore in parallel as a low-risk lane to prove your documentation and your cold chain, and judge it on what it teaches you rather than on volume.

The one thing that would change this recommendation is an establishment gap. If the plant cannot obtain the certification Vietnam expects on a workable timescale, the duty saving is theoretical and the order of these two markets reverses.

Sources

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