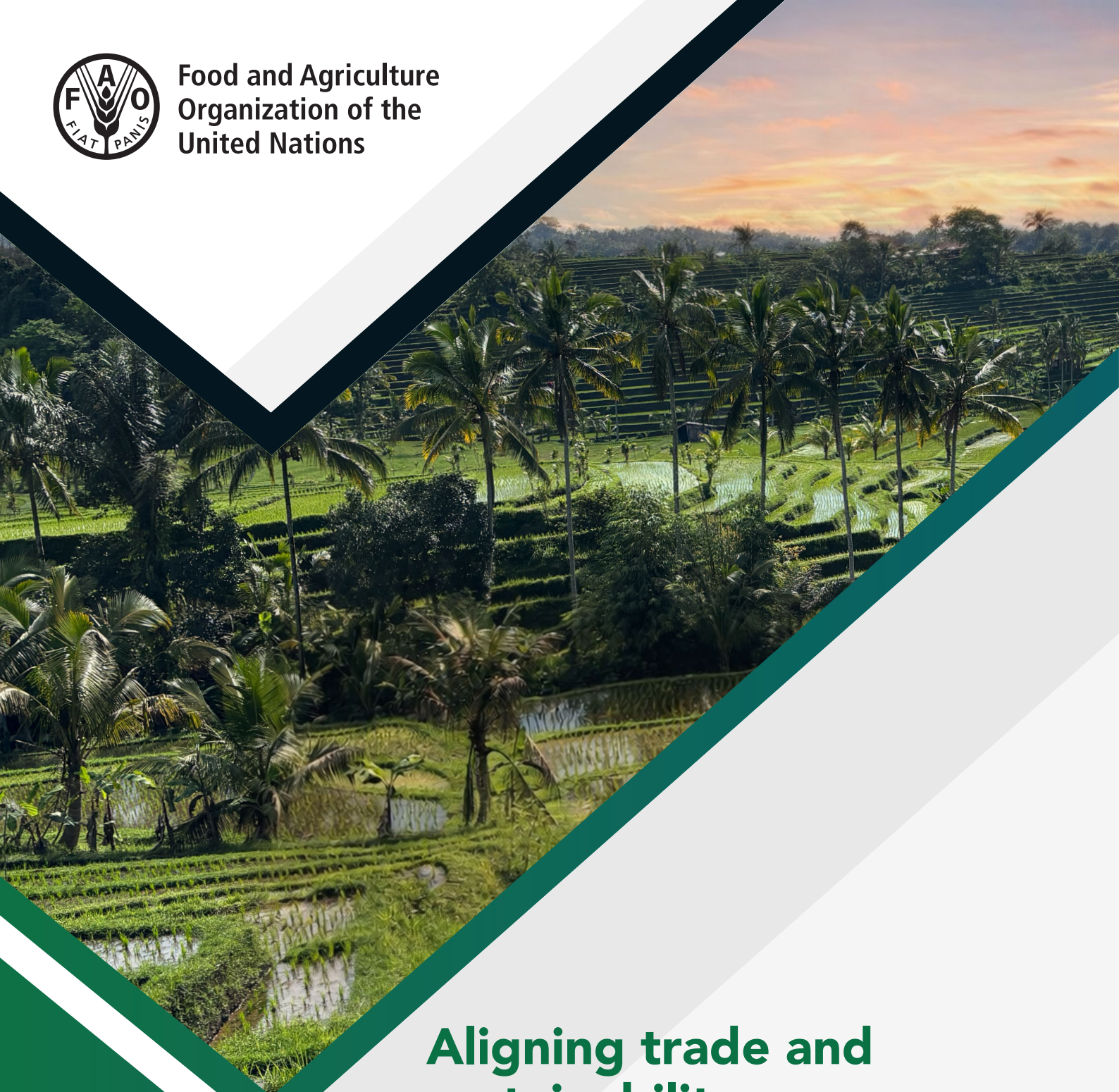




Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



## Aligning trade and sustainability

The role of agricultural environment-related provisions in shaping domestic environmental governance



# **Aligning trade and sustainability**

The role of agricultural environment-  
related provisions in shaping domestic  
environmental governance

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
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# Abbreviations

<b>ACCTS</b>	Agreement on Climate Change, Trade, and Sustainability
<b>Ag-ERP</b>	environment-related provision linked to the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors
<b>CAFTA-DR</b>	Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement
<b>CCRAEC</b>	Canada-Costa Rica Agreement on Environmental Cooperation
<b>CCRFTA</b>	Canada-Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement
<b>CITES</b>	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
<b>CPTPP</b>	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
<b>DLDD</b>	desertification, land degradation, and drought
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>ECA</b>	Environmental Cooperation Agreement
<b>EFTA</b>	European Free Trade Association
<b>EQA</b>	Environmental Quality Act
<b>ERP</b>	environment-related provisions
<b>EU-CAAA</b>	European Union Central American Association Agreement
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FLEGT</b>	Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade
<b>FOAG</b>	Federal Office for Agriculture
<b>FRIM</b>	Forest Research Institute of Malaysia
<b>GHG</b>	greenhouse gas
<b>INMACOM</b>	Incomati and Maputo Watercourse Commission
<b>IIED</b>	International Institute for Environment and Development
<b>IOTC</b>	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
<b>ITTO</b>	International Tropical Timber Organization
<b>IUU</b>	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated
<b>LVFO</b>	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization
<b>MCS</b>	monitoring, control, and surveillance
<b>MEAs</b>	multilateral environmental agreements
<b>MLRA</b>	Marine Living Resources Act
<b>MRV</b>	monitoring, reporting, and verification
<b>MTCC</b>	Malaysian Timber Certification Council
<b>MTCS</b>	Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme

<b>MTIB</b>	Malaysian Timber Industry Board
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Programme
<b>NFA</b>	National Forests Act
<b>NWMP</b>	National Water Master Plan
<b>NWP</b>	National Water Policy
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>PEFC</b>	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
<b>PRTR</b>	Pollutant Release and Transfer Register
<b>RFMO</b>	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
<b>RTA</b>	regional trade agreement
<b>SACUM</b>	Southern African Customs Union Member States
<b>SADC</b>	South African Development Community
<b>SADC-GMI</b>	SADC Groundwater Management Institute
<b>SFE</b>	State Phytosanitary Service
<b>UK PACT</b>	UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions
<b>UNCLOS</b>	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNFF</b>	United Nations Forum on Forests
<b>UNFSA</b>	United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement
<b>WMO</b>	World Meteorological Organization
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization
<b>WWR</b>	Water Resources Regulations

# Executive summary

The growing recognition of the linkages between trade and environmental sustainability has prompted countries to expand the scope of regional trade agreements (RTAs), embedding environment-related provisions (ERPs) that seek to reconcile economic growth with the preservation of natural resources. ERPs linked to the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sectors (Ag-ERPs) have become increasingly prevalent in this evolving landscape. This study, developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with the financial support of the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) of Switzerland, explores how Ag-ERPs influence domestic legislation and governance frameworks in four countries: Costa Rica, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa. It examines how countries reflect, adapt, or reinforce trade commitments through their national rules, strategies, and administrative practices.

Countries were selected based on trade, environmental, and regulatory criteria. Using FAO's 2024 RTA database,<sup>1</sup> a three-step document review traced Ag-ERP-related legal and policy changes and linked them to RTA timelines. The analysis considers both direct and indirect impacts to identify patterns of alignment between trade commitments and domestic frameworks.

Costa Rica provides a compelling example of how trade and environmental objectives can converge. In agriculture, pesticide regulations have been progressively strengthened in a manner that reflects obligations under the Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) and the European Union–Central America Association Agreement (EU-CAAA).<sup>2</sup> The establishment of a *Pollutant Release and Transfer Register* and the adoption of stricter pesticide registration procedures are consistent with trade-related environmental cooperation commitments. In fisheries, the incorporation of international guidelines and port state measures points to a strong causal relationship between Ag-ERPs and domestic regulation. In forestry, while trade agreements played a role, they largely reinforced preexisting domestic initiatives.

In Kenya, the impact of Ag-ERPs is more nuanced. Commitments under the East African Community (EAC) Treaty and the United Kingdom–Kenya RTA have supported reforms particularly in water and fisheries management. Water governance benefitted from an evolving regulatory framework, including the *National Water Policy* and related instruments introduced after the UK–Kenya RTA's entry into force. Similarly, fisheries regulation has been strengthened to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. In forestry, national and regional efforts have evolved in parallel, indicating a mutually supportive relationship rather than a direct causal link.

Malaysia presents a case where Ag-ERPs have both supported and, at times, accelerated existing domestic priorities. In agriculture, particularly with respect to water management, legal and policy reforms are closely aligned with provisions embedded in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for TransPacific Partnership (CPTPP) and earlier RTAs. Fisheries

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<sup>1</sup> Avesani, C., Dervisholli, E., Schéré, E. & Solórzano López, J. D. 2024. *Ag-ERPs database: a novel repository of environment-related provisions for agriculture, fisheries and forestry in regional trade agreements*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc9645en>

<sup>2</sup> In this report, the names of the trade agreements reflect those reported by the WTO in the RTA database: <https://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicAllRTAList.aspx>.

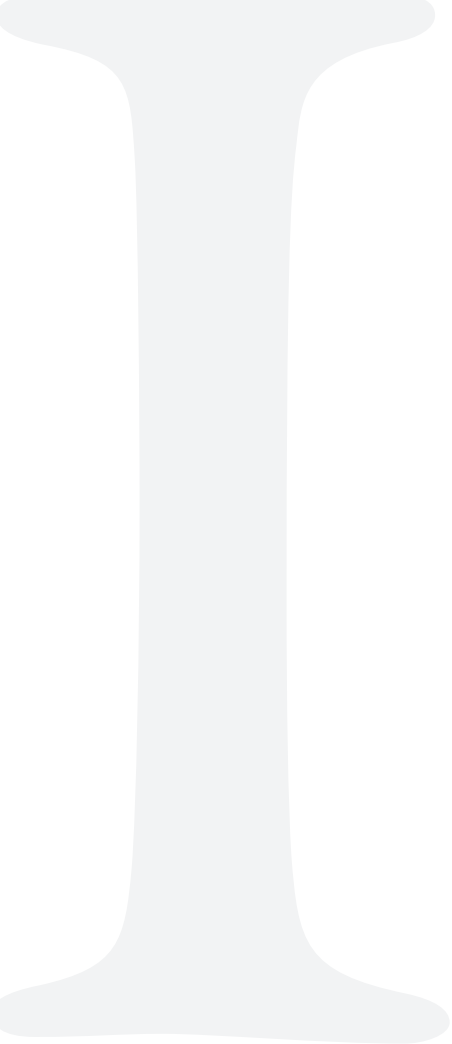
and forestry policies also reflect the combined influence of national commitments and trade agreements. Legislative modifications aimed at sustainable fishing practices and legal timber trade suggest that Ag-ERPs have helped reinforce and internationalize domestic policy trajectories.

In South Africa, environmental priorities were firmly established prior to trade commitments, yet Ag-ERPs reinforced these priorities. Water governance reforms initiated under the *National Water Act* aligned with regional cooperation objectives under the Southern African Development Community (SADC) framework and the bilateral agreements with the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In fisheries, the evolution of the *Marine Living Resources Act* (MLRA) reflects both domestic and international pressures, particularly efforts to combat illegal fishing. Forestry policies, though primarily driven by domestic goals, have been progressively harmonized with international commitments through regional initiatives and trade agreements.

Collectively, these case studies suggest that Ag-ERPs can act as catalysts and can complement domestic policy reform. In some sectors, particularly agriculture and fisheries, clear causal links are observed, where the presence of Ag-ERPs has encouraged the adoption of stronger environmental laws and policies. In others, notably forestry, the relationship appears more bidirectional, with pre-existing national priorities shaping the incorporation of Ag-ERPs into trade agreements, while international commitments have, in turn, reinforced domestic agendas. This *bidirectional relationship* highlights that Ag-ERPs do not function in isolation but rather interact with broader domestic and regional processes. Their effectiveness depends on the strength of domestic institutions, existing policy frameworks and the broader regional context.

While Ag-ERPs hold considerable potential to align trade and environmental goals, their success hinges on effective domestic implementation. Strong monitoring mechanisms, policy coherence between trade and environmental technical support, and inclusive decision-making processes are critical to enhancing their impact. As sustainability becomes central to global trade policy, the experiences of Costa Rica, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa offer valuable lessons on how Ag-ERPs can contribute as building blocks for sustainable and more resilient agrifood systems.





# Chapter 1.

**Introduction**

The interplay between trade and the environment is multifaceted, with evidence suggesting both positive and negative implications on the sustainability of agrifood systems. On the positive side, trade can allocate agricultural production to regions where the amount of land and water used per unit of food is relatively lower, thereby promoting a more efficient use of natural resources. Increased market openness also creates sustainable technology and knowledge spillover effects that can improve production efficiency, providing environmental benefits. However, trade-driven economic growth may have adverse environmental effects, including increased pollution and accelerated depletion of natural resources (FAO, 2022).

Over the past two decades, awareness of these potential externalities has prompted a strong shift in trade policy approaches, emphasizing the need to align market liberalization with sustainable development. This transition seeks to ensure that trade policies and environmental protection measures are coherent and mutually supportive.

One example of this transition is the effort of many countries to increasingly expand the scope of regional trade agreements (RTAs) – which have become a key mechanism for trade liberalization alongside multilateral negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) – to include regulatory coverage that directly references sustainable development and incorporates environment-related provisions (ERPs). Countries began integrating ERPs into their RTAs to achieve multiple objectives, including promoting sustainable development; aligning with international environmental frameworks, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); ensuring fair competition among trading partners, and enhancing environmental cooperation.

As ERPs become more prevalent in trade agreements, they have garnered increasing attention from scholars and trade negotiators globally. Despite the expansion in their use, comprehensive assessments of ERPs' environmental impacts, particularly in the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sectors, remain limited. To address this research gap, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), supported by the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) of Switzerland, initiated a project in 2023 to analyse trends in the inclusion of ERPs in these sectors within RTAs (hereinafter referred to as "Ag-ERPs"). As part of this effort, FAO compiled a new database covering 318 RTAs notified to the WTO between 1995 and 2022, and identified 142 different types of Ag-ERPs (Avesani *et al.*, 2024).

Findings from this research indicated a steady increase in the inclusion of Ag-ERPs in RTAs, suggesting their potential as valuable tools for addressing environmental challenges in agriculture, fisheries and forestry. However, the analysis also underscored that the extent of their inclusion varies across countries and agreements. Specifically, RTAs involving high-income countries tend to feature a greater number of Ag-ERPs, while those involving low- and middle-income countries include fewer of such provisions. In addition, the research highlighted the diverse language used in Ag-ERPs, ranging from binding to aspirational commitments. These differences raise important questions about the legal significance of these clauses for RTAs' signatories and their ability to drive legislative changes in different national contexts.

Given the evolving nature of trade and environmental policies, further exploration is therefore essential to assess the actual impact of Ag-ERPs, and to inform the development of future agreements that address sector-specific concerns. With ongoing support from FOAG, FAO has launched a new phase of the project to deepen the analysis of Ag-ERPs, and the objective of this study is to examine how Ag-ERPs in regional trade agreements interact with domestic legislation, policies, and governance frameworks in four selected

countries – Costa Rica, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa. By doing so, the study seeks to generate new insights into the relationship between international trade commitments and domestic legal frameworks.

### ***Purpose and structure of the study***

This analysis explores the role of Ag-ERPs in RTAs and their influence on domestic environmental governance in selected countries. It specifically examines how Ag-ERPs shape national policies, laws and regulations in the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sectors by tracing how countries translate international provisions into changes within their legal, policy, and institutional frameworks. In doing so, it considers how countries reflect, adapt, or reinforce trade commitments through their domestic rules, strategies, and administrative practices. Building on prior research on Ag-ERPs,<sup>3</sup> the study offers a comparative assessment of domestic implementation through case studies of Costa Rica, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa.

Following the introduction, **Chapter 2** frames the study by summarizing existing research on the interaction between trade agreements and environmental policies. It also outlines the study's methodological approach, detailing the criteria for selecting case study countries and describing the analytical framework applied to examine the influence of Ag-ERPs on domestic legislation. **Chapter 3** introduces the case studies, providing an in-depth analysis of Ag-ERP implementation in Costa Rica, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa. Each country profile evaluates relevant trade agreements, the evolution of domestic environmental regulations, and the role of Ag-ERPs in shaping sustainability policies. The chapter follows a sectoral approach, covering agriculture, fisheries and forestry separately to ensure a comprehensive assessment. Finally, **Chapter 4** synthesizes key findings and discusses broader key takeaways and policy implications. Common patterns across case studies are identified to explore the extent to which Ag-ERPs have contributed to strengthening domestic environmental governance.

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<sup>3</sup> For any additional information about this project, please visit: <https://www.fao.org/markets-and-trade/areas-of-work/trade-policy-and-partnerships/trade-and-sustainable-agrifood-systems/en>



# Chapter 2.

**Framing the study**

## 2.1 The relation between agrifood trade and the environment

The relationship between trade and the environment has been a central topic in economics literature, particularly as globalization has intensified economic integration and environmental challenges. Theoretical and empirical studies have explored both the positive and negative impacts of trade on environmental outcomes, with key debates revolving around natural resource use efficiency gains, pollution levels, resource depletion, and regulatory harmonization.

Various economic theories offer insights into these dynamics. The *Heckscher-Ohlin theory/model* suggests that resource-rich countries often export resource-intensive goods, leading to potential overuse and environmental degradation. Similarly, the *Pollution Haven Hypothesis* argues that trade liberalization may incentivize firms to relocate to countries with weaker environmental regulations, creating so-called “pollution havens”, though empirical evidence on this remains mixed (Copeland and Taylor, 2004).

Other theories explore the link between income and environmental degradation, indicating that while economic growth can initially increase pollution, rising income levels eventually lead to greater demand for environmental protection. Additionally, the *Porter hypothesis*, challenges the notion that stringent environmental regulations can drive innovation and competitiveness rather than impose economic costs. Collectively, these theories shape the debates on how to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability in the context of international trade.

Recognizing the environmental implications of trade, countries have increasingly incorporated environment-related provisions (ERPs) into RTAs to mitigate the potential harmful environmental impacts of trade-driven production growth while promoting sustainability and higher environmental standards (FAO, 2022). This has prompted research into their evolution and implications, including in the context of Ag-ERPs.

Environment-related provisions in regional trade agreements are implemented through a combination of legal commitments, institutional mechanisms, and cooperative frameworks. Many RTAs include dedicated environmental chapters or side agreements that establish obligations to uphold domestic environmental laws. These provisions may be supported by institutional mechanisms, such as joint committees or working groups aimed at facilitating dialogue and cooperation. The implementation approach varies significantly depending on the legal nature of the provisions. Some RTAs adopt binding commitments – “hard law” – that are enforceable through dispute settlement mechanisms, while others rely on nonbinding or aspirational language – “soft law” (Jinnah and Morgera, 2013; Morin, Dür and Lechner, 2018).

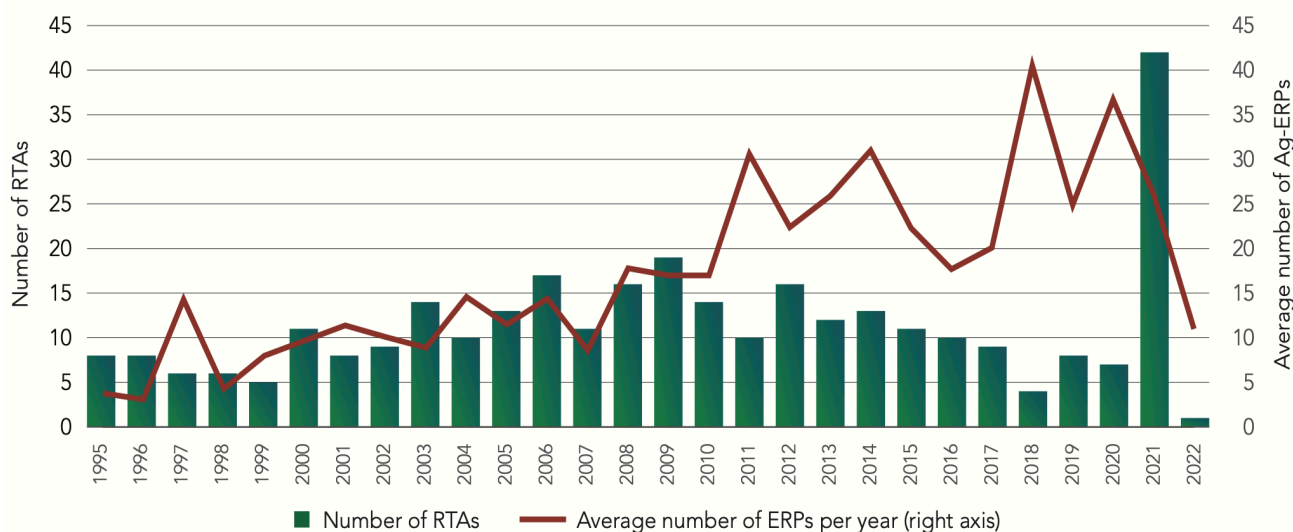
Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms also play a key role in ERP implementation. These can include sustainability impact assessments, periodic reviews, and avenues for civil society engagement through public submissions or consultations. In some cases, enforcement extends to state-state dispute settlement procedures or even monetary sanctions, although these remain relatively rare (Harrison *et al.*, 2019). In RTAs involving developing countries, the emphasis often shifts to capacity-building, technical cooperation, and technology transfer to support the fulfilment of environmental objectives (OECD, 2007; UNCTAD, 2022). Ultimately, the effectiveness of ERP implementation is influenced by the

degree of alignment between international commitments and domestic legal frameworks, as well as the governance capacities and political will of the parties involved (George, 2014; Berger and Brandi, 2015).

Drawing on a novel dataset, FAO developed for Ag-ERPs a study examining trends in the inclusion of environment-related provisions related to agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors referred to as AgERPs in RTAs (Avesani *et al.*, 2024). Specifically, the study found that the total number of Ag-ERPs included in 318 active RTAs notified to the WTO that entered into force between 1995 and 2022 increased from only 30 to 5 807 provisions. While their trend for inclusion – in absolute terms – experienced significant variations on a yearly basis, the average number of Ag-ERPs per RTA steadily increased, from 8 in 1995–2001 to 28 in 2019–2022 (Figure 1). Another study highlights a strong association between AgERPs in RTAs and reductions in agriculture-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Brandi and Schwab, 2024). It identifies several pathways through which Ag-ERPs achieve these reductions, including the implementation of stricter domestic regulations, adoption of sustainable production practices, and enhanced international cooperation. These findings underscore the importance of aligning Ag-ERPs with broader environmental objectives to effectively address environmental challenges.

Despite progress in integrating ERPs into RTAs, challenges related to compliance and enforcement remain. A study assessing ERPs’ enforcement in RTAs analysed 177 agreements, containing substantive environmental provisions, found that only 18 required some form of implementation documentation, such as evaluation reports (George and Yamaguchi, 2018). Such reports provided insights into how parties adhered to environmental commitments, including actions, such as enhancing environmental protection, enforcing environmental laws, establishing institutional mechanisms for environmental matters, promoting public participation in environmental governance, and fostering environmental cooperation. While documentation remains limited, the available evidence suggests with reasonable confidence that ERPs in RTAs are being implemented to the satisfaction of signatory countries, with corrective measures applied when necessary.

**Figure 1.** Number of RTAs and average number of Ag-ERPs per RTA (per year), 1995–2022



**Source:** Avesani, C., Dervisholli, E., Schéré, E. and Solórzano López, J.D. 2024. *Ag-ERPs database: A novel repository of environment-related provisions for agriculture, fisheries and forestry in regional trade agreements*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc9645en>

However, research indicates that even in the absence of systematic reporting, ERPs have contributed to strengthening environmental laws, the promotion of institutional cooperation, and improvements in enforcement, particularly in developing countries (OECD, 2023a). In the context of climate change and pesticide management, studies have highlighted the role of ERPs in limiting pollution leakages and reducing competitiveness losses through enhanced transparency, aligning environmental standards, and facilitating the exchange of sectoral knowledge (OECD, 2023b). Nonetheless, the extent to which ERPs were effectively implemented remains unclear, underscoring concerns about the lack of empirical evidence on enforcement.

Similar findings have emerged from another study exploring the relationship between national environmental legislation and international environmental commitments (Brandi, Blümer and Morin, 2019). This study identified a positive correlation, particularly in developing countries, between international environmental commitments and national legislative reforms, especially in areas such as air quality. However, while legislative reforms were observed, the study emphasized that changes in legal frameworks alone do not necessarily lead to improved environmental outcomes, highlighting the need for further research on the effectiveness of ERPs.

Recent efforts to evaluate ERP implementation and enforcement in RTAs have led to a comparative analysis of different approaches to sustainable development provisions in RTAs. One such study examined eight different approaches to trade and sustainable development provisions in free trade agreements (Velut *et al.*, 2022).<sup>4</sup> The study found that institutional mechanisms for implementing ERPs primarily relied on joint committees or designated contact points, often composed of government officials at the cabinet or ministerial level. It also highlighted that cooperation remained the prevailing approach to enforcing trade and sustainable development provisions, with frequent references to international treaties in environmental, labour, and social standards. While civil society participation in trade policymaking was often encouraged, the study found that it was rarely institutionalized and instead, implemented through *ad hoc* consultations.

Other studies identified several key factors that contributed to effective ERP implementation, including public accountability mechanisms, formal dispute settlement, institutionalized monitoring, and follow-up actions between signatory countries (OECD, 2023a; George and Yamaguchi, 2018). Likewise, Velut *et al.* (2022) highlighted that ERP enforcement followed common patterns, such as obligations to uphold international environmental standards, non-derogation clauses, public complaint mechanisms, consultation processes between signatories, and dispute resolution frameworks.

Another study evaluated the effectiveness of environmental provisions in North-South RTAs, comparing the enforcement mechanisms in EU and US agreements (Bastiaens and Postnikov, 2017). While both the European Union and United States of America have influenced environmental policy changes in partner countries, the findings suggested that US-led policy changes in South countries were largely driven by the likelihood of sanctions, whereas EU-led reforms tended to occur during the implementation phase, relying on policy dialogue. It also stressed that the effectiveness of ERPs depended not only on governmental commitments but also on the strength of civil society engagement in partner countries.

Taken together, the literature highlights both the progress and challenges that remain in integrating ERPs into RTAs. While ERPs have contributed to strengthening environmental

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<sup>4</sup> The study examined the experiences of the European Union, Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, and the United States of America.

governance, policy reforms, and fostering international cooperation, their enforcement and implementation continue to be inconsistent across countries and agreements. Key factors such as institutional mechanisms, compliance measures, and civil society involvement play a crucial role in determining their effectiveness. However, gaps in empirical evidence and the lack of systematic enforcement continue to raise concerns about their long term impact. Therefore, these findings underscore the need for further research to assess the practical outcomes of ERPs and explore ways to enhance their implementation within RTAs.

## 2.2 Methodology

Despite growing research on the role of ERPs in enhancing environmental governance, their integration into domestic legal systems remain under-documented, leaving critical gaps in understanding how these provisions translate into national regulatory frameworks and enforcement practices. To bridge this gap, this study aims to analyse how Ag-ERPs interact with domestic legislation, policies, and governance frameworks across four selected countries, namely Costa Rica, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa. These countries were selected based on specific criteria such as trade participation, environmental commitments, and regulatory frameworks to ensure diverse representation (see in Chapter 3). Drawing on the RTAs included in the database compiled by FAO and published in 2024, the research assesses the relationship between RTA provisions and domestic regulatory systems, providing new insights into the interplay between international commitments and domestic legal frameworks.

This analysis focuses specifically on Ag-ERPs, tracing their evolution from the inception of RTA negotiations for each country. The study employs a three-step documentation analysis: first, identifying relevant legal and policy documents from official government databases and repositories; second, systematically reviewing these documents to track changes in Ag-ERP-related regulations and institutional frameworks; and third, cross-referencing these changes with RTA commitments and timelines to identify potential patterns of influence.

Following the broad interpretation of implementation proposed by George and Yamaguchi (2018), the study considers both direct and indirect impacts of Ag-ERPs, including policy shifts that occur after RTAs enter into force. While direct causality between RTA commitments and domestic legal reforms is difficult to establish, the analysis seeks to identify trends that suggest an alignment between international trade instruments and domestic legislation developments.

The background features three stylized, light gray columns with rounded tops and bases, resembling classical architecture. A dark green diagonal line runs from the top right towards the bottom left. Below this line, a light gray diagonal band extends from the bottom left towards the top right. The bottom left corner is a solid dark green triangle.

# Chapter 3.

**Case studies**

The Ag-ERPs database was developed to capture environment-related provisions in RTAs that display a relationship between the environment and the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sectors. Covering 318 RTAs notified to the WTO between 1995–2022, the database highlights how environmental concerns are increasingly integrated into trade agreements.

These provisions address a range of issues, including biodiversity loss, deforestation, harmful fishing subsidies, and broader commitments to environmental protection and cooperation. According to the database, one-quarter of all Ag-ERPs target specific environmental concerns. Key focus areas include nature, biodiversity, and One Health (333 provisions), marine and coastal environments (278), and waste and recycling (203). Although provisions related to forestry and fisheries were once rare, their inclusion has surged significantly, growing tenfold per RTA on average between the 1995–2001 and 2018–2022 periods. This trend reflects the recognition of environmental sustainability as a core element of trade policy.

Against this background, the selection of Costa Rica, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa as case studies reflects their diverse economic and environmental contexts, providing valuable insights into the impact of Ag-ERPs. These countries share strong environmental commitments alongside dynamic trade policies – sometimes recently evolving – and export-oriented agricultural sectors, making them ideal for assessing how RTAs influence national sustainability strategies. The analysis also explores how domestic environmental policies are influenced by, or integrated into Ag-ERPs to support domestic policy frameworks and maintain competitiveness. Costa Rica is widely recognized for its ambitious climate change policies and sustainable resource management, while Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa represent emerging economies with significant agricultural and forestry sectors, each facing distinct challenges such as deforestation, fisheries management, and sustainable land use. Examining these cases allows for a comparative assessment of Ag-ERP implementation across different regulatory, economic, and agro-ecological conditions.

These four countries are characterized by an extensive and diverse inclusion of environment-related provisions in agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Their importance is underscored by their broad geographical representation, the high number of international and domestic environmental agreements they are party to, and the substantial volume and broad scope of Ag-ERPs they have implemented. Moreover, each country demonstrates significant coverage across specific categories of Ag-ERPs, making them particularly valuable for comparative analysis and the identification of policy patterns and best practices.

Collectively, the RTAs of these four countries account for 851 Ag-ERPs out of 5 807 included in the AgERP database, further highlighting their central role in addressing the nexus of trade and environment. A substantial portion of these provisions pertains specially to the management of water resources, chemical use in agriculture, as well as fisheries and forestry, highlighting the breadth of environmental dimensions addressed within their trade commitments.

## 3.1. Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a global leader in sustainability, having reversed deforestation, achieved 100 percent renewable electricity, and committed to net-zero emissions by 2050. Over the last decade, the country has made notable progress in decoupling environmental pressures from economic growth. However, challenges remain. Agriculture, fisheries and forestry issues include widespread use of pesticides, rising energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and potentially unsustainable exploitation of fisheries resources (OECD, 2023c).

As an export-driven economy with strong environmental commitments, it serves as a unique case to examine the impact of Ag-ERPs in RTAs on sustainable resource management. Costa Rica ranks among the top countries with over 448 Ag-ERPs in RTAs (Ag-ERPs database). Key agreements include the 2002 Canada-Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement (CCRFTA), which also promotes environmental sustainability through its side agreement, the Canada-Costa Rica Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (CCRAEC); the 2009 Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR),<sup>5</sup> aimed at boosting trade and investment while tackling labour and environmental concerns; the 2013 European Union Central American Association Agreement (EU-CAAA), and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Central America RTA,<sup>6</sup> both of which enhance trade, cooperation, political dialogue, and sustainable development.

### 3.1.1 Agriculture

Costa Rica's pesticide regulation stems from its high pesticide use intensity, which ranks among the highest in the OECD and Latin America and the Caribbean regions (OECD, 2023c). This concern has likely influenced domestic policies and trade-related environmental commitments, notably through RTAs like the CCRFTA and the CAFTA-DR – both of which include side agreements on environmental cooperation – as well as the 2013 EU-CAAA (SICE, 2013).

Domestically, the regulatory framework on pesticides was reinforced with the enactment of *Ley de Protección Fitosanitaria [Phytosanitary Protection Law]* (1997). Shortly thereafter, *Reglamento para el Registro de Productos Peligrosos [Regulation for the Registration of Hazardous Products]* (1999) and *Reglamento para el Manejo de Productos Peligrosos [Regulation for the Handling of Hazardous Products]* (2000) introduced controls on chemicals and other hazardous products (Jansen, 2017).

Costa Rica built on these efforts to enhance international cooperation on chemicals and pesticide management through its RTAs. For instance, in the context of CCRFTA and its side agreement (known as CCRAEC), Canada and Costa Rica held a Consultative Workshop in 2003 to explore the establishment of a domestic Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) (Government of Canada, 2016). Likewise, at the 2004 meeting of CCRFTA signatory parties, Costa Rica underscored the importance of managing chemical substances in agriculture, particularly within the coffee industry, reaffirming its commitment to “green production” and sustainable agriculture, and aligning with its domestic regulatory trajectory (Government of Canada, 2004).

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<sup>5</sup> RTA between Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and the United States of America.

<sup>6</sup> RTA between the European Union and Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

Pesticide and chemical management were also considered of relevance in the CAFTA-DR and in its Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA), which identified sound chemical management as a key area of cooperation. Interestingly, Costa Rica's commitment in the area of pesticide management became more evident in 2009, when the CAFTA-DR entered into force. That year, the country ratified the Rotterdam Convention, which mandates prior informed consent for hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade (SICE, 2014). This commitment was further reinforced by the EU-CAAA, which obligates parties to actively implement the provisions of the Convention (Article 287.4). Since then, Costa Rica has become an active member of the Convention, participating in various sessions and committees at the multilateral and regional level (IISD, 2025; Rotterdam Convention, 2023).

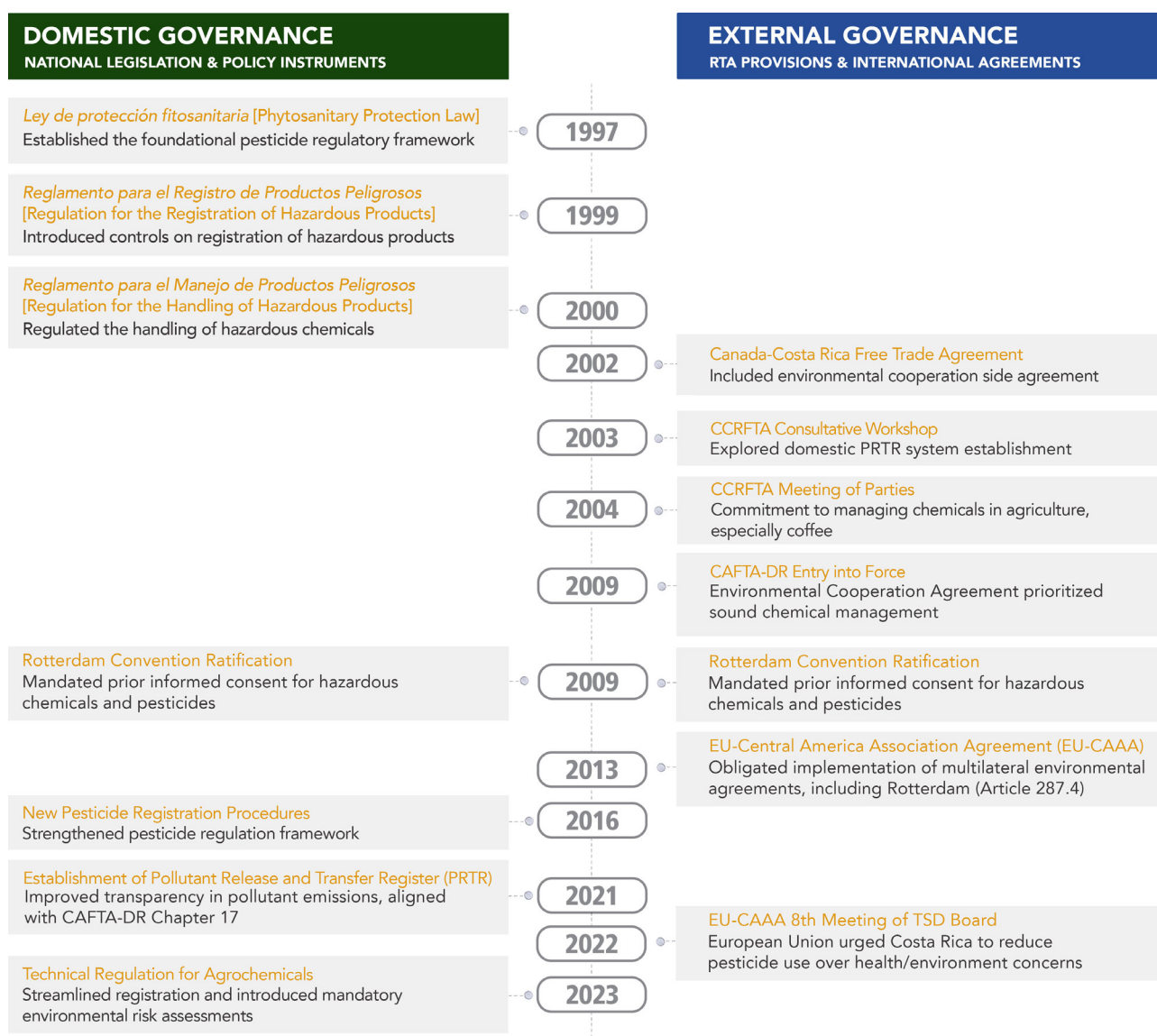
Building on this progress, in 2016, Costa Rica introduced new pesticide registration procedures (Executive Decree No. 40059 MAG-MINAE-S), strengthening the country's commitment to sound chemical management (Jansen, 2017). Subsequently, in 2021, the country officially established the domestic *Pollutant Release and Transfer Register* (PRTR, Decree No. 43058-S), marking a significant step towards greater transparency in pollutant emissions management that was initiated in 2003 in the context of CCRFTA. Notably, the preamble of the decree establishing the PRTR explicitly references Chapter 17 of CAFTA-DR, underscoring its alignment with trade commitments on environmental governance.

Despite these advancements, significant challenges persist. Many highly hazardous pesticides are still in use and some lack recent environmental risk assessments. These concerns were raised in 2022 at the 8th Meeting of the EU-CAAA Board on Trade and Sustainable Development, a platform established by the RTA to oversee the implementation of the agreement's provisions related to trade and sustainable development, with the European Union urging Costa Rica to enhance efforts to reduce pesticide use due to associated environmental and health risks, in line with its commitments under international agreements (European Union, 2022).

In response, Costa Rica adopted a *Reglamento Técnico [Technical Regulation]* for agrochemicals in 2022, streamlining pesticide registration and introducing mandatory environmental risk assessment to ensure that only environmentally and human health safe pesticides remain in use. After its entry into force, Costa Rica's State Phytosanitary Service (SFE) operationalized the registration process for synthetic pesticides, active ingredients of technical grade, adjuvants, physical carriers, and related substances. Additionally, Costa Rica has begun phasing out particularly hazardous pesticides. For instance, the use of chlorothalonil (a substance banned in the European Union) was banned by presidential decree on 30 November, 2023. While not explicitly linked to EU-CAAA implementation, the decrees fully align with the RTA's objectives.

As it emerges from the analysis, a significant portion of Costa Rica's pesticides legislation has been developed in response to obligations established under regional and international trade agreements, underscoring the strong influence that RTAs have had in shaping the country's domestic regulatory framework in this area.

Figure 2. Overview of agrochemicals-related policies and agreements of Costa Rica by year, level, and key provision



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### 3.1.2 Fisheries

Costa Rica's commitment to sustainable fisheries management predates its RTAs, reflecting a long-standing dedication to sustainable resource governance. With coastlines along both the Caribbean and the Pacific, the country's rich yet diverse marine ecosystems face pressures from unsustainable fishing practices, driving its strong regulatory approach.

A cornerstone of Costa Rica's fisheries management framework is Executive Decree 27919/MAG (1999), known as the *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing*, which adopted FAO's *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* to promote responsible fishing practices (UNCTAD, 2018). Another key measure is *Law No. 8059* of 2000, which formalized Costa Rica's ratification of the 1982 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), reinforcing the country's commitment to the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks through international cooperation. Additionally, the *Ley de Pesca y Acuicultura* [Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture] (2005) established a regulatory framework for the conservation, protection and sustainable use of hydrobiological resources, while regulating aquaculture and the commercialization of fisheries product. This law also prohibited fishing in national parks and biological reserves, while restricting activities in protected zones, wildlife refuges and wetlands.

Given the high priority placed on fisheries, the sector has consistently held a significant role in Costa Rica's RTAs. Fisheries was designated as a priority area for environmental protection during the First Meeting of the Signatory Parties of the CCRAEC in 2004 (OAS, 2004) and were further emphasized in the CAFTA-DR (Chapter 17), and its ECA (Article V), as well as in the China-Costa Rica RTA in 2010. Under the CAFTA-DR, the parties implemented activities to combat illegal trade in endangered species and protect wildlife (CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Program, 2025). Moreover, following the entry into force of the EU-CAAA – which provides extensive consideration for the sustainable management of marine resources – Costa Rica made significant progress in sustainable fisheries management. For instance, in line with the commitments undertaken under the agreement to foster the development of artisanal and small-scale fisheries (Article 59), Costa Rica adopted the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (2015) through *Executive Decree no. 39195 MAG-MINAE-MTSS*, recognizing the vital role of artisanal fisheries in food security and employment.

Likewise, further reinforcing the EU-CAAA's emphasis on monitoring and sustainable fisheries trade, Costa Rica ratified the *FAO Agreement on Port State Measures through Executive Decree No. 39299-REE* of 2015, enhancing compliance mechanisms against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This led Costa Rica to take substantial steps in the preparation of a national strategy and action plan to strengthen its position in this regard (FAO, 2024). Also, the country continued advancing transparency and sustainability efforts by signing an agreement with the Global Fishing Watch to publicly disclose vessel tracking data (Global Fishing Watch, 2025), and introduced the *Pura Vida* label, its first seafood and aquaculture collective trademark, to ensure compliance with social, economic, and environmental sustainability standards.

Figure 3. Overview of fisheries-related policies and agreements of Costa Rica by year, level, and key provision



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### 3.1.3 Forestry

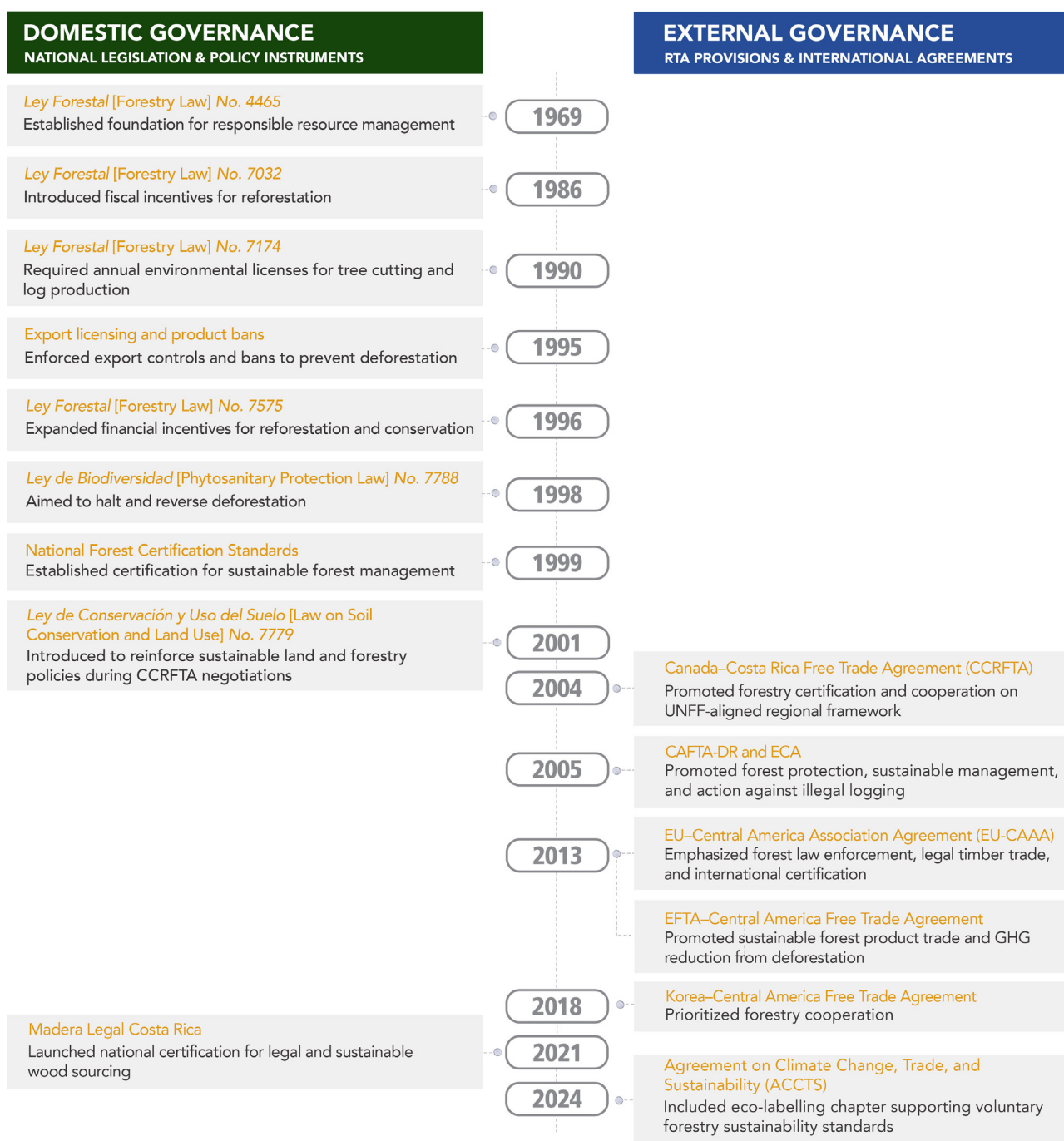
Costa Rica's commitment in forestry precedes its RTAs. One of the country's earliest forestry laws, *Ley Forestal* [Forestry Law] No. 4465 (1969), established the foundation for responsible resource management (IIED, 1997). This was followed by *Ley Forestal* [Forestry Law] No. 7032 (1986) and No. 7174 (1990), which introduced fiscal incentives for reforestation and required annual environmental licenses for tree cutting and log production.

Additional regulations enforced automatic export licenses and banned the export of specific products to curb deforestation. A significant turning point occurred in the late 1990s, when Costa Rica formalized payments for environmental services (PES) through the *Ley Forestal* [Forestry Law] No. 7575 of 1996, offering financial incentives for sustainable forest management. This approach was further reinforced by the *Ley de Biodiversidad* [Law on Biodiversity] No. 7788 of 1998, aimed at reversing net deforestation, and by the *Ley de Conservación y Uso del Suelo* [Law on Soil Conservation and Land Use] No. 7779 of 2001, which introduced specific provisions on forest and land use management.

In 1999, Costa Rica established national certification standards for sustainable forest management (Ministerial Decree No. 27998-MINAE), setting a precedent for future trade agreements. Under the CCRFTA, the First Meeting of the Signatory Parties in 2004 prioritized cooperation on certifying the country's forestry industry. As a result, Costa Rica proposed a joint initiative with Canada to develop a regional framework aligned with the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) international forestry strategy (OAS, 2004).

Under the CAFTA-DR and its ECA, the parties prioritized forest protection and conservation, with the *Environmental Cooperation Program* promoting sustainable management of wildlife, forests, protected areas, and ecosystems, including measures against illegal logging (OAS, 2010). Similarly, the EU-CAAA emphasized forest law enforcement and governance, and trade of legally sourced and sustainable forest products (Article 289). The agreement references key international instruments, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) for timber, the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreements, and other certification schemes for sustainably harvested forest products.

**Figure 4.** Overview of forestry-related policies and agreements of Costa Rica by year, level, and key provision



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The EFTA–Central America Free Trade Agreement (2013) reinforced these efforts, committing countries to promote trade in sustainable forest-based products, sustainable management of forest resources, and GHG emissions reduction from deforestation (Article 9.8). Likewise, the Korea–Central America Free Trade Agreement (2018) prioritized forestry cooperation (Chapter 17).

Building on previous initiatives, Costa Rica also launched the “Madera Legal Costa Rica” (2021), a voluntary national certification ensuring the legal and sustainable sourcing of wood (Madera Legal, 2025). Further advancing its sustainability agenda, in 2024, Costa Rica joined the Agreement on Climate Change, Trade, and Sustainability (ACCTS), signed by Costa Rica, New Zealand and Switzerland, which includes an ecolabelling chapter to strengthen voluntary sustainability standards in the forestry sector (Chapter 5).

## 3.2 Kenya

Kenya, with over 84 percent of its land classified as arid or semi-arid, is highly vulnerable to climate change and faces significant environmental challenges.<sup>7</sup> Sustainable management of natural resources such as water, fisheries and forests is essential for the country's long-term resilience. In response, Kenya has actively participated in various domestic, regional, and international initiatives to address these issues, which are reflected in the trade agreements the country has negotiated.

Key among these is the treaty establishing the East African Community (EAC) and the RTA with the United Kingdom. The EAC Treaty, in effect since 2000, promotes regional cooperation in areas like water management, fisheries and forestry, with compliance overseen by the East African Court of Justice. The United Kingdom-Kenya RTA (2020), Kenya's first major trade deal outside of Africa, aims to support sustainable development, economic growth, and good governance by providing Kenya with significant market access and emphasizing sustainable development.

Kenya's participation in these RTAs reflects its broader commitment to integrating environmental considerations into trade policy. These agreements contain specific provisions addressing water resources, conservation practices, and Kenya's efforts to collaborate in and support multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). According to the Ag-ERPs database, Kenya has 36 types of Ag-ERPs in the EAC Treaty and 33 in the United Kingdom-Kenya RTA – six of which are on water management, four on fisheries, and two on forestry. This underscores a growing trend in aligning trade agreements with environmental objectives at both the regional and income-group level.

### 3.2.1 Agriculture

Kenya has long grappled with critical challenges related to severe drought, desertification and water scarcity, posing significant threats to agricultural resilience, productivity and food security (WMO, 2024). In response, the country has progressively developed a robust legal and policy framework, integrating water management objectives into regional trade agreement.

Agricultural cooperation is a central pillar of the EAC's integration agenda. The EAC Treaty underscores the importance of water for the agriculture sector, calling for joint actions to combat drought and desertification (Article 105). It promotes regional cooperation in irrigation programs, preservation of traditional irrigation systems, improved water catchment management, and sustainable land use (Article 109). The treaty also encourages the development of policies to protect ecosystems and establish common environmental standards to curb water pollution (Articles 111 and 112).

Following the establishment of the EAC, Kenya introduced the *Water Act of 2002*, a landmark law that continues to underpin national water governance and compliance enforcement. This was followed by ongoing regional dialogue, culminating in the *EAC Agricultural and Rural Development Policy (2006)* and the *EAC Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy (2005–2030)*. These initiatives complement the EAC Treaty by advancing regional cooperation in irrigation, water management, infrastructure maintenance, and research and development in irrigation technologies (EAC, 2005).

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<sup>7</sup> Kenya's updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are available at: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/2025-05/KENYAS%20SECOND%20NATIONALLY%20DETERMINED%20CONTRIBUTION%202031\\_2035.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/2025-05/KENYAS%20SECOND%20NATIONALLY%20DETERMINED%20CONTRIBUTION%202031_2035.pdf).

Building on these efforts, Kenya introduced the *National Water Master Plan* (NWMP) in 2014, outlining a roadmap for achieving water security by 2030. In 2016, the *Water Act* was updated to address emerging challenges. These legislative advances – coupled with the increasing regional prioritization of water management within the EAC framework – illustrates how EAC integration has influenced Kenya’s policy evolution.

The United Kingdom-Kenya RTA integrates water management into trade and environmental policies. Recognizing water’s socioeconomic, agricultural, and environmental significance, the agreement emphasizes sustainable irrigation systems and water harvesting strategies (Article 83), advanced irrigation technologies (Article 67), and equitable transboundary water management (Article 91). It also promotes cooperation in hydropower, water catchment protection, infrastructure development, integrated resource management, public-private partnerships, technology, innovation, and pollution control. Cooperation is also aimed at the development of the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks (Article 91).

Since the entry into force of the United Kingdom-Kenya RTA, Kenya’s water-related legal and policy framework has undergone significant transformation through the introduction of key legal and policy instruments. These include the 2021 *National Water Policy* (NWP), the *Water Resources Regulations* (WRR) 2021, the *Irrigation (Amendment) Act* 2022, and the *Water (Amendment) Act* 2024. Collectively, these reforms align with and reinforce the RTA’s objectives by promoting sustainable resource management and integrated water resource management.

**Figure 5. Overview of water-related policies and agreements of Kenya by year, level, and key provision**



**Source:** Authors’ own elaboration.

The 2021 NWP lays the foundation for a comprehensive and sustainable water management system, covering water protection, hydraulic engineering, dam safety, and residual water security. The WRRs regulate water resource management by mandating permits for abstraction, diversion and storage to ensure sustainability and compliance. The *Irrigation (Amendment) Act 2022* clarifies the role of the government in irrigation management, policy formulation, and water efficiency, while fostering innovation and advanced irrigation technologies. Meanwhile, the *Water (Amendment) Act 2024* aims to enhance service delivery and encourage private investment through public-private partnerships. In this regard, it should be noted that in April 2024, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland announced funding to assist Kenyan counties in accessing green finance, with potential investments in sectors including water infrastructure (Government of the United Kingdom, 2024).

### 3.2.2 Fisheries

Fisheries have long been a cornerstone of Kenya's economy, with regulatory frameworks predating and shaping its regional trade agreements. The foundation was laid by the *Fisheries Act of 1989*, which introduced the legal basis for licensing, compliance enforcement, and penalties for non-compliance. Recognizing the sector's importance, Kenya became a founding member of the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) dedicated to sustainable fisheries in Lake Victoria. With the formation of the EAC, the LVFO became an integral institution of the Community,<sup>8</sup> shaping fisheries and aquaculture policy in the entire region.

The EAC Treaty underscores the importance of fisheries, emphasizing their role in food security (Article 110), regional cooperation (Article 105), and the sustainable use of marine and inland aquaculture water resources (Article 114). It also promotes harmonized regulations on marine parks, reserves, wetlands, and fisheries investments.

Building on this framework and likely influenced by negotiations for the EAC-EU RTA, Kenya enacted the *Fisheries Management and Development Act* in 2016. This law strengthened the conservation, management, and development of aquatic resources, while aligning national policy with EU standards to facilitate market access (WTO, 2012). Moreover, in 2017 Kenya became party to the FAO Port State Measures Agreement.

Kenya's commitment to sustainable fisheries management was further reinforced by the 2020 United Kingdom-Kenya RTA, modelled on the 2014 EAC-EU RTA framework. The agreement recognizes fisheries as crucial to livelihoods, food security and economic growth. It promotes sustainable practices in marine, inland, and aquaculture fisheries (Article 51) while ensuring alignment with national and international commitments, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Article 52).

The United Kingdom-Kenya RTA calls for a precautionary approach to fishing, including seasonal and gear restrictions to prevent overfishing (Article 54), and promotes Kenya's participation in international bodies like the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). It places strong emphasis on IUU fishing, promoting monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) in combating it through vessel management, reporting systems, and enforcement measures such as confiscation and prosecution (Articles 53 and 55).

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<sup>8</sup> Following the review of the convention establishing the LVFO in 2016, the organization's scope and mandate expanded to include all the EAC Partner States, extended its focus beyond Lake Victoria into covering all water bodies in the EAC region, and gave aquaculture more prominence as a priority area in addition to capture fisheries.

The agreement also extends to inland fisheries and aquaculture, emphasizing environmental protection, robust regulatory frameworks, and improved market access (Article 56). Further to this, the agreement encourages Kenya to develop sustainable aquaculture, export certification, and capacity building with UK assistance (Article 88). Aquaculture cooperation includes surveillance and intellectual property protection, including eco-labelling, as well as the promotion of small-scale fishers, gender equity, and socioeconomic development (Article 89).

To advance these commitments, Kenya introduced the 2024 *Fisheries Management and Development (General) Regulations*, operationalizing and updating the provisions of the 2016 Act. These regulations strengthen conservation efforts, address IUU fishing, protect endangered species, establish marine protected areas, and promote community participation in resource management.

**Figure 6.** Overview of fisheries-related policies and agreements of Kenya by year, level, and key provision



**Source:** Authors' own elaboration.

### 3.2.3 Forestry

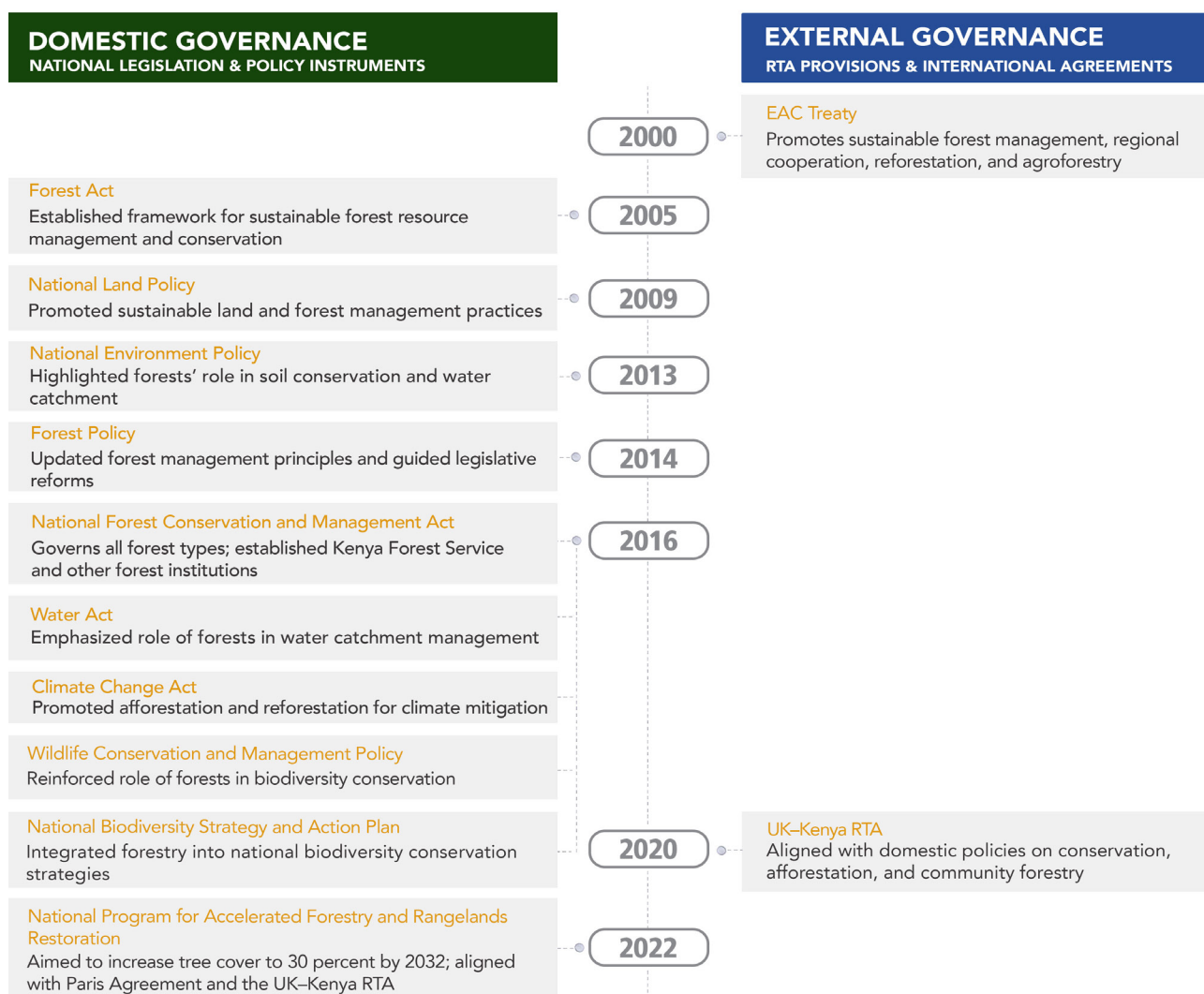
Kenya has consistently prioritized forestry within its sustainable development agenda, aligning its domestic policies and regulations with the commitments outlined in its RTAs. Chapter 19 of the EAC Treaty emphasizes sustainable management and conservation of forest resources with a focus on promoting sustainable forest management practices as an environmental objective of the Community (Article 111.2[c]). The Treaty also highlights the need for regional cooperation and policy coordination in forestry, particularly in adopting environmentally sound management techniques to combat land degradation and enhance forest governance through joint actions, such as tree planting, afforestation and reforestation (Article 112.2[e] and [m]). Moreover, the treaty promotes collaboration among EAC members to achieve sustainable forestry conservation, including exchanging policies on natural forests, commercial plantations, and reserves, promoting common forestry practices, sharing training and research facilities, managing catchment forests, and integrating agriculture and forestry through agroforestry (Article 114).

Over time, Kenya has developed mutually supportive domestic policies that have progressively strengthened sustainable forest management in alignment with EAC objectives. In 2005, for example, Kenya enacted the *Forest Act* to shift towards sustainable forest resource management and conservation. This was followed by the *National Land Policy* (2009), which promotes sustainable land and forest management practices.

The *Forest Act* was later revised through the *Forest Policy* of 2014 and replaced by the *National Forest Conservation and Management Act* of 2016. This legislation governs public, community, and private forests, ensuring their sustainable use and protection. The 2016 Act strengthens forest governance by reaffirming or establishing key institutions, including the Kenya Forest Service, the Forest Conservation and Management Trust Fund, the Kenya Forestry College, and Kenya Forestry Research Institute. It also emphasizes international cooperation in forest management.

Kenya’s forestry policy framework also expanded through strategic initiatives that link the sector’s role in economic growth and sustainability. *Kenya Vision 2030* identifies forestry’s role in industries, livelihoods, and climate resilience. The *National Environment Policy* (2013) and the *Water Act* (2016) highlight forests’ role in soil conservation and water catchment

**Figure 7.** Overview of forestry-related policies and agreements of Kenya by year, level, and key provision



**Source:** Authors’ owns elaboration.

management. The Climate Change Act (2016) promotes afforestation and reforestation as tools for climate mitigation tools, while the *Wildlife Conservation and Management Policy* (2017) reinforces forestry's role in biodiversity conservation.

Many of the key principles embedded in Kenya's domestic regulatory framework were later reflected in its RTA. In particular, the United Kingdom-Kenya RTA reflects Kenya's emphasis on sustainable environmental and biodiversity management, mirroring the *National Forest Conservation and Management Act* of 2016 and *Kenya Vision 2030*. These domestic policies prioritize conservation, afforestation, and community participation in forest management (in alignment with the United Kingdom-Kenya RTA, Article 92.2[b] and [l]). Finally, in 2022, Kenya launched the *National Program for Accelerated Forestry and Rangelands Restoration* aiming to increase tree cover from 10 percent to 30 percent by restoring 10.6 million hectares and planting 15 billion seedlings by 2032. This initiative supports Kenya's commitment under the Paris Agreement, targeting a 32 percent reduction in GHG emissions by 2030, and aligns with the commitments outlined in the UK-Kenya RTA. In this regard, the UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (UK PACT) programme, aligned with the United Kingdom-Kenya RTA's sustainability objectives, serves as a complementary mechanism providing technical and capacity support in sectors such as forestry and land use, thereby reinforcing the trade agreement's environmental dimensions (UK PACT, 2025).

## 3.3 Malaysia

Malaysia – a biodiverse country with extensive coastlines and tropical rainforests – relies on agriculture, fisheries and forestry as key drivers of its development. As the world's second-largest producer of palm oil and with fisheries playing a vital role in rural development and food security, the country faces ongoing challenges in balancing resource use with sustainability, biodiversity protection, and combating IUU fishing.

In response to these challenges, Malaysia has increasingly integrated environmental considerations into its trade policy. Its trade agreements collectively include over 268 Ag-ERPs. These provisions reflect Malaysia's growing commitment to aligning its economic interests with environmental sustainability, particularly in the governance and management of its natural resources, such as water. This approach not only supports the country's development goals but also enhances its compliance with evolving global sustainability standards.

### 3.3.1 Agriculture

Water pollution has long been a major environmental challenge in Malaysia, with legal frameworks dating back to the early 20th century (Mustafa, 2022). Key legislations include the *1920 Waters Act* for river control (later revised in 1989), the *1953 Irrigation Areas Act* on water pollution (also revised in 1989), the *1960 Land Conservation Act* for hill land conservation and the protection of soil from erosion. The *Environmental Quality Act (EQA)* of 1974 serves as the backbone of Malaysia's environmental policy, regulating pollution control, waste management, and environmental protection.

For several decades, water management regulations were secondary to land-use policies aimed at agriculture expansion (Mustafa, 2022). However, the early 2000s marked a shift, as Malaysia's participation in RTAs brought renewed focus to environmental and water management. Though often broad and non-binding, these agreements have played a role in shaping Malaysia's national water policies by fostering greater alignment with international best practices.

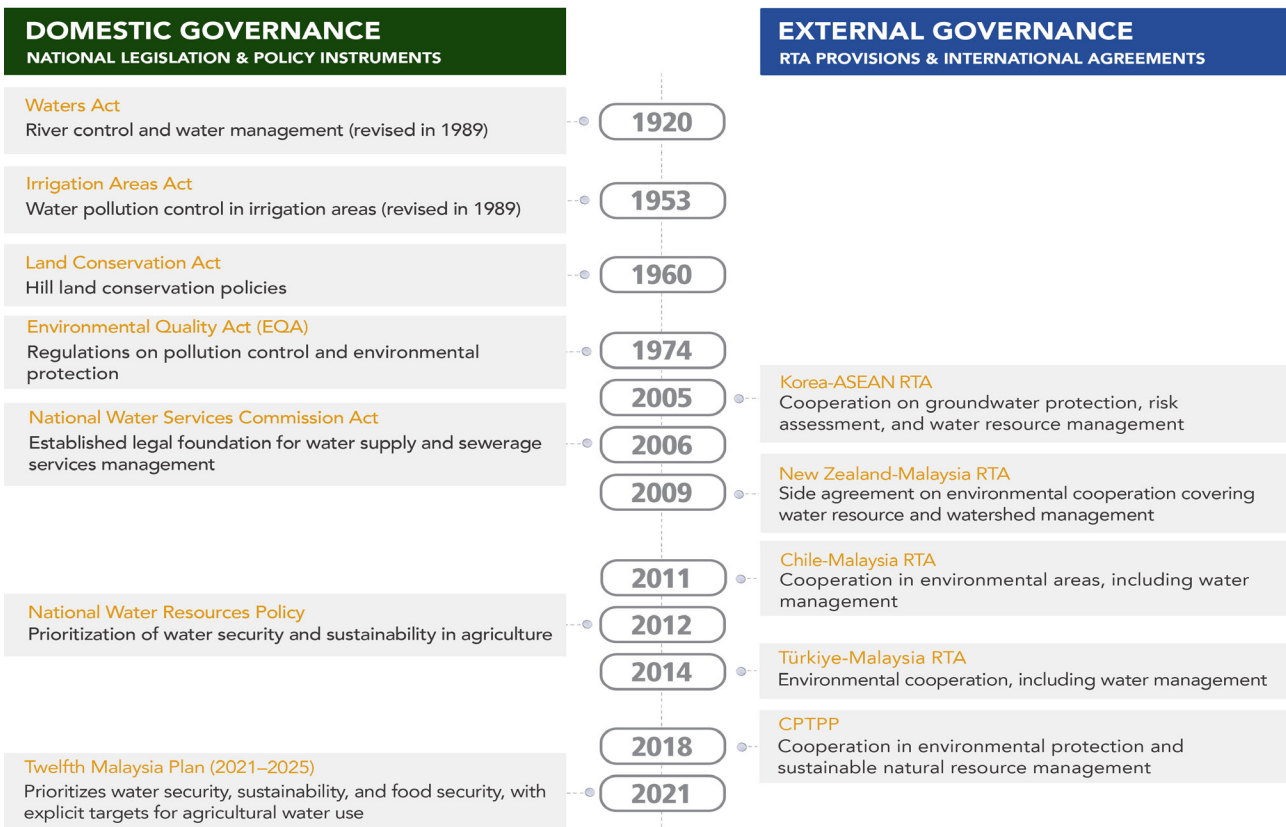
One example is the 2005 ASEAN-Republic of Korea, an RTA, which reinforced commitments to water resource management (Article 17 of its Annex). Shortly after, Malaysia adopted the *National Water Services Commission Act* (2006), establishing a legal foundation for managing water supply and sewage services. The act granted the *National Water Services Commission* to oversee service regulation, protect consumers, resolve dispute, and manage water-related funding mechanisms.

Environmental cooperation provisions continued to appear in later RTAs. The *2009 New Zealand-Malaysia RTA* included a side agreement on environmental cooperation (Article 3), specifically referencing water resource and watershed management. Similarly, the *2011 Malaysia-Chile Agreement* (Article 9.5), initiated in 2007, called for collaboration on environmental areas of mutual concern, including water management. This trend in the country's RTAs likely influenced Malaysia's 2012 *National Water Resources Policy*, which prioritizes water security and sustainability in agriculture through conservation and stakeholder collaboration.

In the same vein, the Türkiye-Malaysia RTA (2014) further reinforced environmental cooperation, including water management (Article 9.10), while the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) highlighted the importance of enhanced cooperation in protecting and conserving the environment and sustainably

managing natural resources, supporting broader sustainable development goals (Article 20.2). Malaysia’s commitment to water resource management, as reflected in the references included in its RTAs, is further reaffirmed by recent national initiatives. Notably, the country has introduced the Water Sector Transformation 2040 (WST 2040) Agenda under the Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021–2025), which places water security at the centre of long-term planning. The agenda emphasizes the need to strengthen water resources governance as a key component of sustainable development.

**Figure 8. Overview of water-related policies and agreements of Malaysia by year, level, and key provision**



**Source:** Authors’ owns elaboration.

### 3.3.2 Fisheries

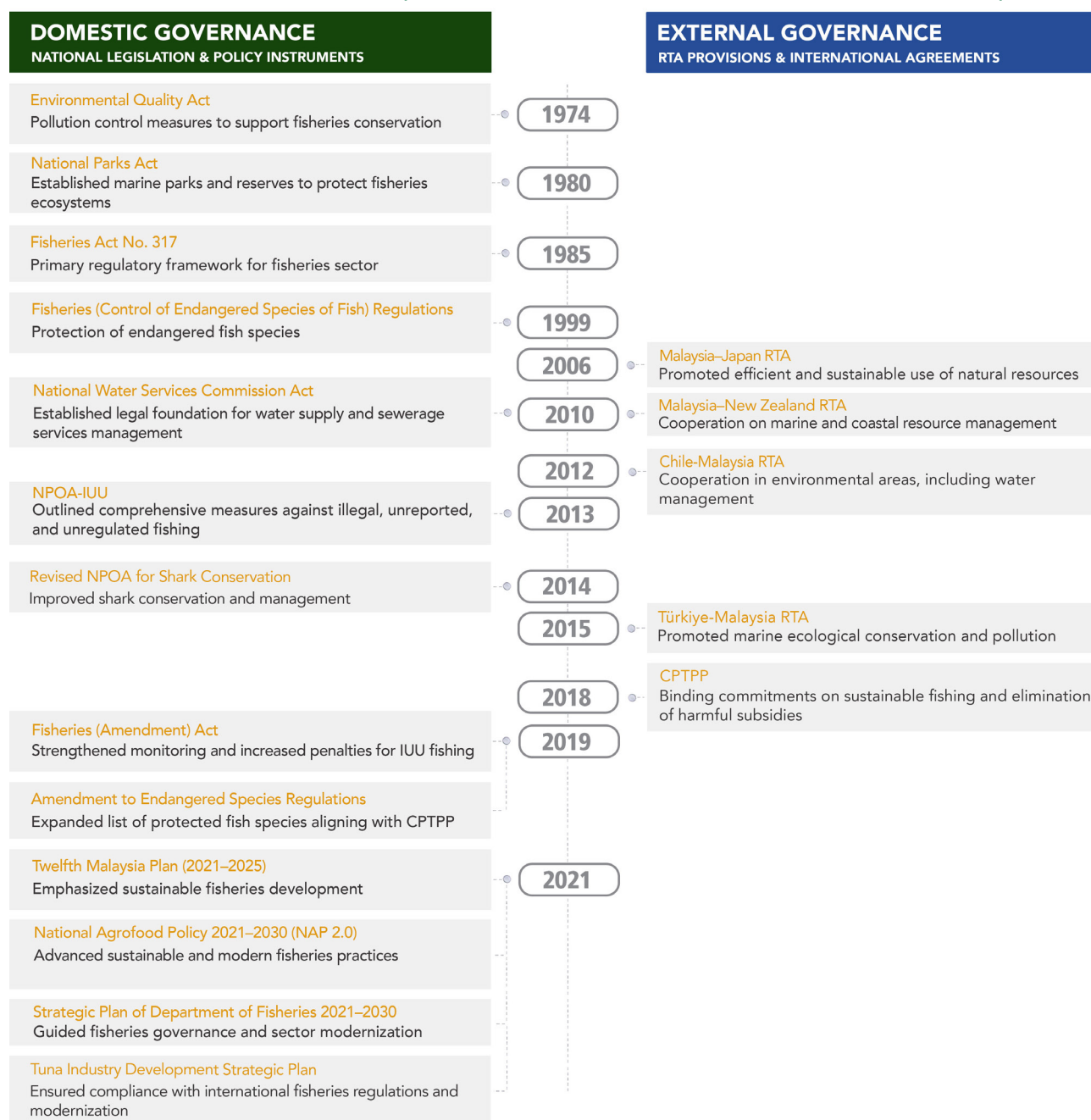
Malaysia’s fisheries sector is vital to its economy and is a primary source of animal protein for its population (Masud *et al.*, 2022; Mustafa, 2022). Key legislation governing the sector includes the *Environmental Quality Act* (1974), *Fisheries Act No. 317* (1985), and *Fisheries (Control of Endangered Species of Fish) Regulations* (1999). These laws collectively support fisheries conservation through pollution control, the establishment of marine parks and reserves, and a regulatory framework for sustainable fisheries management and the protection of endangered fish species.

Recognizing the sector’s significance, Malaysia has progressively integrated fisheries provisions into its RTAs. The 2006 accompanying “Implementing Agreement” of the Malaysia-Japan RTA incorporates references to sustainable development of fisheries as one of the basic principles for cooperation (Article 20), while emphasizing “efficient and sustainable utilization of natural resources” as a key area of collaboration (Article 21 a.ii). The 2010 Malaysia-New Zealand RTA calls for cooperation on “marine and coastal

resource management” (Article 3.5). Similarly, the 2012 Chile-Malaysia RTA and 2015 Türkiye-Malaysia RTA emphasize “marine and coastal ecological conservation and pollution control” (respectively, Article 9.5[g], and Article 9.10[g]).

In parallel with these agreements and supporting them, Malaysia introduced several key policies and regulatory initiatives. In 2013, the *National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (NPOA-IUU)* was launched, outlining comprehensive measures to combat IUU fishing. It includes responsibilities for flag, coastal, and port states, market-related measures, and support for developing countries. In 2014, a revision of the *National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks* improved shark conservation and management measures.

**Figure 9. Overview of fisheries-related policies and agreements of Malaysia by year, level, and key provision**



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

While these agreements may have played a role in advancing Malaysia's fisheries sustainability policies, the most significant legislative reforms came in the context of the CPTPP. Under Chapter 20, the CPTPP introduced binding commitments on promotion of sustainable fishing including stock recovery, bycatch reduction, marine species conservation, and they recognize the importance of elimination of harmful subsidies (Article 20.16). In response, Malaysia enacted the *Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2019*, revising the 1985 *Fisheries Act* to strengthen monitoring and increase penalties for IUU fishing. Moreover, a 2019 amendment to the *Control of Endangered Species of Fish (1999)* further expanded the list of protected species, aligning with CPTPP conservation requirements. In this regard, Malaysia's participation in the 2021 CPTPP Environment Committee meeting further underscored the country's commitment to implementing Article 20.16, contributing to regional dialogue on subsidy notification procedures and reinforcing its alignment with the agreement's environmental objectives (APF Canada, 2021).

In the same vein, the *Twelfth Plan (2021–2025)*, *National Agrofood Policy 2021–2030 (NAP 2.0)*, and *Strategic Plan of the Department of Fisheries 2021–2030*, all emphasize sustainable fisheries development. The *Tuna Industry Development Strategic Plan (2021–2030)* ensures compliance with international fisheries regulations and promotes the modernization of fishing vessels, reinforcing CPTPP sustainability objectives (WTO, 2023). These developments highlight how Malaysia's trade commitments – particularly under the CPTPP – have been a catalyst for comprehensive regulatory and policy advancements in fisheries governance.

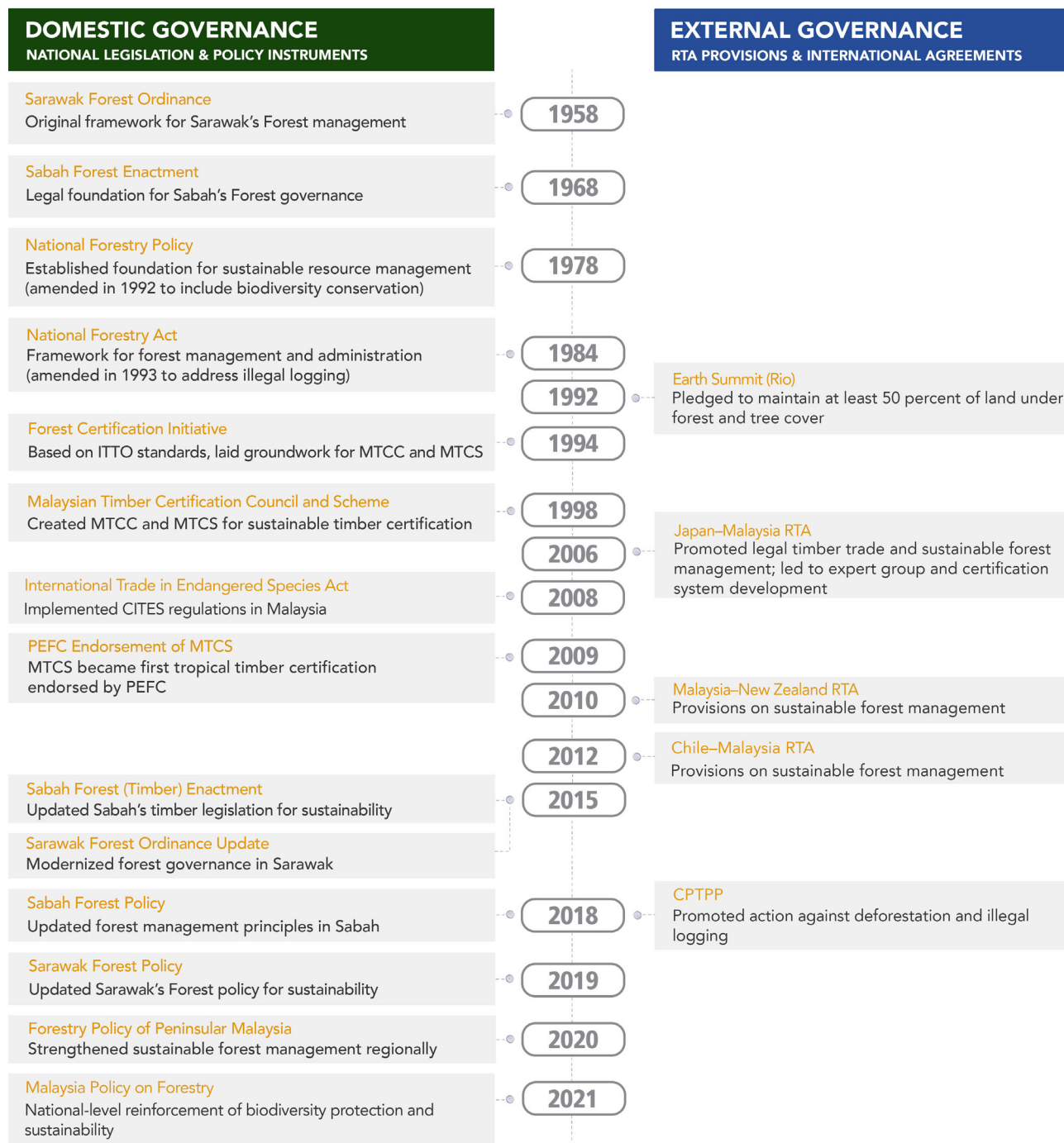
### 3.3.3 Forestry

Malaysia has long pursued a dual approach to forestry, balancing economic development with environmental conservation. This strategy is reflected in its regulatory framework, shaped by domestic priorities and international commitments.

The foundation of Malaysia's forestry legal framework lies in the *National Forestry Policy (1978, amended in 1992)*, which prioritizes biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management. This policy is reinforced by the *National Forestry Act (1984, amended 1993)*, which establishes regulations for forest management and enforcement against illegal logging. Given Malaysia's federal structure, the states of Sabah and Sarawak, which hold significant forest reserves, operate under distinct legal frameworks. Sabah follows the *Forest Enactment 1968* and *Forest (Timber) Enactment 2015*, while Sarawak transitioned from the *Forest Ordinance 1958* to the *Forest Ordinance 2015*, both reinforcing sustainability and responsible forestry practices (Mustafa, 2022).

Malaysia's engagement in international initiatives has further strengthened its domestic forestry governance. At the 1992 Earth Summit, it pledged to maintain at least 50 percent of its landmass under forest and tree cover, leading to the establishment of forest certification mechanisms in 1994 based on the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) standards (Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia, 2023). These efforts resulted in the creation of the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) and the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) in 1998 (FAO, 2025a). By 2009, the MTCS became the first tropical timber certification scheme in the region to receive endorsement by the programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) (MTCC, 2025). Moreover, aligning with sustainable forest management principles, Malaysia implemented the *International Trade in Endangered Species Act* in 2008 to enforce CITES regulations.

Figure 10. Overview of forestry-related policies and agreements of Malaysia by year, level, and key provision



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

In parallel, Malaysia has progressively integrated forestry provisions into its RTAs,<sup>9</sup> positioning itself as a leader in sustainable forest management. During the 2006 Japan-Malaysia RTA negotiations, Malaysia emphasized its commitment to sustainable forestry practices (MOFA of Japan, 2003). Moreover, following the signing of the agreement, Malaysia reaffirmed its dedication to legal timber trade and sustainable forest management in the Joint Statement, leading to the establishment of a bilateral expert group and institutional support for the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) and the Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB) to develop a national certification system for the wood-based industry (MOFA of Japan, 2005). In the same vein, the Malaysia-New Zealand RTA (2010) and Chile-Malaysia RTA (2012) include provisions on sustainable forest management.<sup>10</sup>

Further commitments were introduced under the CPTPP, which expanded forestry cooperation. Article 20.15 promotes joint efforts against deforestation and forest degradation, while Article 20.17 calls for measures to prevent illegal logging through compliance with CITES and participation in global forestry initiatives. Though Malaysia's forestry laws already aligned with these commitments, the CPTPP provided impetus for stronger enforcement mechanisms. In response, Malaysia introduced the *Sabah Forest Policy 2018*, the *Sarawak Forest Policy 2019*, and the *Forestry Policy of Peninsular Malaysia 2020*. Lastly, in 2021, it launched the *Malaysia Policy on Forestry*, further reinforcing sustainable forest management and biodiversity protection.

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, see Article 53 of the ASEAN-Japan RTA (2008), Article 9 of the Annex to the ASEAN-Korea RTA (2010), Article 6 of the ASEAN-India RTA (2010), and Article 16.2 of the Malaysia-Australia RTA (2013).

<sup>10</sup> Article 3 of the New Zealand-Malaysia Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, and Article 9.3 of the Malaysia-Chile RTA.

## 3.4. South Africa

South Africa faces sustainability and resource management challenges, particularly related to water scarcity and the escalating impacts of climate change. Due to its geographical diversity, ranging from arid regions to fertile valleys and a long coastline along two the Atlantic and Indian oceans, the country relies on effective resource management.

Internationally, South Africa's dedication to sustainability is reflected in its participation in a series of key trade and cooperation agreements. These include the 1999 RTA with the European Union (EU-South Africa RTA), the 2016 RTA between the European Union and the South African Development Community (SADC) (EU-SADC RTA), the 2019 RTA between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Southern African Customs Union Member States and Mozambique (UK-SACUM RTA), and the various protocols adopted under the 1992 SADC Treaty.<sup>11</sup> These frameworks promote not only economic integration but also shared responsibilities in environmental stewardship and sustainable development.

South Africa's commitment to sustainable trade is reflected in the inclusion of 108 Ag-ERPs within these trade agreements. These provisions promote environmentally responsible agricultural practices and align trade policy with ecological goals. Key Ag-ERPs in agreements with the European Union focus on conserving fishery resources, protecting natural reserves, and managing water resources and transboundary waterways sustainably.

### 3.4.1 Agriculture

South Africa's agricultural sector faces major water-related challenges, including scarcity, increasing demand, climate change impacts, and pollution (Bwapwa, 2018; de Clercq, de Witt and Laker, 2021). These issues are reflected in its legal and policy framework, which integrates water governance provisions from RTAs and other international agreements.

The foundation of South Africa's water governance lies in its early domestic legal instruments. The 1996 *Water Quality Guidelines* set standards to protect public health and ecosystems, also in agricultural water use. This was followed by the *Water Services Act* (1997), which established a regulatory framework for local water management, ensuring accountability and equitable access. In 1998, the *National Water Act* introduced a comprehensive approach to water resource management, covering water abstraction, quality control, and ecological protection (FAO, 2025b). These measures align with the principles of equitable water use and environmental sustainability that are promoted through the *SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses* (1995, revised 2000) (SADC, 2002).

The *SADC Protocol*, South Africa's earliest international commitment to water governance, promotes regional cooperation, equitable water use, and environmental protection by requiring information exchange and consultation on projects affecting shared watercourses. This protocol has played a role in shaping South Africa's national water management strategies, ensuring alignment between domestic policies and broader regional objectives, particularly in ecosystem preservation and pollution prevention. For instance, under the *SADC Protocol*, South Africa has actively contributed to transboundary water management, entering multiple agreements on international rivers and participating in the establishment of river basin organizations (RBOs) to facilitate cross-border coordination.<sup>12</sup>

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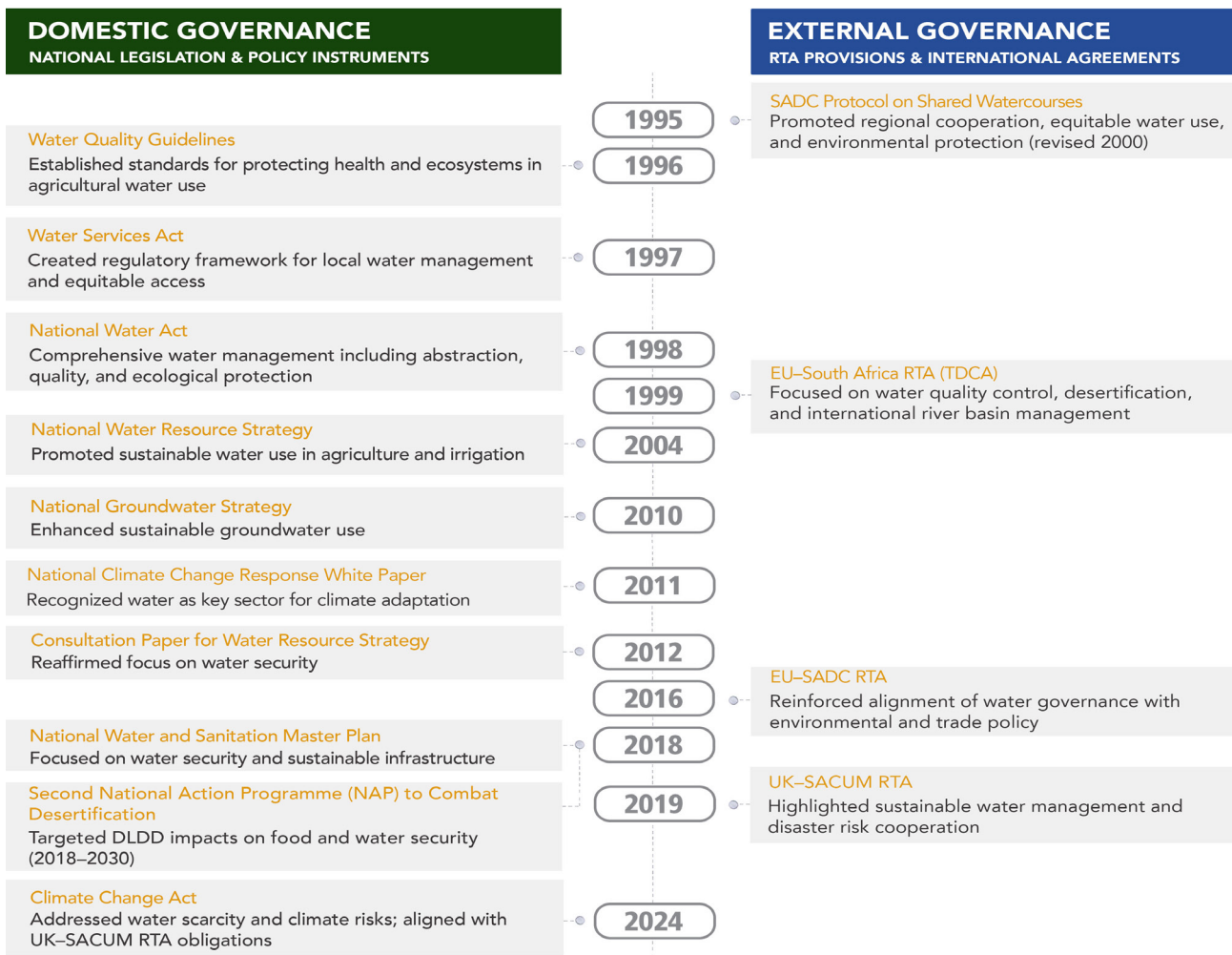
<sup>11</sup> The SADC Protocols are legally binding documents adopted under Article 22 of the SADC Treaty. For each area of cooperation, they spell out the objectives, scope, and institutional mechanisms for cooperation and integration.

<sup>12</sup> A notable example of such cooperation is the 2023 Memorandum of Understanding between the Incomati and Maputo Watercourse Commission (INMACOM) and the SADC Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI), aimed at promoting the equitable utilization of the Incomati and Maputo Basin's water resources.

South Africa’s water policies have been further reinforced through its participation in international trade agreements. The EU-South Africa RTA (1999) emphasized cooperation on water quality control, international river basin management, and desertification (Article 84.3), aligning with South Africa’s evolving regulatory framework. Building on these foundations, South Africa refined its water management framework through the *National Water Resource Strategy* (2004) and the *National Groundwater Strategy* (2010), both of which enhanced sustainable water use for agriculture and irrigation. Later, a 2012 consultation paper on a renewed *Water Resource Strategy* reaffirmed the country’s focus on water security, leading to the *National Water and Sanitation Master Plan* (2018).

Subsequent trade agreements, such as the EU-SADC RTA (2016) and the UK-SACUM RTA (2019) further strengthened the link between water governance and environmental policy. For instance, Annex VII, Articles 4 and 5 of the UK-SACUM RTA, highlight sustainable water resource management, particularly in addressing floods and droughts risks and enhancing cooperation on desertification (Annex VII, Article 4.2[a]). These provisions align with South Africa’s climate-resilient water governance strategies and broader policy framework.

**Figure 11.** Overview of water-related policies and agreements of South Africa by year, level, and key provision



**Source:** Authors’ own elaboration.

National climate policy also reinforces the link between domestic water management and trade obligations. The 2011 *National Climate Change Response White Paper* identified water as a priority sector for adaptation, while the *Second National Action Programme (NAP) to Combat Desertification (2018–2030)*, addressed desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD) in connection with food and water security. Most recently, the 2024 *Climate Change Act* was introduced to address water scarcity and climate-related risks. Together, these initiatives reflect South Africa's commitments to integrating international trade commitments, illustrating the growing intersection of trade agreements and South Africa's water governance.

### 3.4.2 Fisheries

South Africa's fisheries sector plays a vital role in its economy, food security, and employment, reinforcing its commitment to sustainable resource management at both domestic and regional levels (SADC, 2017). Its regulatory framework has evolved in tandem with international trade commitments, ensuring compliance with global sustainability standards.

The foundation of South Africa's fisheries governance management lies in the *Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA)* of 1998, which has been amended multiple times to strengthen fisheries management and conservation. This *MLRA* adopts a precautionary approach, governing subsistence, recreational, and commercial fishing while promoting biodiversity conservation, pollution control, and equitable industry participation.

The 1999 EU-South Africa RTA reinforced these commitments by promoting cooperation on sustainable resource management (Article 62). While the EU-South Africa RTA did not explicitly address IUU fishing, South Africa's increasing seafood trade with the European Union led to stronger compliance measures. These were reinforced after the 2008 IUU Fishing Regulation of the European Union was adopted, providing opportunities for South Africa to enhance fisheries monitoring, enforcement, and catch certification systems. In the same vein, the 2008 "Statement of Commitment to Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing", signed by SADC Ministers, reinforced regional and interregional cooperation to eliminate IUU fishing and strengthen fisheries' governance (SADC, 2023). Consequently, amendments to the *MLRA* introduced stricter sustainability measures and quota allocations, ensuring that South African fisheries policies adhered to international best practices, thus retaining access to the EU market (SADC, 2017).

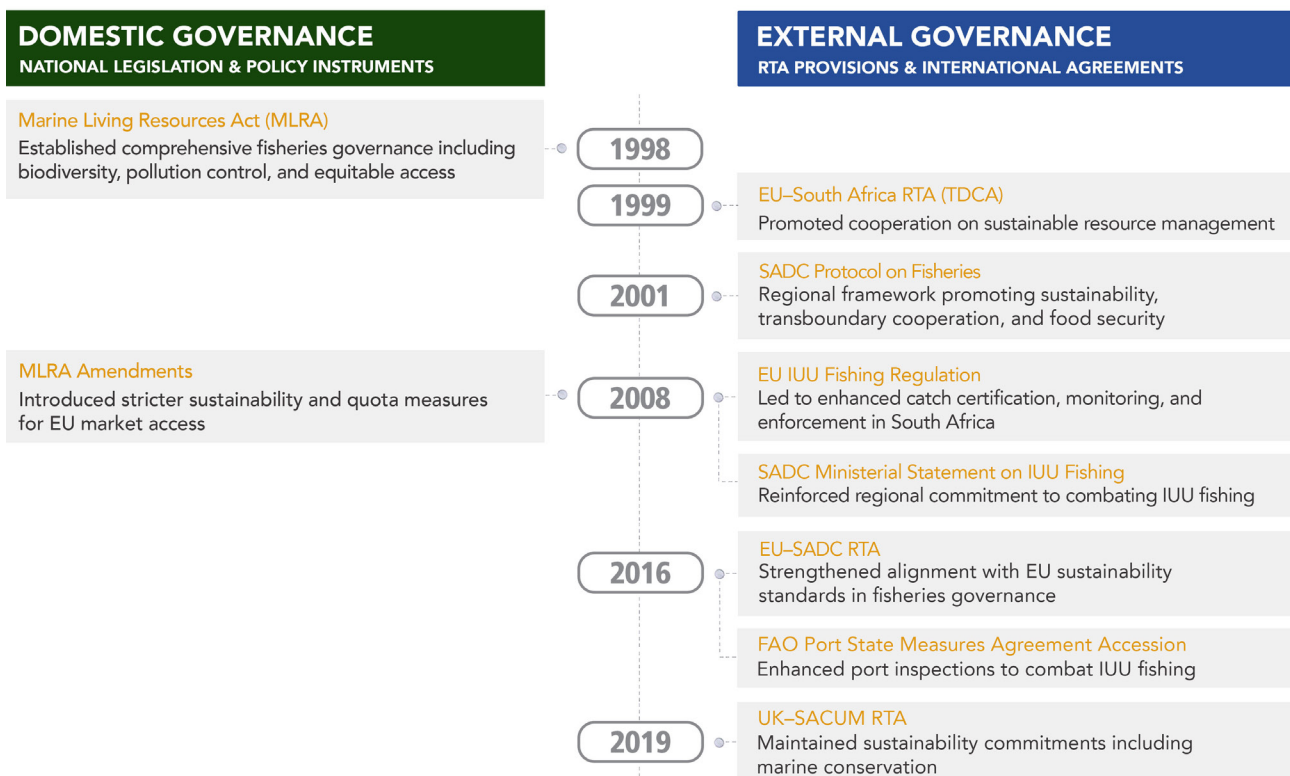
At the regional level, the 2001 SADC Protocol on Fisheries provided a comprehensive framework for fisheries governance, emphasizing harmonization, transboundary resource management, and sustainability among SADC member states (SADC, 2025). Its core objectives – promoting food security, safeguarding the livelihoods of fishing communities, ensuring long-term resource sustainability, and reducing poverty – fully aligned with the principles established under the *MLRA*.

The 2016 EU-SADC RTA, which replaced the 1999 EU-South Africa RTA in governing trade relations, had further implications for South Africa's fisheries sector. The agreement strengthened alignment with EU sustainability principles, emphasizing responsible fisheries governance. As a major seafood exporter, South Africa had to ensure its fisheries policies under the *MLRA* remained compliant, leading to further regulatory refinements in monitoring and enforcement. In this context, South Africa acceded to the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (2016) (SIF, 2025), enhancing its ability to combat IUU fishing through stricter port inspections and controls. More generally, the RTA with the European Union spurred

discussions and analysis on how the liberalization of the sector could serve as a catalyst for sustainable fisheries management, including through platforms, such as the EU–South Africa Dialogue Facility, which have supported broader cooperation on marine resource governance, and the implementation of international commitments to combat IUU fishing (SADC, 2017).

The 2019 UK-SACUM RTA, which largely mirrored the EU-SADC RTA, maintained continuity in trade and sustainability commitments. Annex VII, Article 4 reaffirms the parties’ commitment to environmental protection, marine conservation, and sustainable management of fisheries resources, aligning with South Africa’s domestic fisheries governance under the MLRA.

**Figure 12.** Overview of fisheries-related policies and agreements of South Africa by year, level, and key provision



**Source:** Authors’ own elaboration.

### 3.4.3 Forestry

South Africa has long sought to balance economic development with conservation in its forestry policies, shaping a regulatory framework that aligns with both domestic priorities and international commitments (FAO, 2025c).

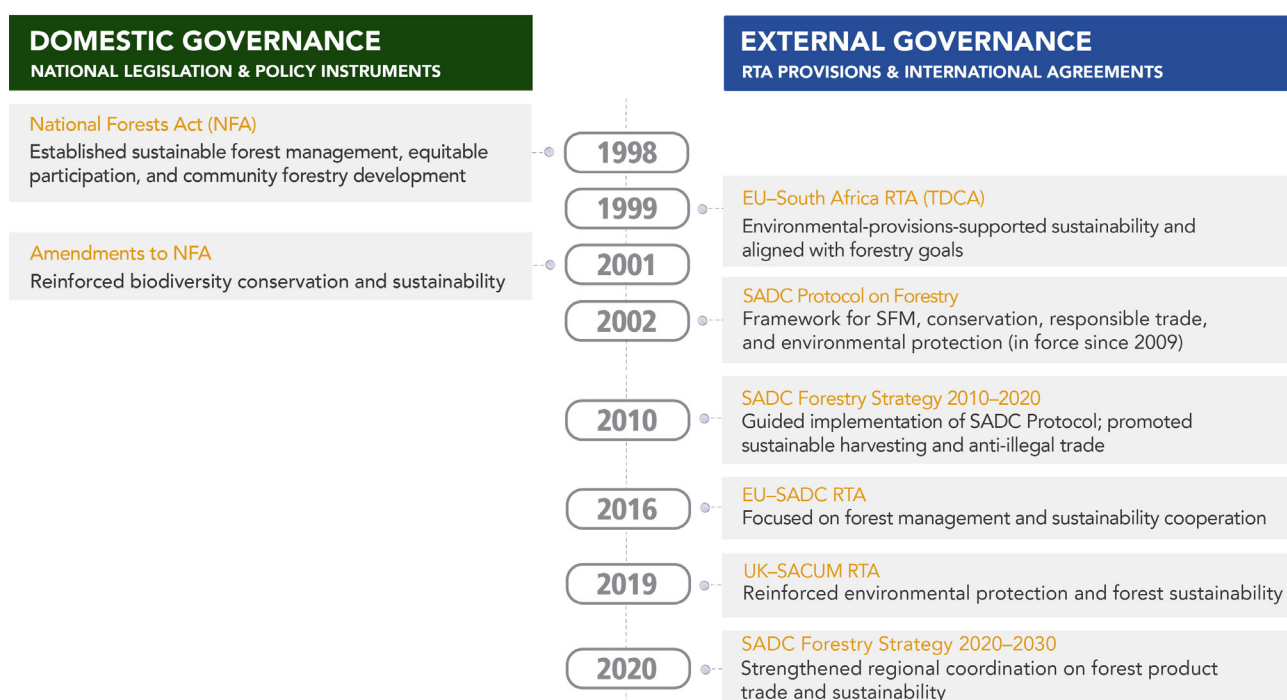
The cornerstone of South Africa’s forestry governance is the *National Forests Act* (NFA) of 1998. It establishes principles for sustainable forest management, equitable participation and forest monitoring while promoting community forestry development. When the NFA entered into force, South Africa was negotiating the EU-South Africa RTA (1999), which recognized forestry within its broader environmental cooperation framework. Its environmental provisions (Article 84.3) encouraged the sustainable management of forestry resources, aligning with South Africa’s domestic forestry objectives.

South Africa’s forestry governance gained a regional dimension with the 2002 SADC Protocol on Forestry, which provides a comprehensive framework for sustainable forest management across SADC member states (SADC, 2002). The Protocol, in force since 2009, promotes the development and conservation of, and responsible trade in forest products, and environmental protection (Article 3.1). It emphasizes harmonization of forest management policies, legislation, and enforcement mechanisms (Article 3.2(f)), and integrates environmental principles such as the prevention and polluter-pays principles (Article 4). These align closely with the National Forests Act and its amendments (2001), reinforcing South Africa’s commitment to sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and community involvement in forestry governance.

The SADC Protocol also addresses tenure rights (Article 5), public participation and equitable benefit sharing (Article 12), protection of traditional forest knowledge (Article 16), and access to forest genetic resources (Article 17). It promotes regional and national timber associations, voluntary certification standards, and measures to restrict trade in protected tree species (Article 18). Its implementation has been guided by the SADC Forestry Strategy 2010–2020 and its successor, the Forestry Strategy 2020–2030, focusing on sustainable harvesting and reducing illegal trade in forest products (SADC, 2024). These strategies align with South Africa’s domestic policies, ensuring compliance with regional commitments while reinforcing national sustainability objectives.

Finally, the 2016 EU-SADC RTA and the subsequent 2019 UK-SACUM RTA further focus on forest management. Both agreements provide explicit provision for forestry cooperation, with the UK-SACUM RTA (Annex VII, Article 4) encouraging specific measures and initiatives aimed at addressing critical issues in sustainable management, as well as aligning with current and future regional and international commitments concerning tropical forests and deforestation. In this context, South Africa actively engaged in several key international and regional forums, such as the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), a country-led initiative, launched during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21), aiming to restore 100 million hectares of degraded and deforested land across Africa by 2030.

**Figure 13.** Overview of forestry-related policies and agreements of South Africa by year, level, and key provision



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.



# Chapter 4.

**Conclusions and key takeaways**

This study assesses the role of Ag-ERPs in influencing domestic policies and legal frameworks in Costa Rica, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Africa, shaping sustainability strategies across varied economic and regulatory contexts.

Despite the heterogeneity in economic structures, environmental challenges, and regulatory landscapes among the selected countries, the case studies reveal striking similarities in the influence of Ag-ERPs on national policy. In all four countries, there is evidence that Ag-ERPs have acted as catalysts for the reinforcement of environmental legislation, the institutionalization of sustainability practices, and the promotion of regional and international cooperation. At the same time, the research highlights a *bidirectional relationship* between RTAs and domestic legislation, indicating that while Ag-ERPs can often drive domestic regulatory reforms, pre-existing national policies also influence the design and integration of Ag-ERPs within regional trade agreements. This dynamic results in a mutually supportive framework, where domestic and regional policy developments reinforce one another over time.

The integration of environment-related provisions in agriculture, fisheries and forestry into regional trade agreements reflects a growing effort to align trade policy with environmental sustainability. The four case studies illustrate how countries with varied ecological, economic, and regulatory contexts are embedding environmental priorities – such as biodiversity protection, sustainable fisheries, and water management – into their trade frameworks. Together, these four countries account for over 851 Ag-ERPs, showcasing leadership in leveraging trade agreements to advance sustainability goals.

Costa Rica has leveraged Ag-ERPs to expand its sustainability leadership, aligning trade commitments with national objectives. For instance, in response to high pesticide use, domestic laws were enacted and further reinforced by agreements like CCRFTA, CAFTA-DR, the EU–CAAA and EFTA–Costa Rica. These RTAs have likely encouraged stronger chemical management measures, including the creation of a *Pollutant Release and Transfer Register* and stricter pesticide registration requirements.

In the same vein, Kenya has integrated Ag-ERPs to enhance its climate resilience strategies, particularly in water, fisheries, and forestry management. For example, the 2016 *Fisheries Act* and the subsequent 2024 regulatory updates (aligned with EU standards and the 2020 United Kingdom–Kenya RTA), have likely contributed to strengthened controls on IUU fishing, promoted aquaculture development and encouraged greater community engagement in fisheries management.

In Malaysia, a major producer of palm oil, Ag-ERPs embedded in trade agreements have supported sustainability efforts in its forestry sector. The country's environmental governance draws on the *National Forestry Policy and National Forestry Act*, as well as international commitments such as its Earth Summit pledge to maintain 50 percent forest cover. Trade agreements, including the Japan–Malaysia RTA, the Malaysia–New Zealand RTA, and the CPTPP, appear to have resulted in regulatory updates and reform initiatives across the country between 2018 and 2021.

Finally, South Africa has incorporated Ag-ERPs into its legal and policy frameworks to address climate change and water scarcity, while enhancing environmental protection and maintaining economic competitiveness. Domestic laws like the *National Water Act (1998)* and international legal instruments such as the *SADC Protocol* and the EU–South Africa and UK–SACUM RTAs have promoted cooperation on water quality and climate resilience. In the fisheries sector, the *Marine Living Resources Act of 1998* and its amendments exemplify how regional trade agreements have shaped domestic policy. Amendments to the MLRA,

prompted in part by increased seafood trade with the European Union and the adoption of the EU 2008 IUU Fishing Regulation, have strengthened enforcement and certification systems, aligning the legislation with international sustainability efforts.

As a result of this study, several policy takeaways emerge to assess the effectiveness of Ag-ERPs in regional trade agreements and enhance their contribution to sustainable development and environmental protection.

First, strengthening monitoring, reporting, and verification mechanisms is essential. Costa Rica's efforts in fisheries governance, through vessel tracking agreements, and improvements in pesticide management, underscore the importance of standardized indicators, transparent data-sharing, and strong monitoring institutions. Likewise, Malaysia's timber sector demonstrates the value of regular audits, public reporting, and species tracking in ensuring legal and sustainable trade, while fostering transparency and preventing illegal logging.

Second, enhancing policy coherence between trade and environmental goals is also essential. Kenya's alignment of fisheries and forestry policies with sustainability objectives demonstrates this approach. For instance, the *Fisheries Management and Development Act* of 2016 deepened commitments to sustainable resource use within trade frameworks, while in forestry, climate adaptation supported by *Vision 2030* and the *Climate Change Act* positioned afforestation and reforestation as central tools for resilience and sustainable development.

Third, increasing technical and financial support for implementation is a critical factor. Costa Rica's reforestation policies illustrate how regulatory measures, when paired with financial incentives, can yield effective results. Similarly, in Kenya, the UK PACT programme provides technical and capacity-building assistance in forestry and land use. More broadly, RTAs can support sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry through technology transfer and innovation sharing, particularly benefitting smallholder farmers in resource-dependent sectors.

Fourth, promoting inclusive and participatory decision-making is key to ensuring the successful implementation of Ag-ERPs. Strengthening the role of civil society, industry stakeholders, and local communities in policy design and enforcement is crucial, particularly where local governance plays a major role in environmental decision-making. Fostering multistakeholder partnerships, as demonstrated by Malaysia, where its RTA with New Zealand and Chile highlight partnership on water management, which likely influenced its 2012 *National Water Resources Policy*, focused on sustainability and stakeholder collaboration.

Lastly, encouraging regional and international collaboration will further enhance Ag-ERP effectiveness. Strengthening cooperation on transboundary issues such as IUU fishing, deforestation, and sustainable land use can improve trade compliance and environmental protection. Kenya's cross-border conservation efforts through the EAC, as well as South Africa's contribution to transboundary water management exemplify this potential. Enhanced regional and multilateral agreements can also foster alignment between Ag-ERPs and multilateral environmental agreements. Malaysia provides a notable example, as forestry and fisheries policies have been progressively harmonized with broader international sustainability initiatives.

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[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/tpr\\_e/s436\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/s436_e.pdf)

## Appendices:

### 1. Costa Rica

Domestic law/regulation	Year	Link
Ley Forestal [Forestry Law] No. 4465	1969	<a href="https://www.mag.go.cr/legislacion/1969/ley-4465.pdf">https://www.mag.go.cr/legislacion/1969/ley-4465.pdf</a>
Ley Forestal [Forestry Law] No. 7032	1986	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=8072&amp;nValor3=90679&amp;strTipM=TC">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=8072&amp;nValor3=90679&amp;strTipM=TC</a>
Ley Forestal [Forestry Law] No. 7174	1990	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=9104&amp;nValor3=9763&amp;strTipM=TC">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=9104&amp;nValor3=9763&amp;strTipM=TC</a>
Ley Forestal [Forestry Law] No. 7575	1996	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=41661">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=41661</a>
Ley de protección Fitosanitaria [Phytosanitary Protection Law] No. 7664	1997	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param2=1&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=43939&amp;nValor3=92806&amp;nValor4=NO&amp;strTipM=TC">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param2=1&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=43939&amp;nValor3=92806&amp;nValor4=NO&amp;strTipM=TC</a>
Ley de Biodiversidad [Biodiversity Law] No. 7788	1998	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=39796&amp;nValor3=74714&amp;strTipM=TC">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=39796&amp;nValor3=74714&amp;strTipM=TC</a>
Ley de Conservación y Uso del Suelo [Law on Soil Conservation and Land Use] No. 7779	1998	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=26421">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=26421</a>
Reglamento para el Registro de Productos Peligrosos [Regulations on the Registration of Hazardous Products]	1999	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=30472&amp;nValor3=32177&amp;strTipM=TC">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=30472&amp;nValor3=32177&amp;strTipM=TC</a>
Reglamento para el Manejo de Productos Peligrosos [Regulations on the Handling of Hazardous Products] No. 28930-S	2000	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=54837&amp;nValor3=60087&amp;strTipM=TC">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=54837&amp;nValor3=60087&amp;strTipM=TC</a>
Acuerdo sobre la Aplicación de UN Fish Stocks Agreement 1982 [Agreement on the Implementation of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (1982)] No. 8059	2000	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=45776&amp;nValor3=48268&amp;param2=1&amp;strTipM=TC&amp;Resultado=2&amp;strSim=simp">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=45776&amp;nValor3=48268&amp;param2=1&amp;strTipM=TC&amp;Resultado=2&amp;strSim=simp</a>

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Ley de Pesca y Acuicultura [Fisheries and Aquaculture Law] No. 8436	2005	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=54688&amp;nValor3=95742">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=54688&amp;nValor3=95742</a>
Decreto Ejecutivo Medidas del Estado Rector del Puerto Destinadas a Prevenir, Desalentar y Eliminar la Pesca Ilegal, no Declarada y no Reglamentada (MERP) [Executive Decree on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (MERP)] No. 39299-REE	2015	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=80745&amp;nValor3=102570&amp;strTipM=TC">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=80745&amp;nValor3=102570&amp;strTipM=TC</a>
Decreto Ejecutivo Aplicación oficial de las Directrices voluntarias para lograr la sostenibilidad de la pesca en pequeña escala en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria y la erradicación de la pobreza [Executive Decree on the Official Application of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication] No. 39195 MAG-MINAE-MTSS	2015	<a href="http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=80178&amp;nValor3=101643&amp;strTipM=TC">http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=80178&amp;nValor3=101643&amp;strTipM=TC</a>
Implementación de Registros de Emisiones y Transferencias de Contaminantes (RETC) [Implementation of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR)]	2021	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/cos214884.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/cos214884.pdf</a>
Reglamento Técnico for agrochemicals Registro. Servicio Fitosanitario del Estado [Technical Regulation on the Registration of Agrochemicals – State Phytosanitary Service] No. 43838-MAG-S-MINAE	2022	<a href="https://pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=98495&amp;nValor3=135200&amp;strTipM=TC">https://pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&amp;nValor1=1&amp;nValor2=98495&amp;nValor3=135200&amp;strTipM=TC</a>
Registro. Servicio Fitosanitario del Estado [Register. Phytosanitary Service of the State] No. 43838-MAG-S-MINAE	2023	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/cos218490.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/cos218490.pdf</a>

## 2. Kenya

Domestic law/regulation	Year	Link
Fisheries Act	1989	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken3536.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken3536.pdf</a>
Water Act	2002	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160877/#:~:text=The%20Act%20states%20that%20every,or%20more%20waterworks%20development%20agencies">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160877/#:~:text=The%20Act%20states%20that%20every,or%20more%20waterworks%20development%20agencies</a>
Forest Act	2005	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken64065.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken64065.pdf</a>
National Land Policy	2009	<a href="https://lands.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Sessional-paper-on-Kenya-National-Land-Policy.pdf">https://lands.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Sessional-paper-on-Kenya-National-Land-Policy.pdf</a>
National Environment Policy	2013	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken147906.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken147906.pdf</a>
National Water Master Plan	2014	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC184848/">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC184848/</a>
Forest Policy	2014	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken144209.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ken144209.pdf</a>
Fisheries Management and Development Act	2016	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160880/">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160880/</a>
Fisheries Management and Development (General) Regulations	2024	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC008007/">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC008007/</a>
National Forest Conservation and Management Act	2016	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160882/">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160882/</a>
Water Act (updated)	2016	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160877/">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160877/</a>
Climate Change Act	2016	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160982/">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC160982/</a>
Wildlife Conservation and Management Policy	2017	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC170968/#:~:text=The%20goal%20of%20this%20policy,landscapes%20and%20seascapes%20in%20order">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC170968/#:~:text=The%20goal%20of%20this%20policy,landscapes%20and%20seascapes%20in%20order</a>
National Water Policy	2021	<a href="http://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2021-08/REPORT%20ON%20SESSIONAL%20PAPER%20NO.%201%20OF%202021%20ON%20NATIONAL%20WATER%20POLICY.pdf">http://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2021-08/REPORT%20ON%20SESSIONAL%20PAPER%20NO.%201%20OF%202021%20ON%20NATIONAL%20WATER%20POLICY.pdf</a>
Water Resources Regulations	2021	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC207236/">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC207236/</a>
Fisheries Management and Development (General) Regulations	2024	<a href="https://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/LegalNotices/2024/LN56_2024.pdf">https://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/LegalNotices/2024/LN56_2024.pdf</a>

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Irrigation (Amendment) Act	2022	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC212539/#:~:text=The%20amendments%20concern%20section%202,inserting%20new%20definitions%3A%20agency%20contract%2C">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC212539/#:~:text=The%20amendments%20concern%20section%202,inserting%20new%20definitions%3A%20agency%20contract%2C</a>
Water (Amendment) Bill	2023	<a href="http://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2024-02/The%20Water%20%28Amendment%29%20Bill%20%28National%20Assembly%20Bills%20No.%2033%20of%202023%29.pdf">http://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2024-02/The%20Water%20%28Amendment%29%20Bill%20%28National%20Assembly%20Bills%20No.%2033%20of%202023%29.pdf</a>
National Program for Accelerated Forestry and Rangelands Restoration	2022	<a href="https://www.president.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/National-Program-for-Accelarated-Forestry-and-Rangelands-Restoration.pdf">https://www.president.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/National-Program-for-Accelarated-Forestry-and-Rangelands-Restoration.pdf</a>

### 3. Malaysia

Domestic law/regulation	Year	Link
Land Conservation Act	1960	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC091384">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC091384</a>
National Land Code	1965	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC005145">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC005145</a>
(Forest Enactment (Sabah	1968	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal10907.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal10907.pdf</a>
Environmental Quality Act	1974	<a href="https://ewaste.doe.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Environmental_Quality_Act_1974_-_ACT_127.pdf">https://ewaste.doe.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Environmental_Quality_Act_1974_-_ACT_127.pdf</a>
National Parks Act	1980	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC012665">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC012665</a>
Fisheries Act No. 317	1985	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC001869/#:~:text=Malaysia-,Fish-,eries%20Act%201985%20(No.,connected%20therewith%20or%20incidental%20thereto">https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC001869/#:~:text=Malaysia-,Fish-,eries%20Act%201985%20(No.,connected%20therewith%20or%20incidental%20thereto</a>
Irrigation Areas Act	(revised 1989) 1953	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC002506">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC002506</a>
Waters Act	(revised 1989) 1920	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal33533.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal33533.pdf</a>
National Forestry Policy	(amended 1992) 1978	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal205592.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal205592.pdf</a>
National Forestry Act	(amended 1993) 1984	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC033376">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC033376</a>

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Fisheries (Control of Endangered Species of Fish) Regulations	1999	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC033459">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC033459</a>
National Water Services Commission Act	2006	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC091527">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC091527</a>
International Trade in Endangered Species Act	2008	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC099054">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC099054</a>
National Water Resources Policy	2012	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC163536">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC163536</a>
National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate IUU Fishing (NPOA-IUU)	2013	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC163554">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC163554</a>
National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks	2014	<a href="https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/bl355e">https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/bl355e</a>
(Forest (Timber) Enactment (Sabah	2015	<a href="http://sagc.sabah.gov.my/?q=en/content/forest-timber-enactment-2015">http://sagc.sabah.gov.my/?q=en/content/forest-timber-enactment-2015</a>
(Forest Ordinance (Sarawak, 2015	2015	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC205615">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC205615</a>
Sabah Forest Policy 2018	2018	<a href="https://forest.sabah.gov.my/policy-enactment">/https://forest.sabah.gov.my/policy-enactment</a>
Sarawak Forest Policy	2019	<a href="https://forestry.sarawak.gov.my/web/subpage/webpage_view/1105">https://forestry.sarawak.gov.my/web/subpage/webpage_view/1105</a>
Fisheries (Amendment) Act	2019	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC211648">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC211648</a>
Control of Endangered Species of Fish ((Amendment	2019	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal33459.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal33459.pdf</a>
Malaysia Policy on Forestry	2021	<a href="#">Malaysia Policy on Forestry (Ver 2.0).pdf</a>
Twelfth Malaysia Plan	2021-2025	<a href="https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal210617.pdf">https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mal210617.pdf</a>
(National Agrofood Policy (NAP 2.0	2021-2030	<a href="https://www.kpkm.gov.my/en/agro-food-policy/national-agrofood-policy">https://www.kpkm.gov.my/en/agro-food-policy/national-agrofood-policy</a>
Strategic Plan of the Department of Fisheries	2021-2030	<a href="https://www.dof.gov.my/en/corporate-info/introduction/departmental-policy/#flip-book-df_335111/11">https://www.dof.gov.my/en/corporate-info/introduction/departmental-policy/#flip-book-df_335111/11</a>

## Appendices

### 4. South Africa

Domestic law/regulation	Year	Link
Water Quality Guidelines	1996	<a href="https://www.dws.gov.za/Groundwater/documents/Pol_saWQguideFRESHDomesticusevol1.pdf">https://www.dws.gov.za/Groundwater/documents/Pol_saWQguideFRESHDomesticusevol1.pdf</a>
Water Services Act	1997	<a href="https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a108-97.pdf">https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a108-97.pdf</a>
(National Forests Act (NFA	1998	<a href="https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a84-98.pdf">https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a84-98.pdf</a>
(Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA	1998	<a href="https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201610/a18-98.pdf">https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201610/a18-98.pdf</a>
National Water Resource Strategy	2004	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC179663">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC179663</a>
National Groundwater Strategy	2010	<a href="https://www.dws.gov.za/groundwater/Documents/GSDocument%20FINAL%202010_MedRes.pdf">https://www.dws.gov.za/groundwater/Documents/GSDocument%20FINAL%202010_MedRes.pdf</a>
National Climate Change Response White Paper	2011	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/es/c/LEX-FAOC201562">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/es/c/LEX-FAOC201562</a>
Water Resource Strategy Consultation Paper	2012	<a href="https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/nationalclimatechangeresponse-whitepaper0.pdf">https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/nationalclimatechangeresponse-whitepaper0.pdf</a>
National Water and Sanitation Master Plan	2018	<a href="https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/es/c/LEX-FAOC201562">/https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/es/c/LEX-FAOC201562</a>
Climate Change Act	2024	<a href="https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202407/50966climatechangeact222024.pdf">https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202407/50966climatechangeact222024.pdf</a>
Second National Action Programme (NAP) to Combat Desertification	2018-2030	<a href="https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/nap_desertification_land_degradation_droughteffects.pdf">https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/nap_desertification_land_degradation_droughteffects.pdf</a>

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