The rapid modernization which has taken place in most facets of the South Korean economy has not been matched by the distribution system for fisheries products. In particular, the traditional pattern of distribution, goods passing down from large to smaller wholesalers. This system contributes to the current situation in which South Koreans pay very high prices for seafood, relative to disposable income. South Korean distribution comprises of wholesale markets, open-air markets, department stores, chain stores and convenience stores. The path of distribution for imported seafood products is as follows: suppliers and their trading agents-importers-wholesalers {often more than one stage}, then down to retailers, restaurants and consumers. An opportunity for international lobster suppliers is to participate in the specialty trade fair, Seoul Food. Seoul Food is held each April under the auspices of the South Korean Trade Promotion Corporation. It is not necessary for international lobster exporters to retain a South Korean agent. International suppliers should deal direct with South Korean importers and distributors, as each importer will be concerned with the need to develop the South Korean lobster market.

TAIWAN

Taiwan has a population of over 20 million with a per capita income of over US$10,000 per annum. Total fisheries production is decreasing by approximately 10 percent each year. Total lobster production {spiny} for Taiwanese vessels was 265 MT in 1992, valued at NT$201.7 million. Declining production provides good opportunities for international suppliers to market seafood products in Taiwan. Taiwan processors have moved significant operations to Southeast Asia, and Taiwanese investment is growing in mainland China. These trends have resulted in a growing quantities of fish and seafood imports to satisfy Taiwanese consumer demand. Total lobster exports were 15,149kg in 1992, a decrease from 3,310kg in 1991 {358%}. Lobster products have long been imported into the Taiwan market, and trade contacts indicate that the market is expanding for all product forms. Higher operating and capital costs in Taiwan has caused a recent trend towards decreases in domestic production and processing.

Taiwan Lobster Exports

Product Form	***1991 {KG}***	***1991 {NT$}***	***1992 {KG}***	***1992 {NT$}***
All Products	3,310	1,465,000	15,149	2,935,000

Source: Canadian Trade Office, Taipei.

Taiwan Lobster Imports

Product Form	***1991 {KG}***	***1991 {NT$}***	***1992 {KG}***	***1992 {NT$}***
Lobster, live	n/a	n/a	151,266	26,174,000
Lobster, frozen	n/a	n/a	130,723	23,875,000
Lobster, prepared/preserved	n/a	n/a	22,170	5,700,000
Total Lobster Imports	28,973	5,136,000	305,389	55,850,000

Source: Canadian Trade Office, Taipei.

THAILAND

The fisheries and aquaculture industries are particularly important to Thailand. Thailand has domestic production of lobster {Phuket lobster] with a catch area centered in, and around the Andaman Sea. Lobster production is limited, and consumer demand for lobster products within Thailand society is small. In 1992, Thailand imported fish and seafood products totalling US$870 million. Import statistics for 1990 show very small amounts of H.S.0306.1200 {37,996 kilograms}, and 0306.2200 {115 kilograms} were imported into Thailand. Imported lobster products are distributed in Thailand through importers and wholesalers, who transfer lobster products to retail supermarkets and the hotel trade. Although market size is small, Thailand is considered to be a growing market for the importation of fish products. Domestic demand for fresh seafood products; the proximity to Vietnam as a source of lobster; high transportation costs; and the limited size of the market for lobsters; all combine to make it difficult for lobster exporters to sell product into the Thailand market.