



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



DEPARTMENT OF
FISHERIES



Workshop & High-Level Meeting on **Port State Measures Agreement to Combat IUU Fishing (PSMA)**

10 - 13 Feb 2025



Workshop:
10 - 11 Feb 2025, Kochi

High-level Meeting:
13 Feb 2025, New Delhi

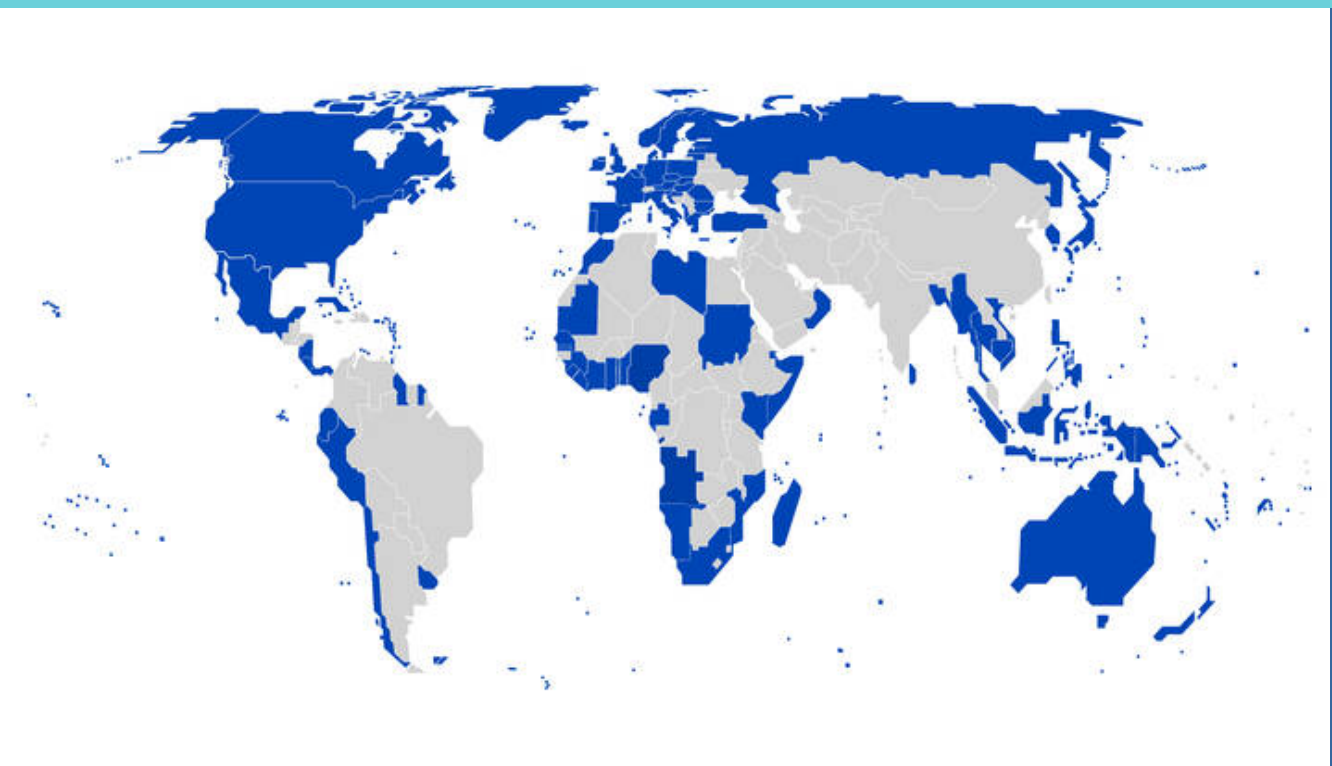
1 Background

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is recognized as a global threat to fisheries sustainability as well as safety and livelihoods of the fishing communities. In 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly noted that IUU fishing is “one of the greatest threats to fish stocks and marine ecosystems and continues to have serious and major implications for the conservation and management of ocean resources, as well as the food security and economies of many States, particularly developing States” (UNGA 2015: para 56). Three UN Specialized Agencies – the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) – have developed instruments relating to sustainable harvesting, working conditions, and vessel safety on board fishing vessels. Common to these instruments is that they contain port state measures for enforcement.

The Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) of 2009 is the first legally binding international agreement to target IUU fishing. It entered into force in June 2016 and, as of now, has been ratified by 79 countries, underscoring a collective international effort to safeguard and promote sustainable fishing practices.

The primary goal of the Agreement is to prevent and deter IUU fishing by restricting port access for vessels involved in these activities. By denying these vessels the opportunity to land their illicit catches, and blocking illegally sourced fish from entering local and global markets, the PSMA disrupts the economic incentives driving IUU fishing.

Current Parties to the PSMA (Accessed on 14 July 2024)



2 PSMA Agreement in the Context of India

India's legal framework for managing its maritime zones and addressing IUU fishing by foreign vessels is primarily governed by two key legislations: the Maritime Zones of India (Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone) Act, 1976 and the Maritime Zones of India (Regulation of Foreign Vessels) Act, 1981. These laws form the backbone of India's national maritime security strategy, particularly in regulating unauthorized fishing within its waters.

Historically, India permitted the operation of chartered vessels and joint ventures in marine fishing during the early stages of fisheries development. However, allegations of unauthorized activities by foreign vessels led to a comprehensive review in the mid-1990s. Following this review, the Government of India terminated all forms of foreign collaboration in marine fishing, demonstrating its commitment to protecting national interests and marine resources.

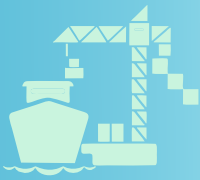
India has also taken a strong stance on addressing IUU fishing by Indian-flagged vessels. The National Policy on Marine Fisheries (2017) underscores the country's dedication to preventing IUU fishing across its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the high seas, and other nations' EEZs. The policy mandates robust mechanisms both at sea and in ports to ensure compliance.

The PSMA aligns seamlessly with India's existing framework and policies. By enabling port States to verify and deny entry to vessels engaged in IUU fishing, the PSMA complements India's flag State responsibilities under international law. It also strengthens cooperation and information-sharing among coastal States, flag States, and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), enhancing India's capacity to address IUU fishing comprehensively.

Moreover, the PSMA contributes to broader fisheries management goals by promoting accurate data collection, improving vessel reporting, and facilitating regional collaboration. It also supports the enforcement of international labor, safety, and pollution standards, reinforcing sustainable fishing practices and marine conservation efforts – key priorities for India.

India's efforts to promote sustainable fisheries management and responsible maritime governance are well-aligned with the objectives of the PSMA. This workshop aims to explore how the PSMA can contribute to corroborate India's effort in dealing with IUU fishing while complementing national and regional initiatives.





Enhanced Port Control:

The PSMA is expected to strengthen port state measures, facilitating improved oversight of fishing activities. This is particularly relevant as nations invest in expanding port infrastructure and processing capacities, ensuring robust mechanisms are in place to deter IUU fishing effectively.



Economic Growth and Coastal Development

The implementation of the PSMA could lead to greater economic security for legitimate fisheries, benefiting coastal communities reliant on sustainable fishing practices. Additionally, it may support the development of value-added sectors such as seafood re-exports, contributing to economic diversification in the maritime domain.



Global and Regional Cooperation

The PSMA emphasizes cooperation among coastal States, flag States, and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), fostering collaboration on information sharing and enforcement. Such mechanisms are likely to strengthen collective efforts in ensuring responsible fisheries management across the region.



Capacity Building and Infrastructure Development

The agreement's provisions for technical assistance and capacity building may support efforts to enhance inspection systems, port controls, and compliance mechanisms. This is especially relevant for countries scaling up their maritime infrastructure and aiming to adopt best practices in fisheries governance.



Market Access and Trade Opportunities

The PSMA's emphasis on sustainable fishing practices aligns with the requirements of high-value international markets, which increasingly demand transparency and accountability in seafood sourcing. Compliance with its provisions may facilitate access to these markets, promoting growth in the seafood export industry.



Environmental Sustainability

By preventing IUU fishing, the PSMA is likely to contribute to the conservation of marine ecosystems, ensuring that maritime development does not compromise biodiversity or the health of oceanic environments.



Regional Leadership and Influence

Adopting and implementing the PSMA reinforces a country's commitment to international best practices in fisheries management. This leadership role in promoting sustainability is likely to strengthen regional cooperation and enhance influence in global maritime governance forums.

In conclusion, ratifying the PSMA aligns with India's strategic goals under the Sagarmala project, offering significant benefits in enhanced port control, economic gains, global reputation, information access, capacity building, market access, regional leadership, environmental protection, and future-proofing infrastructure. These advantages will support India's emergence as a key player in the global seafood trade while maintaining sustainable and responsible fisheries management.

3 India's Consideration of Accession to the PSMA

Key Themes for Deliberation

1. Alignment with National Policies and Frameworks

- Examining how India's existing legislative framework, can support implementation of the PSMA, including the Maritime Zones of India Acts and the National Policy on Marine Fisheries (2017).
- Exploring the role of PSMA in strengthening India's monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) systems to combat IUU fishing in its waters and beyond.

2. Economic and Social Impacts

- Assessing the PSMA's potential to safeguard the livelihoods of legitimate fishers and support coastal community development.
- Identifying opportunities to enhance India's seafood value chain and protect marine-based industries, particularly through reduced IUU fishing activities.

3. Strengthening Regional and Global Cooperation

- Evaluating how India's accession could bolster regional collaboration in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region.
- Understanding opportunities to work with regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and international partners to combat IUU fishing.

4. Capacity Building and Technical Support

- Identifying capacity gaps in port inspections, vessel monitoring, and data-sharing systems, and exploring avenues for technical assistance.
- Highlighting international programs and partnerships that could support India's fisheries management capacity development under the PSMA framework.

5. Market Access and Trade Considerations

- Discussing how compliance with PSMA standards aligns with sustainability requirements in global seafood markets.
- Evaluating the potential for enhanced market access and strategic benefits for India's seafood export industry through sustainable certifications and practices.

6. Environmental and Sustainability Goals

- Exploring the PSMA's role in reinforcing India's commitments to conserving marine biodiversity and achieving sustainable development goals.
- Identifying synergies with national initiatives such as the Sagarmala project for responsible port development and maritime sustainability.

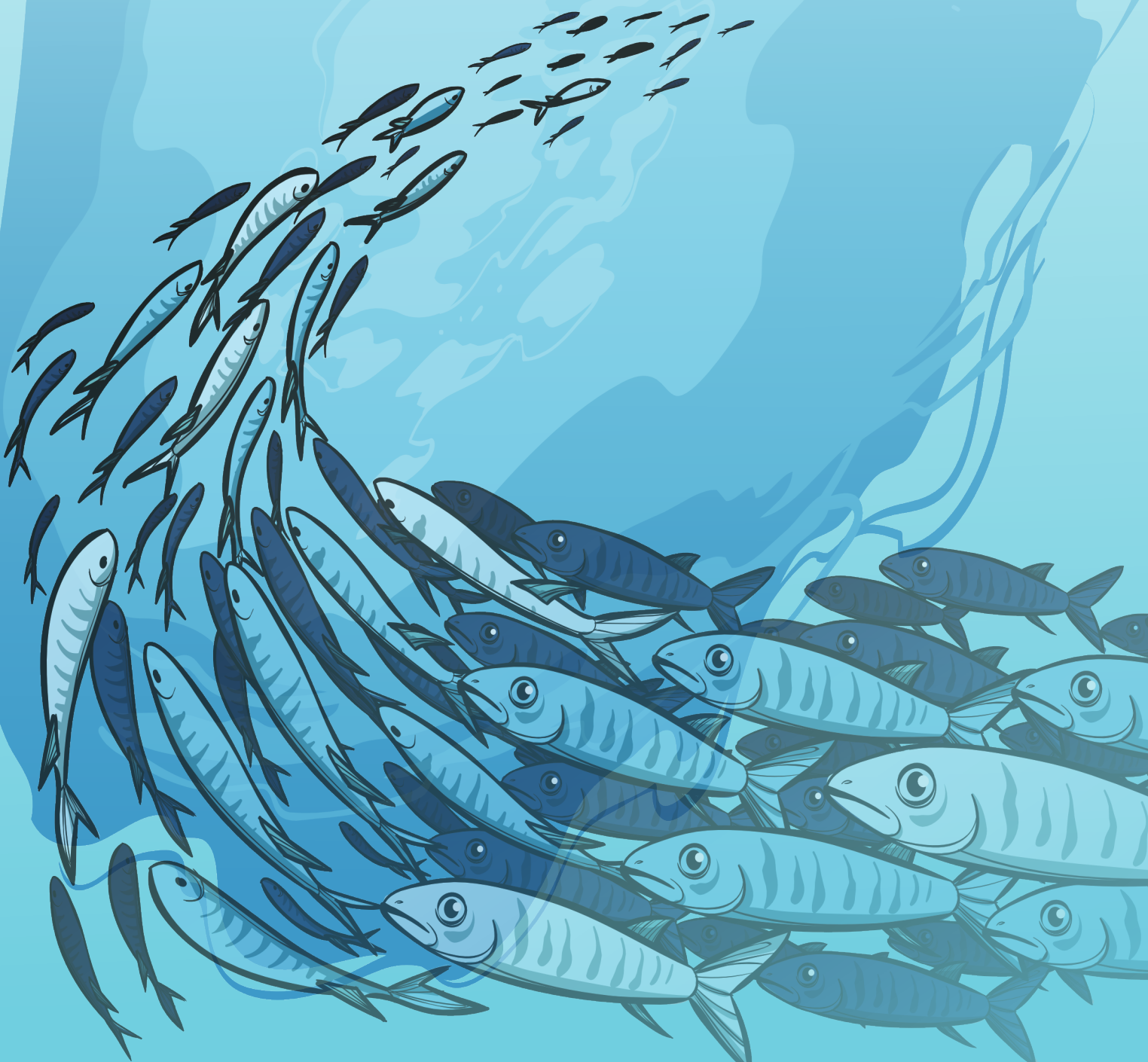
7. Implementation Roadmap and Challenges

- Addressing challenges in integrating existing systems with PSMA requirements, including inspection protocols and information exchange mechanisms.
- Developing a phased roadmap for accession and implementation, ensuring alignment with regional and international standards.

4 Expected Outcomes

This workshop aims to provide actionable recommendations to guide India's decision-making regarding the PSMA. Key expected outcomes include:

- A thorough understanding of the PSMA's relevance to India's fisheries governance framework.
- Identification of economic, environmental, and social opportunities arising from potential accession.
- A proposed roadmap for accession, highlighting capacity-building needs and strategies for effective implementation.



WORKSHOP ON THE PORT STATE MEASURES AGREEMENT (PSMA)

10-11 February 2025 | Four Points by Sheraton, Kochi, Kerala

10 February 2025

09:30 - 12:30

Welcome and opening of the workshop (*Government of India & FAO*)

Overview of the international instruments framework for sustainable fisheries (*FAO*)

India's fisheries management, MCS and enforcement framework (*DoF and other authorities / agencies*)

14:00 - 17:00

A closer look at illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and its impacts (*FAO and participants*)

The FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) - objectives, functioning, implementation and information exchange (*FAO*)

11 February 2025

09:30 - 12:30

Review of PSMA requirements and benefits (*participants in break-out groups, facilitated by FAO*)

14:00 - 15:30

Capacity development needs

Conclusions and recommendations

Closure of the workshop



HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON PSMA

13 February 2025

DoF, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi, India

13 February 2025

14:30 – 17:30

Welcome and opening (*Gol*)

Introductions (*Ministries, Agencies, FAO*)

India's fisheries policy, achievements and challenges (*Gol*)

Status and functioning of the PSMA (*FAO*)

FAO's global capacity development programme for the PSMA and complementary instruments (*FAO*)

Opportunities for India to bolster its capacity in combatting IUU fishing and strengthening its international fisheries trade (*Ministries, Agencies, FAO*)

Considerations for India's accession to the PSMA (*Ministries, Agencies, FAO*)

Conclusions

Closure of the meeting

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