



Food and Agriculture
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Report of the National Workshop on Fisheries Management Inventory (FMIInv) – Bangladesh

28 – 30 September 2025



In collaboration with



Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock,
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



BOBP For Sustainable Fisheries
BAY OF BENGAL PROGRAMME
Inter-Governmental Organisation

National Workshop on Fisheries Management Inventory (FMInv)

Department of Fisheries, Dhaka, Bangladesh

28 – 30 September 2025



Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO)
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About the Organisers



Food and Agriculture
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Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

FAO is a specialized UN agency founded in 1945 to combat global hunger and promote sustainable agricultural development. Headquartered in Rome, FAO works with governments and international organizations to improve food security, nutrition, and rural livelihoods. It plays a key role in fisheries and aquaculture governance, developing international agreements



Bay of Bengal Inter Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO)

The BOBP-IGO is a regional fisheries advisory body with Bangladesh, India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka as its contracting parties. It is mandated to enhance cooperation amongst its member countries and other countries (especially, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand) for sustainable fisheries management in the Bay of Bengal region. The BOBP-IGO Secretariat is located in Chennai. The Department of Fisheries, Government of India is the nodal agency from India and the hosting agency.

Report Preparation

This report on the “National Workshop on Fisheries Management Inventory (FMInv) in Bangladesh”.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of BOBP-IGO concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

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Executive Summary

The Food and Agriculture Organisation has initiated information collection for preparation of Fishery Management Inventory (FMInv) to share best practices for fisheries assessment and management. The objective of FMInv is to allow fishery managers, fishers and other stakeholders to access information on other management systems and measures, and their effectiveness or not in achieving the intended objectives. During Phase I of FMInv data compilation for selected fisheries, the BOBP-IGO partnered with the FAO and developed database for 21 fisheries in its member countries (Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka). Building on the information collected in Phase I, the FAO and BOBP-IGO proposed to develop a fully validated database for shortlisted fisheries, through a participatory process involving relevant stakeholders. For this purpose, national workshops were planned. A National Workshop on three short-listed fisheries for Bangladesh was held in Department of Fisheries, Dhaka during 28-30 September 2025. The participants were fishery managers, researchers, fishers and NGOs either engaged in planning management framework and implementing management plans and measures, researchers involved in developing these plans and measures, or involved in following and supporting the measures. After the Opening Session, the participants discussed on the salient features of each fishery, management framework, management measures and monitoring, enforcement and compliance three breakout group discussions. Each group was moderated by a Facilitator. Based on the deliberations FMInv database for each fishery has been revised. As the next step, the FMInv survey data will be updated by the BOBP-IGO based on the information received from the participants in the workshop. The revised survey data will be sent for validation to the Facilitators and resource persons and submitted to the FAO. To develop better practical fisheries management approaches, adopting ideas and lessons from similar fisheries will be valuable. BOBP-IGO can undertake comparative assessments to understand regional variations and support the improvement of fisheries management strategies.

Acronyms

BOBLME	Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem
BOBP-IGO	Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FMIInv	Fishery Management Inventory
FIP	Fishery Improvement Project
MLS	Minimum Legal Size
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SOFIA	State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture

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Participants at the Workshop

1. Background

Following a recommendation from the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management of the Committee on Fisheries¹, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been developing a global process and tool to gather information on current practices for assessment and management of fisheries aimed at empowering fishery managers to improve sustainability. In this context, the FAO initiated information collection for preparation of Fishery Management Inventory (FMInv) to share best practices for fisheries assessment and management and to understand “what is working where” in terms of fishery management measures. The objective of FMInv is to allow fishery managers, fishers and other stakeholders to access information on other management systems and measures, and their effectiveness or not in achieving the intended objectives. This database is the first step to understanding the context and potential pathways for improvement, and ultimately contribute to the development of management plans in line with the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management.

2. FMInv Phase I: Data Compilation for Selected Fisheries

During Phase I of FMInv data compilation for selected fisheries, the BOBP-IGO partnered with the FAO. The BOBP-IGO adopted the data template developed by FAO and contributed to developing the database for 21 fisheries in its member countries (Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka), covering a wide spectrum of fishery types, management systems, and management measures from the four countries, which was reviewed and finalized by the FAO. The required information was collected from researchers, managers, and other stakeholders associated with the selected fisheries (e.g. through literature surveys, interviews and questionnaires).

3. FMInv Phase II: Developing a Validated FMInv Database through National Workshop

Building on the information collected in Phase I, the FAO and BOBP-IGO proposed to develop a fully validated database for shortlisted fisheries, through a participatory process involving relevant stakeholders. For this purpose, national workshops were planned to review the implementation of current fisheries management plans or interventions for three or four fisheries in each country. From a series of discussions with experts from the FAO, BOBP-IGO and other stakeholders, the following three fisheries from Bangladesh were shortlisted for the workshop:

- Hilsa Fishery in the EEZ of Bangladesh
- Industrial Trawl Fishery
- Set Bagnet Fishery

¹ <https://www.fao.org/3/cd0256t/cd0256t.pdf>

Bangladesh 's National Workshop was conducted with the following objectives:

3.1 Specific objectives

- To understand the implementation challenges of current fishery management plans/measures through participatory assessment and cross-learning among fishery managers, researchers, and stakeholders; and
- To foster inclusive dialogue among fishers, managers, and NGOs to co-develop actionable solutions and finalize context-specific management actions for sustainable and participatory fisheries governance.

3.2 Expected outcomes

- Document grassroots-level challenges in implementing management plans and measures for the respective fishery, and identify mutually agreed solutions for their effective implementation among different stakeholders.
- Facilitate conversations among various stakeholders including fishery managers, researchers, fishers, and NGOs to raise awareness about the importance of management plans and measures for sustainable fisheries management.

3.3 Agenda and Venue

- The Workshop was held from 28-30 September 2025 with a Wrap-Up session on 30 September 2025.
- After Opening Session on 28 September 2025, fisheries managers and researchers discussed the 3 shortlisted fisheries in break-out groups on 29-30 September 2025.
- On 30 September 2025, fishers, researchers and NGOs discussed the four shortlisted fisheries in breakout groups.
- Plenary sessions were held on 29 September 2025 and 30 September 2025.
- The Workshop was held in the Department of Fisheries, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

3.4 Coordinators

- **Dr. P. Krishnan**, Director, BOBP-IGO, Chennai
- **Dr. Nicolas Gutierrez**, Senior Fishery Officer, NFIFL, FAO, Rome
- **Mr. Carlos Montero Castaño**, Fishery Officer, NFIFM Assessment and Management, FAO, Rome
- **Mr. Varun Tandon**, Fisheries Consultant, NFIFL, FAO, Rome

3.5 Facilitators

- **Dr. E. Vivekanandan**, Senior Scientific Consultant, BOBP-IGO, Chennai
- **Dr. K. Sunil Mohamed**, Chair, Sustainable Seafood Network of India (SSNI), Kochi
- **Dr. P. S Ananthan**, Principal Scientist, ICAR- Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE), Mumbai

3.6 Participants

The participants were fishery managers, researchers, fishers and NGOs either engaged in planning management framework and implementing management plans and measures, researchers involved in developing these plans and measures, or involved in following and supporting the measures. The list of participants arranged by fishery is placed in **Annex 2**.

4. Opening Session

Dr. E. Vivekanandan, Senior Scientific Consultant, BOBP-IGO, provided an overview of the FMInv project, explaining that this initiative is part of a broader FAO-led effort, mandated by COFI, to compile a global database of best fisheries management and assessment practices. He noted that BOBP-IGO, as a partner, had gathered information on 14 fisheries from South Asia-four each from India and the Maldives, and three each from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. These selected fisheries will be featured in FAO's global and BOBP's regional databases, ensuring international visibility and fostering opportunities for development collaboration. He further highlighted that the Bangladesh sites are also part of the ongoing EAFM activities under the #BOBLME project, where these fisheries can serve as global examples of best practices.

The Chief Guest of the programme, **Mr. Md. Zia Haider Chowdhury**, Additional Director General (C.C), Department of Fisheries, Bangladesh, commended the efforts of BOBP-IGO and FAO in organizing the workshop. He highlighted that the three selected fisheries represent some of the most important fisheries for Bangladesh. In particular, the Hilsa fishery stands out as a significant success story, demonstrating how a single high-value species can be effectively managed through a robust management framework and its effective implementation. He further emphasized that their inclusion in both the global and regional databases will not only showcase Bangladesh's best practices but also create new opportunities for collaboration in sustainable fisheries management.

5. Breakout Group and Plenary Sessions

On Day 1 & 2, more than 7 hours were allotted for breakout group discussion consisting fishery managers and researchers. On Day 3, about 4 hours were allotted for breakout group discussion consisting fishers, NGOs and researchers. Long breakout group sessions facilitated in-depth discussion on the management measures and how they are implemented in the three short-listed

fisheries. Segregating fishery managers and fishers permitted understanding the perceptions of the resource managers and resource users. three facilitators, identified from extensive pre-workshop interactions, generated questions and sought the views of the participants on the three days. Note-takers were assigned to each breakout group.

For interacting with the participants in the breakout sessions, the following documents were referred/ prepared in pre-workshop exercise:

- Data collected from experts on the four fisheries in the FMInv survey forms consisting 112 questions in Phase I;
- Brief profile of each fishery prepared from the FMInv survey forms; and
- Questionnaires related to each fishery prepared for discussion with the participants for the guiding the Facilitators.

The salient observations and takeaways for the management implementation of four fisheries based on the breakout group and plenary session discussion during three days are given below:

5.1 Hilsa Fishery in the EEZ of Bangladesh

Salient features of the fishery

- Hilsa (*Tenualosa ilisha*) is a target species for the majority of artisanal fishing fleet of Bangladesh. Gillnet fishery represents >80% of artisanal effort, while industrial trawlers catch <10% as bycatch.
- The fish is diadromous: adults migrate upriver to spawn, juveniles (jatka) grow in rivers/estuaries and return to sea for maturation.
- In 2022–23, total hilsa landings were 571,342 tonnes, worth ~68,561 crore BDT (BDT 1,200/kg). About 23,000 artisanal boats are engaged. The fishery operates year-round, across coastal, estuarine, and river ecosystems.

Management framework

- National Fisheries Policy 1998 and Marine Fisheries Act 2020 provide the legal base.
- Protection and Conservation of Fish Act 1950 (amended 2011).
- Hilsa Fisheries Management Action Plan (HFMAP) in place since 2003, updated 2019.
- Marine Fisheries Management Plan also addresses hilsa.
- Co-management is consultative: DoF leads, with inputs from BFRI, universities, fishers' associations, NGOs, Coast Guard, Navy, River Police, Customs.

- Explicit objectives: ecological (stock recovery, bycatch reduction), economic (income, post-harvest quality), and social (livelihoods, gender inclusion). Trade-offs (e.g., stock recovery vs fisher income) are recognised.

Management measures

- Spatial: Six sanctuaries in key spawning/nursery rivers.
- Temporal: 65-day marine closure (all species), 22-day October ban (spawning), 2-month March–April ban (jatka).
- Gear: Gillnet is primary gear; minimum mesh size = 90 mm; monofilament (current jal) banned; maximum net length restricted.
- Size limits: Minimum legal size = 23 cm; juveniles (<25 cm) strictly protected.
- Effort: Industrial trawler entry limited by license; artisanal fleet shifting to permit scheme (letters of permission, 2024–25).
- Catch: First experimental TAC introduced in 2023.
- Other: Fisheries Management Committees established; illegal gear control.

Monitoring, Enforcement and Compliance

- DoF monitors bans, licensing, mesh size, and gears.
- BFRI conducts biological and spawning stock studies.
- Catch & effort, size-frequency data collected at 175+ landing sites.
- Quantitative stock assessment methods used (B/BMSY, F/FMSY, TAC). 2023 assessment also applied length-frequency (SPR).
- Coverage: Medium—VMS introduced but not full fleet coverage. Some MPAs lack full enforcement.
- Enforcement: DoF with Coast Guard, Navy, River Police, local administration, mobile courts.
- Sanctions: seizure of nets/catch, fines, imprisonment.
- Fishers penalised for jatka/brood hilsa fishing.
- Compliance support: 40 kg rice/month to ~500,000 registered households during bans; AIG as encouraged.
- Awareness campaigns since 2003.
- Compliance remains partial: poverty, lack of manpower, and illegal gear markets pose challenges.

Performance

- Ecological: Spawning stock shows recovery; catches increasing after bans.
- Economic: Hilsa contributes ~1.15% to national GDP; incomes improved but vulnerable to ban periods.
- Social: Compensation helps but insufficient for poorest fishers. Occupational safety and alternative livelihoods promoted.

5.2 Industrial Trawl Fisheries

Salient features of the fishery:

- Industrial trawl fishery has been growing steadily in Bangladesh over the years, focusing mainly on large-scale, high-volume, low-value species.
- Bangladesh has two major types of trawl fishing: shrimp trawlers and fish trawlers. In 2022–23, 232 industrial trawlers were actively fishing out of a total of 267 registered industrial fishing trawlers.
- The major species targeted are shrimp and small pelagics. Production from industrial trawling increased from 108,479 metric tons in 2016–17 to 146,037 metric tons in 2022–23.
- Reports indicate that marine fish stocks in Bangladesh’s EEZ have declined, mainly due to the rampant use of industrial trawlers and the lack of proper implementation of the Marine Fisheries Act.

Management framework:

- Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995
- National Fisheries Policy 1998
- Hilsa Fisheries Management Action Plan 2003
- Maring Fisheries Act 2020
- Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Management Plan: Part 1- Industrial 2021
- Marine Fisheries Harvest Policy 2023 (Bengali)
- Marine Fisheries Rules, 2023 (Bengali)

Management measures:

- No new fishing licenses for industrial fishing vessels (mid-water trawlers, bottom trawlers or shrimp trawlers) since 2015
- All industrial trawlers are required to have an industrial fishing vessel license which is to be renewed biannually

- Cod-end of shrimp trawl nets must be 45 mm or larger
- Cod-end of fin-fish trawler net must be 60 mm or larger
- All trawlers shall use specified Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs)
- Shrimp trawlers must use Turtle Excluder Device (TEDs)
- Shrimp trawlers must have at least 30% fin-fish in the total catch
- No fishing allowed 698 sq. km Marine Reserves (MR) area in the Bay of Bengal
- Industrial fishing trawlers, either imported or locally built, must adhere to specifications fixed by the government. Failure to meet such specifications will result in such trawlers being refused registration.
- Vessels should operate beyond 40 m depth
- 65 days fishing ban all types of vessels are prohibited from fishing from May 20 to July 23, every year
- 3,188 sq. km area at Nijhum Dewip and its adjacent area of Hatia, Noakhali coastal zone as “Nijhum Dewip Marine Protected Area
- 22 days yearly ban on hilsa fishery

Monitoring, Enforcement and Compliance:

- Fishing is monitored by DoF which keeps check of vessel specification, registration, licensing, area of operation, closed season, trip duration, sailing permission and arrival report (VMS) and by catch.
- Enforcement is by the State Department of Fisheries along with Bangladesh Coast Guard, River Police and Local administration.
- Industrial trawler fisheries violations are penalized under the Marine Fisheries Act 2020, with punishments including up to three years of imprisonment and fines of up to Tk 5 crore (USD 500,000) for illegal fishing activities.

5.3 Estuarine Set Bagnet Fishery

Salient features of the fishery

- The Estuarine Set Bag Net (ESBN) is a traditional small-mesh, fixed gear fishery operated mainly in estuarine and nearshore waters of Bangladesh.
- It targets a wide variety of small pelagics, shrimps, juveniles of hilsa (*Tenualosa ilisha*), and other finfish. ESBN is predominantly artisanal, contributing significantly to coastal livelihoods, though often associated with high juvenile and bycatch mortality.
- Fishing units are simple canoes and small motorised boats with fixed nets set in shallow estuarine zones.

Management Framework:

- National Fisheries Policy 1998
- Marine Fisheries Act 2020
- Protection and Conservation of Fish Act 1950 and Rules 1985
- Community-Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) programme (DoF, WorldFish, NGOs)
- Bangladesh Sustainable Coastal and Marine Fisheries Project (BSCMFP)
- Hilsa Fishery Management Action Plan (indirectly applicable to ESNB)
- Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) provisions under MFA 2020

Management Measures

- Gear restriction: cod-end mesh size <30 mm legally banned (rarely enforced)
- Monofilament nets prohibited
- Seasonal bans: 65-day marine fishing ban (May–July), 22-day hilsa ban (Oct), 2-month jatka protection ban (Mar–Apr)
- Spatial restrictions: ESNB excluded from hilsa sanctuaries and marine protected areas (Swatch of No Ground MPA)
- Size limits: minimum legal fish size 23 cm; gillnet mesh size ≥ 6.5 cm
- Entry restrictions: licensing and fishing permits introduced under MFA 2020
- Some co-management initiatives through local committees and NGOs

Monitoring and Assessment

- DoF collects catch and effort data at 175+ landing sites
- Size/length-frequency data partially available (not systematic)
- No dedicated fishery-independent survey for ESNB; assessments rely on catch data and expert judgement
- BFRI and DoF conduct stock monitoring, often through hilsa-focused assessments that overlap with ESNB
- Enforcement by DoF, Coast Guard, Navy, River Police, with Joint Monitoring Cell (JMC) introduced in 2023
- Licenses required for vessels ≤ 15 NT; penalties for violations include fines, imprisonment, and license cancellation
- Compliance is weak: gear bans poorly enforced, illegal undersized catches common

6. Closing remarks

At the valedictory programme, **Dr. Md. Abdur Rouf**, Director General of the Department of Fisheries, commended the efforts of BOBP-IGO and FAO in organizing the workshop. He highlighted the critical importance of the three selected fisheries, Hilsa in the EEZ of Bangladesh, the Set Bag Net Fishery, and the Industrial Trawl Fishery, to the country's economy and food security. He emphasized that Hilsa, the national fish of Bangladesh, contributes about 11% of the total fish catch and nearly 1% of the national GDP. To ensure sustainable harvests, the Department of Fisheries has implemented several initiatives, including the Hilsa Fisheries Management Action Plan, seasonal fishing bans, prohibition of juvenile Hilsa catch, establishment of sanctuaries, and additional conservation projects to enhance production. Speaking on the Set Bag Net Fishery, he noted its importance and informed participants that new legislation is being developed to ensure its sustainable management. With regard to the Industrial Trawl Fishery, he explained that Bangladesh has already introduced several modern measures such as logbooks for catch reporting, onboard observers to curb IUU fishing, and the use of MCS systems together with AIS in trawlers. He further underlined that Bangladesh has developed three comprehensive management plans: the Sustainable Fisheries Management Plan for Industrial Trawlers, the Artisanal Fisheries Management Plan, and the MCS Plan.

Dr. E. Vivekanandan, Senior Scientific Consultant, BOBP-IGO, presented the outcomes of the workshop and outlined the next steps of the project. He emphasized that the workshop generated valuable new insights from diverse stakeholders, which will add significant value to the FMIInv.

7. Outcomes from the workshop and Next Steps

On 30 September 2025, a wrap-up meeting among the team from FAO, BOBP-IGO and facilitators was held to assess the conduct and outcomes of the workshop, and the next steps to be taken. It was unanimously opined that the workshop achieved its objectives. All the participants participated enthusiastically in the discussions and were willing to share their knowledge. Good acquaintance with the facilitators with many participants helped win the trust in the workshop. It was opined that pre-workshop briefing on the workshop structure and expectations from the participants would have further strengthened the discussions.

Outcomes from the workshop

- Grassroot-level challenges in implementing management plans and measures for the respective fishery and identify mutually agreed solutions for their effective implementation among different stakeholders were documented.
- Conversations among various stakeholders including fishery managers, researchers, fishers, and NGOs to raise awareness about the importance of management plans and measures for sustainable fisheries management were facilitated.

Next steps

- The FMInv survey data in Excel sheets will be revised by the BOBP-IGO based on the updated information received from the participants in the workshop.
- The revised survey data will be sent for validation to the Facilitators and resource persons and submitted to the FAO.
- A comprehensive information sheet/template will be prepared by the BOBP-IGO and circulated to State Fisheries Departments to capture current management practices, challenges, and relevant data.

Annexure 1



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National Workshop on Fisheries Management Inventory (FMInv) 28 – 30 September 2025

Session I (Fisheries Managers & Researchers)

28 September 2025

Time	Agenda
10:00-10:30	Inaugural Programme
10:30-10:45	Introduction of participants
10:45-11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of the FMInv project and tool• Overview of the FMInv Workshop
11:15-12:00	National fisheries policies & legislations <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation by BOBP- Participants interaction
12:00-12:20	Morning tea
12:20-13:00	Breakout group discussion on implementation of management plans & management measures
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:30	Breakout group discussion on implementation of management plans & management measures (continued)
15:30-15:50	Afternoon tea
15:50-17:00	Breakout group discussion on implementation of management plans & management measures (continued)
17:00	Close for the day

29 September 2025

Time	Agenda
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10:00-11:00	Breakout group discussion on implementation of management plans & management measures (continued)
11:00-11:20	Morning tea
11:20-13:00	Breakout group discussion on implementation of management plans & management measures (continued)
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:30	Plenary session & close for the day
15:30-15:50	Parting tea

Session II (Fishers & Researchers)

30 September 2025

Time	Agenda
10:00-10:30	Inaugural Programme
10:30-10:45	Introduction of participants
10:45-11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the FMInv project and tool • Overview of the FMInv Workshop
11:15-12:00	National fisheries policies & legislations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation by BOBP - Participants interaction
12:00-12:20	Morning tea
12:20-13:00	Breakout group discussion on implementation of management plans & management measures
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:30	Breakout group discussion on implementation of management plans & management measures (continued)
15:30-15:50	Afternoon tea
15:50-17:00	Plenary session & close for the day

Annexure 2



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National Workshop on Fisheries Management Inventory (FMInv)

28 – 30 September 2025

S. No	Fishery	Participants	Mobile/Email
1.	Hilsa Fishery in Bangladesh EEZ	Dr. M A. Wahab, Professor, Dept. of Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture, Bangladesh Maritime University, Dhaka – 1216.	Tel: +880 1715 099 156 Email: wahabma_bau2@yahoo.com
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