Report of the International Workshop on

Upgrading Marine Fisheries Value Chain in the Bay of Bengal Region: Destination - Puducherry, India

In Technical Cooperation with

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

12 - 13 February 2026 | Puducherry

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This Workshop was organized as a follow-up to the FAO Regional Workshop on Strengthening Value Chain organized by BOB-IGO, conducted in Dec 2025. The workshop aimed to project Puducherry, India, as an emerging showcase model for value chain upgradation, aligning with recent policy developments in India, including the launching of the PM-MKSSY scheme for strengthening the aquatic value chain in India.

Hotel Accord, Puducherry

12 – 13 February 2026

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

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.

Environmental Defense India Foundation (EDIF)

The Environmental Defense India Foundation (EDIF) is a non-profit organisation focused on strengthening environmental governance, sustainable natural resource management, and climate resilience in India. It works with government agencies, research institutions, and community stakeholders to support evidence-based policy development, capacity building, and on-ground implementation of conservation initiatives. EDIF contributes to advancing ecosystem-based approaches, biodiversity protection, and sustainable livelihood practices through research, technical support, and multi-stakeholder engagement. The foundation operates across India, collaborating with national and regional partners to promote long-term environmental sustainability.

Government of Puducherry

The Government of Puducherry is the administrative authority of the Union Territory of Puducherry, responsible for governance, policy implementation, and socio-economic development across its regions, Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe, and Yanam. It functions through various departments and directorates to deliver public services, promote sustainable development, and implement central and Union Territory-specific schemes. In sectors such as fisheries, environment, and coastal resource management, the Government of Puducherry works in coordination with the Government of India, research institutions, and local stakeholders to support livelihood security, infrastructure development, and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Food and Agriculture 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

Report Preparation

This report on the "International Workshop on Upgrading Marine Fisheries Value Chain in the Bay of Bengal Region: Destination – Puducherry, India" has been prepared by BOBP-IGO.

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Executive Summary

India's marine fisheries sector is at a turning point, and Puducherry is emerging as a strategic destination to demonstrate how a traditional, production-driven system can be transformed into a modern, value-led marine economy, with the International Workshop on Upgrading Marine Fisheries Value Chain in the Bay of Bengal Region outlining a practical and implementable roadmap to convert long-standing structural gaps into new economic opportunities. Organised as a follow-up to the regional FAO–BOBP-IGO assessment, the initiative positions Puducherry as a pilot hub to test scalable interventions that strengthen post-harvest systems, improve market linkages and enhance incomes across the fisheries sector. Against this backdrop, the consultation highlighted Puducherry's unique potential to lead value chain transformation through its strong infrastructure base, proximity to major fishing states and direct coordination with central schemes. Discussions over the two days (12 &13 February 2026) moved beyond increasing catch volumes to strengthening the middle of the value chain, particularly landing, post-harvest handling, processing and trade, where losses and inefficiencies remain highest. Evidence presented during the workshop pointed to persistent issues such as post-harvest losses ranging between 20–52 percent, underutilized processing facilities, rising operational costs, and information gaps that limit small-scale producers from accessing better markets and prices.

The workshop brought together policymakers, researchers, development partners, industry actors, line department officials and fishing communities to collectively examine production, landing, processing and trade systems and identify targeted interventions. Stakeholder discussions in working groups highlighted infrastructure gaps at landing centres, limited access to finance, weak institutional capacity, and the critical but often overlooked role of women, who form a majority of the post-harvest workforce yet remain largely informal and excluded from decision-making and credit systems. Through thematic sessions, field-based assessments and working group consultations, participants developed a shared understanding that future growth must come not from extracting more fish, but from reducing losses, improving quality, increasing value addition and strengthening traceability systems to meet domestic and international market standards.

Positioned within the broader vision of FAO's Blue Transformation and national initiatives such as PMMSY and PM-MKSSY, the Puducherry pilot is intended to evolve into a replicable model for the east coast and the wider Bay of Bengal region. The workshop concluded with a strong consensus that activating existing infrastructure, modernising cold chain systems, strengthening cooperatives, enabling MSMEs, and promoting participatory governance can help transform fishers from price-takers into value creators. With coordinated leadership, sustained technical collaboration and active community participation, Puducherry has the potential to emerge as a demonstration hub for value chain–led fisheries development, setting the stage for a more resilient, inclusive and globally competitive marine sector.

Abbreviations

ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
CIFT	Central Institute of Fisheries Technology
CMFRI	Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
MPEDA	Marine Products Export Development Authority
MSME / MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NFDB	National Fisheries Development Board
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PM-MKSSY	Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana
PMMSY	Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana
RFB	Regional Fisheries Body
RFMOs	Regional Fisheries Management Organizations
RSN	RFB Secretariat Network
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Background

India's marine fisheries sector stands at a critical juncture. With annual production of approximately 4.1 million tonnes harvested from over 1,400 species across 1,333 landing centres, the sector generates approximately USD 7 billion in revenue at the point of first sale and provides livelihoods to 3.77 million fishers across its 13 coastal states and union territories. Operating 1,80,333 fishing crafts and employing nearly 58% of the nation's 14.14 million fisheries workforce, marine fisheries represent a cornerstone of India's blue economy and coastal food security architecture.

However, beneath these impressive aggregate figures lies a value chain beset by severe structural vulnerabilities and operational inefficiencies that could threaten both immediate competitiveness and long-term sectoral sustainability. The sector's portfolio exhibits serious under-diversification: despite harvesting over 1,400 species, the lack of product innovation, limited value addition, and concentration in low-margin commodity formats represent substantial foregone revenue opportunities and vulnerability to market volatility.

> *Post-harvest value loss represents perhaps the most immediate drain on sectoral performance. Studies show marine fisheries suffer 20–52% volume losses, with quality degradation adding up to 20% value erosion largely due to infrastructure deficiencies in preservation, processing and logistics across diverse fleets operating in sun, seas and storms.*

These challenges occur against a backdrop of mounting resource pressures and climate risks. While 86.70% of assessed marine stocks remain at sustainable levels, 8% are already overfished and the sector has been exploiting 71–77% of assessed fishery potential, leaving limited headroom for volume-led growth. Climate change intensifies operational uncertainty through increased cyclone frequency in the Bay of Bengal, ocean warming that alters fish distribution patterns, and sea-level rise threatening coastal infrastructure and communities.

The fragmentation of the value chain itself constitutes a fundamental constraint in upgrading efforts. Multiple intermediaries between the harvester and the final market capture margins while suppressing farm gate prices. Information asymmetries disadvantage small-scale producers who comprise the overwhelming majority of operators, and nascent Fisher Producer Organizations lack the business capacity to aggregate supply or negotiate collectively. Processing capacity remains chronically underutilized despite 400+ registered establishments, hampered by raw material supply inconsistencies and working capital constraints that prevent backward integration.

Gender dynamics add another layer of complexity and untapped potential. Women constitute 72% of the post-harvest workforce, dominating fish marketing (74%) and processing (73%), yet their contributions remain largely informal and unrecognized. Inadequate facilities at landing centres and markets, unsafe working conditions in

processing plants, and systemic exclusion from credit access and decision-making bodies all point to a value chain that fails to optimize its most significant human resource.

This International Workshop is a follow up to the comprehensive regional assessment of Asia's Aquatic Food Value Chain conducted by BOBP-IGO and supported by FAO during 2025–2026, which identify the above challenges. The present workshop explored the ways and means to translate these findings into policy and practices with a primary focus on India but replicable across the Bay of Bengal region.

Destination Puducherry

Building on the FAO-BOBP Regional Aquatic Food Value Chain Assessment

The selection of Puducherry as the destination for this National Workshop is deliberate and strategic.

As a Union Territory with significant marine fishery activity, established processing infrastructure, proximity to major fishing states including Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, and a governance structure that enables direct central-state coordination, Puducherry offers an ideal laboratory for examining value chain upgrading pathways. Its coastal geography encompasses the challenges common to India's eastern seaboard: cyclone exposure, resource management pressure, and export orientation, while its institutional capacity positions it to serve as a demonstration hub for scalable interventions.

Day 1 (Thursday, 12 February 2026)

Welcome Remarks

Dr. D. Manikandan, informed the gathering that Puducherry is steadily positioning its fisheries sector for a transition from a traditional livelihood base to a more structured, value-driven marine economy, highlighting that the Union Territory, despite its modest 40–45 km coastline, supports nearly 50 fishing villages and over 6,300 fishing boats, and achieves an annual marine fish production of close to five lakh metric tonnes. He noted that this performance has earned recognition from the Central Government and international organisations such as the Bay of Bengal Programme, and the continuous government support reflected in the development of key infrastructure, including 3 major harbours, 2 landing centres, 8 fish markets, 4 government ice plants, and multiple work shelters. He pointed out that construction of a world-class smart harbour in Karaikal at an estimated cost of ₹130 crore and additional infrastructure investments worth around ₹650 crore are critical steps toward strengthening production capacity and improving the value of marine products. Stressing that the next major challenge lies not in increasing catch but rather in enhancing value addition and market access, he underlined the need to expand processing industries and promote export-orientation production to generate higher incomes for fishers. He added

that meaningful progress would depend on the active participation of fishing communities alongside government initiatives and noted that the workshop brought together fishers, experts, and representatives from national and international institutions to collectively shape the future of the fisheries sector. He expressed his confidence that such coordinated efforts mark the beginning of a new phase in fisheries development, and that Puducherry has the potential to secure a strong position in the global seafood economy.

Opening Remarks

Ms. Angela Lentisco said the workshop in Puducherry marks a decisive step in strengthening aquatic food value chains and advancing a shared regional vision for sustainable and inclusive fisheries development, building on the momentum created during the regional consultation held in Chennai in 2-4 December 2025. Addressing government officials, researchers, development partners and fishery stakeholders, the she highlighted that fisheries and aquaculture remain vital pillars of food security and livelihoods across Asia, providing affordable protein, essential fatty acids and key micronutrients, particularly critical for maternal and child health. Further she pointed out that the sector continues to face persistent structural challenges, including high levels of fish loss and waste, gaps in compliance and traceability, underutilization of nutrient-rich small fish species, inadequate post-harvest infrastructure and cold chain systems, and gender-based barriers that limit equitable access to markets and benefits. She said the Puducherry pilot initiative, represents an important effort to assess these constraints and identify practical solutions through value chain studies conducted in partnership with BOBP-IGO and the Government of Puducherry. She advised the participants would review initial findings and discuss a roadmap for future action, with the aim of developing a model that can be replicated across other regions of India and beyond. Emphasising that the initiative aligns with FAO's Blue Transformation vision to build efficient, resilient and sustainable aquatic food systems by 2030, she stressed the importance of strengthening fisheries management, expanding sustainable aquaculture and upgrading trade and value chains, while placing small-scale fisheries at the centre of development efforts. She appreciated BOBP-IGO for its technical leadership and to the Government of Puducherry for hosting the initiative, noting that the Union Territory's early steps in piloting value chain improvements could serve as a guiding example for the wider region.

Thematic Presentation: Upgrading Marine Fisheries Value Chain in Puducherry – Broad Messages and Roadmap for Future Collaboration

Dr. P. Krishnan the BOBP-IGO Director, addressing dignitaries, technical experts, researchers and fisher representatives from across the region, highlighted that the international workshop in Puducherry marks a critical step toward shifting the focus of fisheries development from production-centric growth to strengthening the often-neglected middle levels of the value chain, where the highest inefficiency and the great loss of quality and value occur. , He noted that while issues like illegal fishing dominate global attention, post-harvest losses ranging from 20 to 60 per cent across Asia, particularly at landing centres due to weak cold chain systems, remain a far more pressing but under-recognised challenge. He explained that regional consultations with multiple countries revealed common structural gaps, including inadequate cold storage, limited ice and refrigeration facilities, poor logistics, and insufficient processing infrastructure, all of which directly affect incomes and food security. Presenting initial findings from a rapid field assessment in Puducherry, he highlighted the Union Territory's strong advantages, including higher mechanisation levels, relatively newer fishing fleets, strong productivity, and a large seafood-consuming population with better purchasing capacity, indicating significant market potential. At the same time, he also highlighted critical constraints, including limited functional cold storage, reliance on external ice supply, rising operational costs, institutional capacity gaps, and restricted access to affordable finance. He noted that the Government of Puducherry has embarked upon a clear direction through port-led development, the promotion of deep-sea fishing, the strengthening of cooperatives, and the positioning of Karaikal as a harbour-centric production and processing hub, which could serve as a model for the entire east coast. Stressing that the ultimate goal is to transform fishers from price-takers into value-making entrepreneurs, he outlined the need for a fleet management plan, modernization of public infrastructure, greater private sector participation, and stronger involvement of fishing communities and MSMEs in the value chain. Drawing lessons from countries such as Norway and Iceland, where traceability, technology adoption and high-value processing reduced post-harvest losses to below five per cent, he emphasized that the workshop would work toward validating practical interventions and developing a participatory roadmap that could first benefit Puducherry and later be scaled across India and the wider Bay of Bengal region.

Address by Chief Guest

His Excellency Thiru. K. Kailashnathan remarked that Puducherry is positioning itself to emerge as a dynamic hub in the marine economy, with following the two-day training forum on Fisheries Value Chain Development which is envisioned as a platform to shape the future direction of the sector. Addressing fishers, government officials, technical experts, researchers, industry representatives and cooperative members, he emphasised that the focus must move beyond increasing fish production to strengthening the entire value chain, from the moment fish is caught to when it reaches the consumer through cold storage, transport, processing, branding, marketing and export. He opined that improving incomes for fishing communities will depend on enhancing the value derived from each catch through modern landing centres, ice plants, quality certification, export readiness and adherence to global food safety standards. Highlighting the Government of Puducherry's ongoing efforts in collaboration with the Centre under schemes such as PMMSY, he pointed to investments in fishing harbour development, safety equipment, insurance coverage, GPS facilities, promotion of deep-sea fishing, and training and financial support for women's self-help groups. He also underlined the growing role of digital marketing and e-commerce in connecting Puducherry's seafood directly to national and international markets, while recognising women as key drivers of value addition through processing and product diversification. Stressing that sustainable fishing practices must remain a priority to protect marine ecosystems, he said Puducherry's coastline, infrastructure, human resources and institutional support place it in a strong position to become a model maritime economy in the region. He expressed hope that the forum would serve as a knowledge-sharing and collaboration platform for research institutions, universities and fishing communities, leading to concrete action plans, stronger trade linkages and technical cooperation across the Bay of Bengal, ultimately elevating Puducherry's fisheries sector to newer heights while ensuring the protection of marine resources.

Vote of Thanks

Thiru. A. Mohamad Ismail conveyed his appreciation for the collective effort that made the consultation on strengthening the fisheries value chain in Puducherry both meaningful and impactful, noting that the success of such initiatives depends on coordinated support from government leadership, technical institutions and the fishing community. Addressing the gathering, he expressed gratitude to senior officials and policymakers who recognised the importance of the consultation and extended their support, as well as to the top executives of Puducherry, departmental heads and partner organisations for their encouragement and participation. He acknowledged the role of the Bay of Bengal Programme in effectively organising the event, along with the contributions of FAO representatives, national and international

experts, and members of the media in bringing visibility and technical depth to the discussions. He particularly appreciated the active involvement of fisheries stakeholders whose inputs and practical insights helped enrich the consultation process. Emphasising that such collaborative platforms are essential for shaping informed decisions and future action, he concluded by thanking all participants for their engagement and commitment to advancing the development of the fisheries sector.

SESSION 1: VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY AND PUDUCHERRY BASELINE

Chair: Ms. Angela Lentisco

Objective 1& 2: Present methodology and share initial findings

Aquatic Food Value Chain Assessment: Analytical Framework

Dr. Omar Riego Peñarubia, Fishery Officer, emphasised that transforming marine fisheries into competitive, resilient and sustainable systems requires a clear understanding of how aquatic food value chains function and where they fail. Addressing the participants, he highlighted that value chain assessment is not merely a diagnostic exercise but a strategic tool that identifies inefficiencies, uncovers opportunities for value addition, strengthens market linkages, and supports inclusive and equitable development. He explained that the FAO-led analytical framework moves through a structured process, from functional and sustainability analysis to resilience assessment, upgrading strategy, and development planning, ensuring that policy, investment and infrastructure decisions are guided by evidence. Stressing that data-driven interventions are central to reducing food loss and waste and building long-term sectoral sustainability, he noted that the development plan integrates investment pathways, resource mobilisation, risk assessment and coordinated stakeholder action. He underscored that meaningful blue transformation will depend on a supportive policy environment, stronger skills and services, appropriate technologies, improved infrastructure, and collaboration across all actors in the value chain, positioning such integrated planning as essential for driving lasting change in aquatic food systems.

Puducherry Marine Fisheries Value Chain: Baseline Assessment and Preliminary Findings

Dr. E. Vivekanandan explained that Puducherry's fisheries sector stands at a crucial transition point where strengthening the value chain, rather than merely increasing production, will determine its future growth and sustainability. Presenting an overview of the sector, he noted that despite a relatively small coastline of about 45 km, Puducherry supports a diverse and active fisheries system with mechanised,

motorised and non-motorised fleets, and a population that has a high demand for fish consumption. He highlighted that while marine fisheries continue to lead production and the motorised sector has shown resilience during weather disruptions and the pandemic, overall fish production has remained largely stagnant in recent years, with frequent bad weather and flattening catches of major commercial species limiting growth. He pointed out that a significant share of fish sold in local markets actually comes from outside Puducherry, indicating gaps in supply and the need to explore deep-sea fishing opportunities. Drawing attention to post-harvest practices, he highlighted the concerns such as inadequate freshwater for cleaning, lack of cold storage at markets, congestion at landing points, and limited insulated transport, all of which increase the risk of contamination and quality loss. He also pointed out infrastructure and operational challenges at major centres like Thengaithittu and Karaikal harbours, including ageing facilities, underutilised capacity, ice shortages, rising trip costs, and delays in subsidies, alongside broader issues such as limited access to finance, traditional marketing practices, and institutional capacity gaps. Further, he emphasised the scope for improvement through targeted interventions such as expanding cold storage and ice production, strengthening cooperatives to manage facilities, modernising landing infrastructure, and promoting small-scale processing and digital marketing channels to improve value realisation. Stressing the need for a strategic shift, he underscored that investments must be reoriented toward mid-chain infrastructure, particularly at landing sites where most losses occur, while enabling micro-enterprises and encouraging regional knowledge sharing to build a more efficient, resilient and value-driven fisheries economy for Puducherry.

Regional Models of Marine Fisheries Value Chain

Dr. Hussain Sinan highlighted that many of the challenges discussed at the workshop closely mirror the experiences of the Maldives, noting that fisheries-dependent nations across the region face similar struggles in building infrastructure, supporting fishers, and strengthening value chains. Sharing the Maldivian experience, he explained that as an island nation with people living across nearly 200 inhabited islands, fisheries management requires a highly decentralised system, with landing, port and support facilities spread across multiple locations. He described how sustained investments in harbours, landing infrastructure and quality preservation have been central to supporting fishers and maintaining product value. Showcasing the Maldives' pole-and-line tuna fishery as a globally recognised model, he highlighted its one-by-one fishing method that ensures minimal bycatch, protects marine habitats and supports community-based livelihoods while maintaining sustainability. He also emphasised the strong focus on quality control, including immediate icing, hygiene, temperature monitoring and structured collection systems that move fish efficiently from vessels to processing units. Stressing that fisheries are deeply embedded in culture and

livelihoods, he noted that income generated through this locally owned system flows directly back into communities, creating employment and economic stability. He expressed hope that sharing these practical experiences, from infrastructure development to sustainable harvesting and post-harvest handling, would contribute to regional learning and help strengthen value chain improvements across countries like India, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Mr. Susantha Kahawate highlighted that Sri Lanka, like many island nations in the region, faces a complex mix of opportunities and constraints in strengthening its fisheries value chain, shaped by geography, limited maritime space and evolving market demands. Sharing the Sri Lankan experience, he explained that fisheries remain a vital sector for national food security, contributing a major share of animal protein and supporting thousands of livelihoods through a fleet that includes over 5,000 multi-day vessels and nearly 50,000 small-scale boats. He noted that Sri Lanka's proximity to India brings both shared resources and operational challenges, particularly in managing fishing grounds and cross-border pressures, pushing the country to focus more on offshore and distant-water tuna fisheries. Emphasising the importance of maintaining quality for export markets, he pointed out that Sri Lanka exports primarily fresh fish, but continues to face post-harvest challenges due to dependence on ice-based preservation, limited onboard cooling facilities and rising operational costs driven by fuel and electricity prices. He outlined ongoing efforts to modernise the sector through improved harbours, cold rooms, conveyor-based unloading systems, and EU-approved processing facilities supported by strong quality control and certification mechanisms to ensure traceability and food safety. He acknowledged persistent gaps, including inadequate infrastructure at many of the 900 landing sites, high ice costs affecting preservation practices, traditional onboard handling methods and quality losses during long fishing trips. Stressing the need for technological upgrades, capacity building and infrastructure expansion, he noted that pilot initiatives to introduce onboard cooling systems and develop green harbours are underway, with the broader goal of improving value retention, reducing losses and strengthening Sri Lanka's competitiveness in international seafood markets.

SESSION 2: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE – GATHERING GROUND INTELLIGENCE

Chair: Dr. D. Manikandan

Objective 3: Gather stakeholder intelligence

Fisher Voices: Production, landing and Post-Harvest Challenges

(i) Fisher Voices: Production, Landing and Post-Harvest Challenges (Fisher Representatives including Mechanized, Motorized, Traditional)

Fishers shared a wide variety of issues including fishing and other cross-cutting themes during the gathering ground intelligence session.

Non-mechanized/Traditional Fishers

- **Fishery Requisites (Craft Subsidy):** Motorization of traditional craft costs about Rs. 70,000 but at present the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare and Fishermen Welfare gives only Rs.25,000/- per OBM. Considering current inflation and the increased cost of building the boat, the subsidized amount should be increased for the craft subsidy

- **Fishery Requisites (Gear Subsidy):** Similarly, for gear subsidy the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare provides only 10 kg of fishing gear per year and it should be increased for the Non-mechanized/Traditional Fishers.

Motorized Fishers

- **Designated Boat Landing Place:** Motorized fishing villages suffer from having no designated boat docking place in the fishing village. Now, many villages spend about Rs. 170 to pull the boat into shore and into the sea. It is requested that a boat docking place is essential in the fishing villages so that the fishing operation will be smooth.

- **Pre-disposal of Subsidy Amount:** Although fishers' applications get sanctioned for boat subsidy, at present the fishers have to build the boat with their own money or by borrowing from money lenders or other sources of private finance, and the subsidy money is released only after the submission of bills or is even delayed due to the arrival of funds to the Department of Fisheries. This creates a huge problem because many times fishers borrow from money lenders to construct the boat and have to pay more interest than the subsidy amount, so this creates no meaningful subsidy for the fishers. Front ended subsidy amount would be essential to avoid borrowing money from money lenders or other private sources, which increases the interest rate.

- **Bigger Size Ice Box:** At present, the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare provides a 50 kg ice box; motorized boat fishers catch about 300–400 kg of fish in a day, so the subsidized ice box size should be increased and made available for the fishers.

- **Petrol Subsidy for Suzuki/ Yamaha engines fitted in the Motorized boat:** Currently Puducherry fishers operate two kinds of small-scale and motorized boats namely < 30 ft. boats and 34 ft. boats. The larger motorized boats exclusively operate hook and line fishing lasting a 1–2-day fishing period. Since the engines run only on petrol, it is requested to provide petrol subsidy.

- **Onboard Handling and Preservation Technique for Export Quality Tuna:** Tuna resources are available in the UT of Puducherry, especially in the Karaikal region, and there are capabilities of fishing vessels to catch these highly migratory species available in the region. Earlier fishers used to fish tuna and bring it to the markets, but traders/exporters were reluctant to buy the fish stating that it was not export quality, and the fish sold for the price of Rs. 80. It is understood that fishers need proper training on onboard handling and preservation techniques to bring export quality tuna to shore.

Mechanized Fishers

- **Ice Production and cold Storage:** Mechanized boats carry about 15 tonnes of ice on every fishing trip and Puducherry and Karaikal altogether have 490 mechanized boats, motorized boats, and fish markets that have huge ice requirements. It is observed that insufficient ice production in the state leads to bringing ice from nearby districts of Tamil Nadu. The study indicates that about 60% of ice comes to Puducherry district and 40% of ice comes from Tamil Nadu.

- **Premium Price for Fishes (Puducherry):** Thengathittu fishing harbour has a total of 140 mechanized trawlers, of which 85 are multi-day trawlers and 22 are single-day trawlers, and the number of boats arriving depends on the daily venture. There has been an informal arrangement stating that only 15 boats at a time are allowed to land their catch to sell, and the remaining boats are advised to land their catch the following day. This is mainly because the majority of the fish goes to the local market and to some extent to nearby districts, and a very small quantity goes to the export market, which is sent to Kochi or Chennai for processing and export. It is also understood that there are only 2 traders in the Puducherry district who supply to exporters in Chennai and Kochi and decide the price. Bringing more competitors would ensure deserving price discovery for fish landed in the Thengathittu fishing harbour.

- **Renovation and Enhance the Capacity of the Fishing Harbour (Karaikal):** At present Karaikal fishing harbour has the capacity for 350 fishing boats, of which 340 are trawlers and 10 are gillnetters. This16 years old harbour was built for the capacity of 100 trawler boats only. But the harbour is running with triple capacity and fishers have to take turns to dock the boat to unload the fish or carry fish from a distance to reach the fish auction point. This makes it inconvenient for fishers and deteriorates the fish quality due to delays in unloading. Harbour infrastructure is weathered and in bad shape now, affecting unloading, auctioning, and other post-harvest activities.

Cross-cutting Themes

- **Sea Safety and Fishers Ambulance:** Fishing is the second most dangerous occupation next to mining in the world. Life jackets provided by the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare are not relatively convenient to wear and carry out day-to-day fishing operations. Lightweight and reflector-based life jackets are required for the fishers. Similarly, during man overboard incidents and other climate disaster times, rescue is delayed due to coordination with various departments.

Trader and Market Actor Perspective: Logistics, Quality and Market Constraints

- **Quality and Sufficient Ice:** Due to insufficient ice, fishers use less ice and add more water to preserve the fish. This leads to deterioration in fish quality and makes it least preferred for export and even domestic marketing

- **Recycled Ice use by Women Vendors:** Especially in the Thengathittu fishing harbour, women vendors who procure and sell in the local market and nearby districts take recycled ice remaining from fishing boats landed in the harbour. This contaminated ice results in quality deterioration.

- **Insulated and Refrigerated Cold Vehicles:** Under PMMSY, traders and market actors are getting benefitted but the allocation of vehicles is limited in number and it should be increased so that a greater number of beneficiaries can avail the scheme.

- **Cold storage for Street Vendors:** Street vendors, especially women vendors, could not sell the procured fishes in a day and often end up in distress sales due to the perishable nature of fish. It is requested that cold chest/cold storage can be created in the villages/landing centres so they can store fish overnight for selling on the next day.

- **Ice Box with Two Wheelers for Women Vendors:** Women vendors are largely head loaders and face multiple occupational hazards and safety issues during selling. It is recommended that these women should be supported for procuring ice box with two-wheeler for fish vending.

Processor Perspectives: Supply, processing and Value Addition Opportunities

- **Export Hub:** At present Puducherry has only 2 processing plants that exclusively deal with crab meat processing and export. Other than that, there are no specific seafood plants present in the UT of Puducherry, and a large quantity of catch goes to either Kochi or Chennai where it gets processed and exported.

- **Cloud Kitchen:** Women volunteer groups at present take demand-based orders and prepare fish curry and other value-added products and for sales. Puducherry being a tourist hub, it is essential to create space for cloud kitchens and branding, which will enhance fisherwomen involvement and increase the income of fishing households.

- **Income Generating Activities under Cooperative Society:** At present cooperative societies focus on only welfare measures and are not undertaking any income-generating activities, although they are capable of undertaking many activities. Currently, 2 women cooperative societies have been given deep sea fishing vessels and exposure training in Gujarat. Cooperative societies can explore the possibilities of managing ice plants, cold storage/cold chest units, cloud kitchens, and other collective entrepreneurial activities.

Cross-cutting Themes

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Fishers have been successful in seaweed culture training provided by ICAR-CMFRI and achieved good harvest results. There is more scope for expansion of this activity in other villages as well. Capacity building programmes for fishing, preparation of fish value-added products, its marketing, preparation of Detailed Project Reports, tourism, fish by-products rom fish waste, and a dedicated institute on tourism are suggested.

Summary of Chair Comments

Dr. D. Manikandan, IAS, Secretary, Department of Fisheries and fishermen Welfare, Government of Puducherry appreciated the ground-level issues shared by the different stakeholders in the session. He also expressed some concerns shared by different stakeholders and noted that the line department is taking initiatives to resolve the issues. The following initiatives are few of them.

- **Function and Enhance the Capacity of Ice Plants:** The Department of Fisheries and fishermen Welfare is in the process of reviving the dysfunctional ice plant located in the Thengathittu fishing harbour with scientific consultation from the National Institute of Fisheries Post Harvest Technology and Training (NIFPHATT) and it will be made functional. He also assured that the Department of Fisheries is in the process of devising a plan for enhancing ice plants, chilling plants, and cold storage for the next five years.

- **Deep Sea Fishing Expansion:** As acknowledged by the community, on a pilot basis 2 women cooperative societies were sanctioned with deep sea fishing vessels where women from the cooperative society are trained in fishing and the vessels are given to them. He acknowledged this as the first of its kind in the country. Similarly, the Puducherry government plans to expand deep sea fisheries also in the state.

- **Seaweed Farming Expansion and Processing Plant:** Following the success of seaweed farming trials in 5 villages in Puducherry district, the Department of Fisheries and fishermen Welfare plans to expand the area of culture and there would be a dedicated seaweed processing plant in the UT for further development of the seaweed sector.

- **Capacity Development and Training:** The state has initiated different training and capacity building requirements in the UT. The Department of Fisheries and fishermen

Welfare plans to take deep sea fishers to Barcelona to provide exposure to deep sea fishing. Similarly, Karaikal has an exclusive training institute for fishing and it has been revamped and will be operational in a few months. There will be a dedicated engineering wing in the Department to look after fisheries engineering-related works and there will be a separate cell for Detailed Project Report (DPR) preparation and a separate Project Management Unit (PMU) to look after implemented projects.

SESSION 3: INTRODUCTION TO WORKING GROUPS

Facilitator: Dr. P. Krishnan

Working Group Themes, Guiding Questions and Expected Outputs

Day 2 (Friday, 13 February 2026)

SESSION 4: PARALLEL WORKING GROUPS – VALUE CHAIN SEGMENT DEEP DRIVE

Objective 3 & 4: Gather intelligence and co-develop recommendations

1. Production and Landing Operations - Puducherry

The participants were fishers from the motorized sector in Puducherry District. Trawl fishers were not adequately represented.

Core Diagnostic:

1. At landing, which two steps most damage fish quality now?

(i) Unloading delay: Number of wholesale buyers are very much limited in Puducherry. Hence, the fish that are brought to the landing centre could not be sold immediately, resulting in quality related issues. Often, the fishes brought to Thengaithittu harbor have to be retained for long hours and stored with additional ice. Ice is costly (Rs 140-150 for 50 kg bar) in Puducherry, increasing the cost of fish storage.

(ii) Ice handling: Due to inadequate number of ice plants in Puducherry, often ice is supplied from Cuddalore (Tamil Nadu), resulting in higher cost. Because of this, adequate ice is not used during fish storage.

2. If harbor space is limited, which category faces the worst exclusion?

While all the stakeholders face issues, the worst affected are the mechanised boat owners. Difficulties are finding the space for berthing as well as unloading the catch.

3. What is the single most constraint to operate safely?

Safety gear could not be used as there is no adequate space in the motorized boats and using life jackets hinders fishing operations.

4. ***Subsidy: which support has the highest payoff for livelihoods, and what must change in design?***

The cost of construction of motorized boats has increased in the field. The subsidy should be correspondingly increased adopting suitable increase in the unit cost.

5. ***Deep-sea expansion: list two readiness gaps that must be solved before scaling***

Opinion among the participants was divided and many did not show interest for deep-sea fishing. Those who showed interest indicated the need for providing adequate finance and capacity building initiatives.

6. ***Nearshore resource pressure: what is the most workable way to create "space" for small/non-motorized without conflict?***

The participants, who were from motorized sector, said that zonation should be strictly followed, and mechanized boats should be prevented from operating in nearshore waters.

The participants also highlighted the problems like release of untreated sewage and dumping of plastics into coastal waters.

<u>Prioritisation:</u>

1. ***Rank top 5 landing fixes by impact on price:***

   i. Village landing points: Landing jetty required for quick unloading of catch. This is particularly important as sea erosion is becoming a major issue in recent years.

   ii. Finding enough buyers

   iii. Establishing fish storage facility in landing centres

   iv. Establishing gear storage facility in landing centres

   v. Addressing safety and health issues in the landing centres

2. ***Allocate 100 points across subsidy reforms vs infrastructure vs safety vs deep-sea capacity***

   - Subsidy reforms: 30
   - Infrastructure at landing centre: 40
   - Safety: 15
   - Deep-sea capacity: 15

3. ***Choose one measure that can be implemented in 90 days and one that needs 2+ years.***

- Two wheelers with icebox can be supplied to motorized boat owners in 90 days.
- Providing landing jetties, ice plants/cold storage in 2 + years.

Feasibility

1. ***What can fishers/associations realistically operate? What must government do?***

- Fishers/associations can maintain ice plants, cold storage, gear storage facilities, and help in monitoring and removing plastics and ALDFG.
- The government shall construct ice plants, cold storage, jetties and gear storage facilities. The government shall also arrange for recycling the plastic and ALDFG wastes.

2. ***For dep-sea: what is the acceptable financing form and what collateral/repayment is realistic?***

- Could not obtain clear view of the participants to this question.

2. Production & Landing (Karaikal)

Core Diagnostic:

1. **At landing, which two steps most damage fish quality?**

- **Sorting Area:** The condition of landing platforms was reported to be bad and inadequate. Stakeholders highlighted the need for improved concrete flooring, expanded sorting space, and additional holding areas to manage peak landings and accommodate traders without congestion.
- **Ice Handling:** The lack of reliable ice sources within the harbour vicinity was identified as a major constraint. Existing government facilities require operationalization ensuring availability of sufficient ice immediately after landing.

2. **If harbor space is limited, which category faces the worst exclusion?**

While all stakeholder groups experience congestion, participants ranked the degree of exclusion broadly as follows:

- Mechanized sector (as harbours primarily serve mechanized vessels)
- Motorized sector
- Large traders
- Women vendors at auction
- Non-motorized sector

This reflects competition for space and operational priority during peak landing times.

3. **What is the single most binding constraints to operating safely?**

The most critical safety gap identified was the lack of essential safety gear and communication equipment, including:

- Life buoys

- Transponders
- Life jackets (with a need for more user-friendly and innovative designs)
- Satellite phones
- Walkie-talkies

Improved access to these items was considered essential for reducing operational risk.

4. **Subsidy: which support has the highest payoff for livelihoods? what must change in design?**

Mechanized Sector – Fuel Support

- Suggested subsidy range: ₹10–₹20 per litre
- Monthly quantity: approximately 4,000–5,000 litres
- Design change proposed: allow unused monthly quotas to be carried forward or shift to an annual quota system for greater flexibility.

Motorized Sector – Boat Support

- Proposed revision of unit cost to ₹3.0 lakh
- Subsidy recommended at ₹1.5 lakh (50% of unit cost)
  Participants noted that current subsidy levels do not reflect actual construction costs in the field.

5. **Deep-sea expansion- List two readiness gaps that must be solved before scaling**
   Before scaling deep-sea fishing initiatives, stakeholders highlighted several prerequisites:
   - Skills and training for fishers
   - Adequate landing and logistics infrastructure
   - Access to finance
   - Improved accessibility scheme

   Fishers also requested flexibility to choose their own boat builders rather than being restricted to government-allocated options.

6. **Near-shore resource pressure: what is the most workable way to create 'space' for small/ non-mechanized without conflict?**

   Suggested measures to reduce pressure and support small and non-mechanized fishers included:
   - Strict enforcement of zonation rules
   - Deployment of artificial reefs
   - Improved control of litter and marine pollution

Prioritization:

1. Rank top 5 landing fixes by impact on price (1-5)

Stakeholders emphasised the following interventions as having strong potential to improve price realisation:

- Provision of freshwater points
- Adoption of basic icing protocols
- Expansion of unloading space

2. **Allocate 100 points across subsidy reforms vs infrastructure vs safety vs deep-ses capacity**

- Infrastructure improvements: 45
- Subsidy reforms: 30
- Safety measures (including boat-to-shore communication): 15
- Deep-sea capacity development: 10

This allocation reflects a strong preference for immediate infrastructure upgrades at landing sites.

3. **Choose one measure that can be implemented in 90 days and one that needs 2+ years-justify:**

Measure feasible within 90 days

Introduction of basic icing protocols and operationalisation of existing ice facilities. These actions rely primarily on management improvements and modest investments, making rapid implementation realistic.

Measure requiring 2+ years

Upgrading landing infrastructure, including platform reconstruction, expansion of sorting areas, and harbour capacity enhancement. These interventions require planning approvals, budget allocations, and construction timelines, making them longer-term initiatives.

Working Group 2: Post-Harvest and Cold Chain

Key outcomes from the group deliberations

- Establishment of 40-tonne ice plants at multiple locations in Puducherry to ensure adequate ice supply.
- Installation of 5-tonne cold storage units at 24 locations across harbours and landing centres in Puducherry and Karaikal, accessible to fishers and retail vendors.

- Provision of 100 kg capacity cold chests for local vendors and small retailers to reduce spoilage and maintain quality.
- Improving ease of transport within fishing harbours, landing centres, and SSF villages through pallet handlers for efficient movement of ice, fish, and fishing gear. Introduction of insulated vehicles for retail vendors to maintain the cold chain during transport.
- Promotion of ice-box fitted two-wheelers to support women vendors in safe and quality-preserving fish vending.

3. Processing and Value Addition

Core diagnostic

1. Identify 3 products realistically feasible in Puducherry in the next 12 months: *(dry fish, basic chilled cuts, ready-to-cook, waste by-products, seaweed products)*— and the single missing input for each.

Based on the deliberation, the working group came out with three products, namely (1) preparation and marketing of ready-to-cook fishery products, (2) dry fish production, and (3) preparation of diversified seaweed products.

2. **What prevents women groups from scaling value addition: workspace, training, credit, market linkage—rank.**

   Major challenges, which prevents women groups from scaling value addition are inadequate training, market linkage, common workspace, and credit linkage.

3. **Fish waste: which waste stream is easiest to organise first (heads/frames/viscera) and who can aggregate it?**

   Puducherry produces a large quantity of fish waste through fish cleaning, which is generated in all fish markets. Major waste includes viscera and head portions. Much of this fish waste is dumped in open yards, creating pollution in nearby settlements. There is a huge opportunity for SHGs to be exclusively formed to develop by-products from this waste and market them. Opportunities include fish amino acid preparation and other by-products. There has been earlier experience in Puducherry where women individuals tried but could not market the products due to lack of market linkage. This is an added advantage, as proper market linkage will quickly facilitate production and take forward these entrepreneurial activities.

4. **Seaweed: what is the minimum viable chain—training → raw material → processing → buyer—where is it breaking now?**

   Pilot seaweed farming conducted in five fishing villages is successful at present. The minimum viable value chain would require providing training for other villages going forward.

5. **What "quality standard" must be met to get premium pricing—what can be verified locally (icing/clean water/packaging)?**

   All three elements mentioned are necessary, namely clean ice, clean water, and good packaging.

Prioritisation

1. Rank 5 proposals by **jobs created per ₹1 crore** (rough judgement).

Activity	No. of Unit	Puducherry	Karaikal
Value added product	5 person/ stall	50 stalls	10 stalls
Seaweed	3 villages	Pannithittu Moorthikuppam Narambai	Pattinacherry Karaikalacherry
Solar drying		15	Kilingalmedu (10) Karaikalmedu Pattinamcherry
Cloud Kitchen	Near to marketing centre	2	2

2. **Allocate 100 points: women livelihoods vs export-oriented processing vs waste utilisation vs seaweed.**

   Based on the prioritisation and allocation of points,

   Women livelihoods (40),

   Export-oriented processing (10),

   Waste utilisation (20),

   Seaweed (30).

3. **Pick one pilot to run in one harbour + two villages—why that geography?**

   Karaikal harbour is a good fit to run the pilot scale, and the two villages Kilingalmedu and Karikalmeedu/Pattiacherry are adjacent to the harbour and would be a good fit for taking the initiatives.

Key Suggestion on Feasibility and Institutional responsibility

- Training is required for fish value-added product development, and another multifaceted fisheries entrepreneurship.
- A DPR preparation cell is required for entrepreneurs to facilitate and simplify the process of document submission to the government.
- A Project Management Unit and Engineering wing within the DoF are required.
- Fish waste value addition (amino acid, by-products) is required.
- Solar drying units are required for dry fish production.

4. Markets and Trade

1. **Where is value being lost most: at auction, transport, market holding, retail handling—pick one and describe the mechanism.**

   Stakeholders indicated that the greatest loss of fish value occurs at the landing centres during auction, primarily due to insufficient availability of ice and inadequate chilling immediately after landing. The next major loss takes place during retail handling, where poor storage and exposure reduce quality and price realisation.

2. **Women vendors: what exact constraint forces low-price sale (time, storage, credit, space, harassment, spoilage risk)?**

   Women fish vendors reported that the main driver of distress sales is the lack of storage facilities in village markets. Unsold fish at the end of the day could not preserved, forcing vendors to sell at heavily reduced prices. Limited access to formal credit further constrains their ability to invest in storage or improve handling practices. Current lending procedures from banks and NBFCs are cumbersome with high collateral requirements, and stakeholders requested simplified and more accessible credit facilities.

3. **Cooperative marketing: what can coops credibly do in year-1—*(ice/cold chests, collective transport, simple retail outlets, price information)*—and what should they *not* do yet?**

   Fisher cooperatives expressed willingness to operate and manage basic infrastructure such as:
   - Ice boxes and cold-chain support facilities
   - Collective transport systems
   - Small utility vehicles for women vendors under a custom-hiring model

   These were viewed as feasible possibilities and could improve efficiency without major institutional risk.

4. **Premium price: what does "quality fish" mean to buyers here, and how will it be signalled (icing/pack/trace)?**

   Consumers in Puducherry associate "quality fish" primarily with freshness from local marine landings. Locally caught fish commands higher price because buyers perceive it to be fresher than fish transported from other states. Traders suggested promoting exclusive outlets branded around local fish to signal freshness and maintain a premium market segment.

5. **If >60% fish in Puducherry markets comes from outside, what does it imply for local marketing strategy? (supply gap vs preferences).**

   Although a significant share of market supply originates from neighboring states such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, local consumer preference still

favors locally landed fish. This suggests that the marketing strategy should focus on:

- Strengthening branding and visibility of local fish
- Addressing supply gaps while recognizing differentiated consumer segments
  Traders observed that externally sourced fish is often targeted toward peri-urban and rural markets.

Prioritisation

1. **Rank 5 market interventions by income impact for small fishers.**
   1. Introduction of mobile fish vending stalls in urban Puducherry to improve market access and price realisation.
   2. Inclusion of fish in the school nutritious meal programme, creating stable institutional demand.
   3. Providing fisher cooperatives priority access to institutional and bulk buyers.
   4. Development of branded retail concepts highlighting local fish.
   5. Provision of shared transport and storage facilities through cooperatives.

2. **Score each option (1–5) on risk of capture (higher score = higher risk), and explain why.**
   - Institutional supply contracts may carry higher risks of elite capture if procurement is not transparent.
   - Cooperative-managed infrastructure requires clear governance mechanisms to prevent unequal access.
   - Branding initiatives must ensure participation of small vendors rather than benefiting only larger traders.
3. **Choose one intervention that best supports tourism-linked markets (only if implementable), else drop it.**

   Branded local-fish stalls or curated retail outlets were considered potentially suitable for tourism markets, provided they remain operationally simple and financially viable.

Feasibility

1. **What is a viable operating revenue model for coop marketing without hidden subsidies (commissions, rentals, membership fees)?**

Operating revenue model for cooperative marketing

Stakeholders suggested that cooperatives could sustain operations through:

- Custom hiring fees for vehicles and equipment
- Membership contributions
- Small commissions from collective sales or logistics services

The emphasis was on avoiding dependence on hidden subsidies and ensuring transparent cost recovery.

2. **What minimum digital steps are realistic (price posting, simple online stall promotion) given current capacity?**

Minimum realistic digital steps

- Regular posting of daily fish prices through simple digital platforms
- Basic online promotion of stalls or vending routes given current capacity levels, more advanced digital traceability systems were not considered immediately feasible.

Institutional responsibility

1. **Who owns/maintains village markets and ensures vendor space allocation?**

Stakeholders highlighted the need for clarity regarding which authority is responsible for maintaining village markets and allocating vendor space, indicating that coordination between local government bodies and fisheries institutions remains essential.

2. **Who enforces basic hygienic handling standards in markets (DoF/municipality/market committee/coops)?**

Ensuring basic hygiene and quality control in markets was seen as a shared responsibility involving:

- Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare
- Municipal authorities
- Market committees
- Fishermen/Fisherwomen Welfare Cooperatives Societies (for self-regulation and awareness)

VALEDICTORY FUNCTION

Thiru. N. Rangasamy, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Puducherry said that Puducherry is steadily moving towards positioning its fishing community at the centre of a modern, export-oriented marine economy, appreciating the collaborative efforts of BOBP-IGO, FAO and the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare in organising the international workshop and creating a platform for long-term sectoral transformation. He highlighted that the future of the fisheries sector lies in enabling fishers to move beyond the role of harvesters and become entrepreneurs, processors and exporters, supported by strategic initiatives such as the Integrated Port Development Scheme and the Fisheries Processing Cluster. He highlighted that the Government of Puducherry has been actively implementing a wide range of fisheries development and welfare programmes aimed at improving infrastructure, strengthening value chain and enhancing better livelihoods and improved economic security of fishing communities. He advised all the participants to make use of this golden opportunity to discuss and contribute for evolving suitable strategies. Further he assured full support from the Government for all initiatives / recommendations of the workshop.

Opening Remarks

Ms. Angela Lentisco noted that the national workshop in Puducherry marked an important transition from broad regional discussions to a focused, evidence-based roadmap for upgrading aquatic food value chains at the local level, highlighting the strong momentum built over the past two days through detailed technical deliberations and active stakeholder participation. Addressing senior government representatives, experts and all participants, she expressed appreciation to the Government of Puducherry for its leadership and willingness to host the pilot initiative, emphasising that the Union Territory is setting a practical model that can be scaled across India and the wider region. She acknowledged the close collaboration between FAO and BOBP-IGO, noting that the recent technical surveys and analyses have laid a solid foundation for interventions that are participatory, locally grounded and driven by real sectoral needs. Referring to the roadmap discussed, she outlined priority areas including reducing post-harvest losses, strengthening cold chain and micro-level infrastructure, improving traceability systems to meet modern standards, and ensuring that small-scale fisheries, particularly women, are empowered to access greater economic benefits. She stressed that the workshop should be seen not as an endpoint but as the beginning of a sustained process, with the findings from the Puducherry pilot offering a clear pathway for long-term improvements. Reaffirming FAO's commitment to continued collaboration with national and regional partners, she expressed confidence that coordinated efforts, shared expertise and ongoing engagement with fishers,

researchers and institutions would contribute to building a more resilient, inclusive and profitable fisheries sector in the years ahead.

Workshop Outcome

Dr. P. Krishnan observed that Puducherry's fisheries sector holds strong production potential but continues to lose substantial value due to critical gaps in post-harvest infrastructure and value chain integration, stressing that the time has come to shift focus from extraction to efficiency and value creation. Presenting the findings of the BOBP-IGO partnership to the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Fisheries Minister, he highlighted that Puducherry's fleet already outperforms national averages, with higher per-trip yields, a younger and more mechanised fleet, a strong consumer base with high seafood demand, and favourable income levels that signal strong market potential. However, he explained that despite these advantages, the sector has not fully taken off due to systemic bottlenecks such as weak cold chain systems, high ice costs, limited functional cold storage, and a large share of fish leaving the Union Territory without value addition. Drawing from stakeholder consultations, he noted that fishers across production, post-harvest, processing and marketing segments repeatedly pointed to the same core constraints, insufficient infrastructure, rising operational costs, limited subsidies, poor access to finance, and weak cooperative capacity. He emphasised that many problems stem not from the absence of infrastructure but from non-functional facilities, particularly idle ice plants and inadequate harbour capacity, which lead to rapid quality deterioration, price drops and income loss, especially affecting women vendors. He outlined immediate and medium-term action pathways including activating existing ice plants, expanding cold storage and insulated transport, strengthening village-level markets, supporting women through targeted cold-chain and enterprise packages, and enabling deep-sea expansion and value-added processing. Aligning these interventions with national policies such as EEZ regulations, Union Budget provisions and WTO subsidy frameworks, he stressed that Puducherry has a unique opportunity to position itself as a harbour-centric production and processing hub on India's East coast. He further highlighted the need to modernise governance frameworks, strengthen data systems through traceability initiatives, and establish a dedicated Fisheries Development Board to guide long-term sectoral transformation. Concluding with a call to action, he underscored that with unified stakeholder support, existing infrastructure activation, and sustained technical partnership, Puducherry can move rapidly from workshop discussions to field implementation, setting a replicable model for value chain–led fisheries development across the Bay of Bengal Region.

Address by Guest of Honour

Thiru. K. Lakshminarayanan observed that Puducherry's fisheries sector stands at the threshold of a new phase of transformation, with recent initiatives by the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare and the support of national and international partners creating fresh opportunities for fishers to move beyond traditional practices and embrace a more knowledge-driven and market-oriented future. Appreciating the efforts of Department and the Bay of Bengal Programme for bringing together experts, institutions and community representatives on a common platform, he noted that the workshop marked a first-time exposure to global experiences to many fishers, modern methods and international perspectives, shifting discussions from local concerns to broader development pathways. He emphasised that fishing remains one of the most risky and labour-intensive occupations, yet nearly a third of the catch is often lost due to poor handling, storage and marketing systems, underlining the urgent need to strengthen the value chain, reduce wastage and improve income security. Highlighting that fish is a highly perishable commodity with ever-growing demand, he stressed that the sector holds immense economic potential, if supported with proper infrastructure, technology adoption and better planning. Referring to government's investments in harbours, landing centres and welfare schemes across Puducherry and Karaikal, he noted that financial support alone is not enough and it must be used productively to build businesses and create long-term growth. He urged fishers to see subsidies and training opportunities as stepping stones to entrepreneurship, to adopt new technologies, maintain proper data and records, and share knowledge within their communities, particularly with the younger generation. Drawing parallels with India's agricultural transformation, he expressed confidence that with collective effort, strong institutions and community participation, fisheries sector can achieve a similar economic revolution in the coming years, positioning Puducherry as a model for sustainable and prosperous fisheries development.

Vote of Thanks

Thiru. A. Mohamad Ismail expressed his deep appreciation to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Puducherry for gracing the valedictory session of the international consultation workshop and for his continued commitment to improving the lives and livelihoods of the fishing community through progressive leadership and support. He also acknowledged the valuable presence and guidance of the Hon'ble Minister for Fisheries, whose initiatives and reforms, he noted, have been instrumental in steering the sector toward growth and modernisation. Thanking senior officials, departmental heads and organising partners, he highlighted that the workshop, though organised within a short time, was conducted successfully through strong coordination, particularly recognising the efforts of BOBP-IGO and its leadership. He also expressed gratitude to the FAO

representative for her technical contributions, as well as to national and international experts, government officials and institutional partners whose insights strengthened the discussions. He paid special thanks to the fishermen and fisherwomen from Puducherry and Karaikal, whose field experiences and active participation gave direction and purpose to the consultation, noting that the entire exercise was designed with the singular aim of improving their livelihoods. Emphasising that the outcomes of the workshop would guide structured and long-term development of the traditional fisheries sector, he expressed confidence that such collective efforts would support stable and sustainable progress for fishing communities, while thanking all those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the event a grand success.

Recommendations

Activate Underutilised Infrastructure for Immediate Gains

Idle and underutilised fisheries infrastructure must be activated immediately to achieve rapid gains in the fisheries economy and improve value chain efficiency.

Promote Fishers as Value Chain Entrepreneurs

Fishers should be supported and enabled to transition from a catch-and-sell model to enterprise-based operations through capacity building, market linkages, and institutional support.

Expand Cold Chain Systems to Reduce Post-Harvest Losses

Decentralised cold storage, insulated transport, and community-managed cold chain systems must be developed and scaled up to minimise post-harvest losses and improve price realisation.

Strengthen Women's Economic Participation

Targeted interventions should be implemented to strengthen women's participation, including improved access to storage, vending infrastructure, credit, and enterprise opportunities.

Establish a Dedicated Fisheries Development Platform

A specialized fisheries and seafood development body should be established to coordinate infrastructure development, traceability, value addition, cooperative strengthening, and export linkages.

Ensure Compliance with National and Global Standards

Fishers must be trained and supported in vessel tracking, catch reporting, and sustainable fisheries practices to meet national regulations and international market requirements.

Develop WTO-Compatible Support Mechanisms

Public investments should be aligned with WTO-compliant support areas, including infrastructure, safety equipment, insurance, value addition, and small-scale fisher welfare.

Integrate Climate Resilience into Fisheries Policy

Fisheries policies must incorporate climate resilience measures, including risk protection, insurance coverage, and livelihood diversification for vulnerable groups.

Enhance Fishing Productivity Without Expanding Fleet Size

Efforts should focus on improving access to productive fishing grounds through artificial reefs, Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), and cooperative offshore fishing models rather than increasing fleet size.

Strengthen Fisheries Data and Traceability Systems

Robust systems for data collection and traceability must be established, including species-wise catch data, effort tracking, vessel-level reporting, and socio-economic indicators.

Shift from Welfare-Based Approaches to Economic Development

Policy focus should shift from fragmented welfare schemes to a structured economic development approach that promotes stable incomes, efficient supply chains, strong institutions, and export competitiveness.

Provisional Agenda & Programme

Annexure I

Time	Activity	Responsibility
Day 1 (Thursday, 12 Feb 2026)		
0830 – 0910	Arrival of participants at Hotel Accord & Registration	
0910 – 0915	Participants to be seated in the Conference Hall	
0915 – 1115	**Inaugural Session**	
0915 – 0925	Arrival of the dignitaries / Dignitaries to be escorted to the dias	
0925 – 0930	**National Anthe/ Tamil Thai Vazhthu (Invocation of Mother Tamil)**	
0930 – 0935	**Lighting of the Lamp** by Chief Guest and dignitaries	
0935 – 0940	**Welcome Remarks**	**Dr. D. Manikandan,** IAS Commissioner-cum-Secretary to the Lt. Governor & Secretary (Fisheries and Tourism), Government of Puducherry
0940 – 0948	**Opening Remarks**	**Ms. Angela Lentisco** Fishery and Aquaculture Officer, FAO Regional Office for Aia and the Pacific, Bangkok
0948 – 1000	**Thematic Presentation** Upgrading Marine Fisheries value Chain in Puducherry – Broad Messages and Roadmap for future collaboration	**Dr. P. Krishnan** Director, BOBP-IGO
1000 – 1010	**Keynote Address** PMMKSSY – A game changer initiative for prosperous fisheries	**Dr. S. Kannappan** Senior Executive Director, NFDB
		Thiru. Sagar Chauchan, IAS Chief Secretary, Government of Puducherry
1010 – 1020	**Address by Guest of Honour**	**Dr. Sharath Chauchan,** IAS Chief Secretary, Government of Puducherry
1020 – 1030	**Address by Chief Guest**	**His Excellency Thiru. K. Kailashnathan**

		Lieutenant governor, Government of Puducherry
1030 – 1035	**Presentation of Mementos to Dignitaries on Dias**	BOBP-IGO
1035 – 1040	**Vote of Thanks**	**Thiru. A. Mohamad Ismail** Director, Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare and Fishermen Welfare, Government of Puducherry
1040 – 1045	**Group Photograph**	BOBP-IGO
1045 - 1115	**High Tea**	
1115 – 1300	**Session 1: Value Chain Analysis Methodology and Puducherry Baseline** **Chair: Ms. Angela Lentisco**, FAO Objective 1 & 2: Present methodology and share initial findings	
1115 – 1140	Aquatic Food Value Chian Assessment: Analytical Framework	**Dr. Omar Peñarubia** Fishery Officer, FAO, Rome
1140 – 1215	Puducherry Marine Fisheries Value Chain: Baseline Assessment and Preliminary Findings • Production profile and species diversity • Landing center infrastructure • Post-harvest handling and losses • Market channels and actor relationships	**Dr. P. Krishnan** Director, BOBP-IGO
1215 – 1300	Regional Models of marine Fisheries Value Chain	**Mr. Abu Naim Muhammad Abdus Sabur** Joint Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Bangladesh **Dr. Hussain Sinan,** Director General (Fisheries), MoFOR, Maldives **Mr. Susantha Kahawate** Director General, Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare and Aquatic Resources, MoFAR, Sri Lanka
1300 – 1400	Lunch Break	

1400 – 1530	**Session 2: Stakeholder Perspectives – Gathering Ground Intelligence** **Chair: Dr. D. Manikandan**, IAS, Department of Fisheries, Government of Puducherry Objective 3: Gather stakeholder intelligence	
1400 – 1425	Fisher Voices: Production, Landing and Post-Harves Challenges	**Fisher Representatives** (Mechanized, Motorized, Traditional – 8 min each)
1425 – 1445	Trader and Market Actor Perspectives: logistics, Quality and Market Constraints	**Trader/market Representatives** (2 speakers, 10 min each)
1445 – 1505	Processor Perspectives: Supply, Processing and Value Addition Opportunities	**Processing Plant/Exporter Representatives**
1505 – 1530	Open Discussion: Additional Insights and Cross-Cutting Issues	**All participants**
1530 – 1600	**Tea/Coffee Break**	
1600 – 1630	**Session 3: Introduction to Working Groups** **Facilitator: Dr. P. Krishnan**, BOBP-IGO	
1600 – 1620	Working Group Themes, Guiding Questions and Expected Outputs	BOBP-IGO
1620 – 1630	Summary of the day	BOBP-IGO

Day 2 (Friday, 13 February 2026)

0930 – 1100	**Session 4: Parallel Working Groups – Value Chain Segment Deep Dive** Four concurrent groups (8-10 participants each). Each group will include mix of government, industry, fishers, research institutions and NGOs to ensure diverse perspectives and actionable recommendations. Objective 3 & 4: Gather intelligence and co-develop recommendations **Each group to identify** • Top 3 binding constraints • Priority upgrading interventions (quick win & medium-term) • Specific recommendations with institutional responsibilities	
	Working Group 1: Production and landing Operations Focus: Infrastructure gaps, handling practices, fisher organization	**Facilitator: CMFRI Representative** Rapporteur: BOBP-IGO
	Working Group 2: Post Harvest and Cold Chain	**Facilitator: CIFT Representative**

	Focus: Ice availability, transport, loss hotspots, logistics	Rapporteur: BOBP-IGO
	Working Group 3: Processing and Value Addition Focus: Capacity utilization, product diversification, quality standards	**Facilitator: MPEDA Representative** Rapporteur: BOBP-IGO
	Working Group 4: Markets and Trade Focus: Domestic markets, export opportunities, pricing, demand trends	**Facilitator: NFDB/Market Expert** Rapporteur: BOBP-IGO
1100 – 1130	**Tea/Coffee Break and Report Finalization**	
1130 – 1330	**Session 5: Synthesis and Consensus Building** **Chair: Dr. Omar Peñarubia**, FAO Objective 4: Finalize recommendations for government submission	
1130 – 1145	Working group 1 Presentation: Production and Landing – Key Recommendations	**WG1 Rapporteur**
1145 – 1200	Working group 2 Presentation: Post-harvest and Cold Chain – Priority Interventions	**WG2 Rapporteur**
1200 - 1215	Working group 3 Presentation: Processing and Value Addition – Strategic Actions	**WG3 Rapporteur**
1215 – 1230	Working group 4 Presentation: Markets and Trade – Enhancement Pathways	**WG4 Rapporteur**
1230 – 1245	Integrated Upgrading Strategy Framework for Puducherry • Quick wins (0-6 months) • Medium-term actions (6-18 months) • Institutional responsibilities and resource requirements	**BOBP-IGO/FAO**
1245 – 1300	Consensus Building: Validation, Refinement and Stakeholder Commitments	**Facilitated Discussion** **All participants**
1300 – 1415	**Lunch**	
1415 – 1600	**Valedictory Function**	

1430 – 1435	**Lighting of the Lamp**	
1435 – 1440	**Welcome Remarks**	**Dr. D. Manikandan**, IAS Commissioner-cum-Secretary to the Lt. Governor & Secretary (Fisheries and Tourism), Government of Puducherry
1440 – 1448	**Opening remarks**	**Ms. Angela Lentisco** Fishery and Aquaculture Officer, FAO Regional Office for Aia and the Pacific, Bangkok
1448 – 1500	**Workshop Outcome** Upgrading Marine Fisheries Value Chain in Puducherry – Roadmap for Future Collaboration	**Dr. P. Krishnan** Director, BOBP-IGO
1500 - 1510	**Keynote Presentation**	**Dr. Sharath Chauchan,** IAS Chief Secretary, Government of Puducherry
1510 – 1520	**Address by Guest of Honour**	**Thiru. K. Lakshminarayanan** Hon'ble Chief Minister of Puducherry, Government of Puducherry
1520 – 1530	**Address by Chief Guest**	**Thiru. N. Rangasamy** Hon'ble Chief Minister of Puducherry, Government of Puducherry
1530 – 1535	**Presentation of Mementos to Dignitaries on Dias**	BOBP-IGO
1535 – 1540	**Vote of Thanks**	**Thiru. A. Mohamad Ismail** Director, Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare and Fishermen Welfare, Government of Puducherry
1540 - 1600	**High Tea**	

List of Participants

Annexure II

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31.		**Mr. K. Gajendiran,** Puducherry	
32.		**Mr. K. Raja,** Puducherry.	
33.		**Mr. G. Uthukattan,** Puducherry.	
34.		**Ms. K. Monishree,** Puducherry.	
35.		**Mr. R. Kalaignanam,** Puducherry.	
36.		**Mr. Madhan,** Puducherry.	
37.		**Mr. Mathiyalakan,** Puducherry.	
38.		**Mr. K. Pugazhenthi,** Puducherry.	
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40.		**Mr. V. Nagamuthu,** Puducherry.	
41.		**Mr. Velavan,** Puducherry.	

42.		**Ms. Samundeeswari,** Puducherry.	
43.		**Ms. Divya,** Puducherry.	
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46.		**Mr. Venkadesaperumal,** Puducherry.	
47.		**Mr. Ainnarappan,** Puducherry.	
48.		**Mr. Ramachandran,** Puducherry.	
49.		**Ms. Valli,** Puducherry.	
50.		**Mr. Ravi,** Puducherry.	
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57.		**Mr. Kamalanathan,** Puducherry.	
58.		**Ms. Achadana,** Puducherry.	
59.		**Mr. Murugananthan,** Puducherry.	
60.		**Mr. Veerappan,** Puducherry.	
61.		**Mr. Subramanian,** Puducherry.	
62.	**FFPO, Puducherry**	**Mr. Bharathidasan,** Puducherry.	
63.	**Women SHG, Puducherry**	**Mrs. Jayanthi,** Solai Nagar, Puducherry.	
64.		**Mrs. Akila, Pannithittu,** Puducherry.	
65.	**Women SHG, Karaikal**	**Ms. A. Kalaimani,** Puducherry.	
66.	**Traditional**	**Mr. G. Gunaseelan,** Puducherry.	

67.	**Fisher Community Leader - Karaikal**	**Mr. Gobardhan sahoo,** Puducherry.	
68.	**Fisher Rep Mechanized, Puducherry**	**Mr. S. Sanjai,** Puducherry.	
69.		**Mrs. Anushiya** Puducherry.	
70.	**Fisher Puducher ry**	**Mrs. Neelavathi** Puducherry.	
71.		**Ms. Selvarani,** Puducherry.	
72.	**Fisher Karaikal**	**Mr. Jagadish,** Puducherry.	
73.	**NGO**	**Ms. Bharathi. B,** Puducherry.	
74.	**Ice Plant & Cold Storage**	**Mr. Natarajan,** Puducherry.	
75.	**Retail Market Vendor**	**Mr. R. Naresh,** Puducherry.	
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Brief Profile of the Speakers

Annexure III

Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, Chennai

Served as a scientist for over 20 years in Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) under Government of India. He has published over 100 research papers on diverse areas in fisheries and environment management. He spearheads many regional programs on fisheries management in the BOB region. He also serves as the vice chair of the RFB Secretariat Network (RSN).

Ms. Angela Lentisco, Fishery and Aquaculture Officer, FAO/RAP, Bangkok

International development specialist with over 19 years of experience across FAO, UNEP, and AECID, a rare blend of technical expert and institutional strategist. His work centers on strengthening fisheries and aquaculture systems, with a strong focus on small-scale fisheries, gender mainstreaming, and ecosystem-based management. Extensive field experience across South and Southeast Asia and Latin America (Brazil) has shaped his practical, solutions-driven approach.

Dr. Omar Riego Peñarubia, Fishery Officer, FAO/RAP, Rome

Fishery Officer at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), based in Rome, working at the intersection of science, technology, and sustainable fisheries. His work focuses on post-harvest fisheries, reducing fish loss and waste, and promoting innovative fish waste valorization approaches.

Dr. E. Vivekanandan, International Consultant, BOBP-IGO, Chennai.

He belongs to the Agricultural Research Service of India. He has years of experience in marine fisheries research and development. He has pioneered the research on fish stock assessment, climate change, marine mammals and marine fisheries management.

Dr. Hussain Sinan, Director General, Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Maldives.

Researcher and policy maker - an extraordinary combination. His research work focuses on equitable governance particularly focusing on the role of RFMOs and he is also keen on issues surrounding ABNJ.

Mr. Susantha Kahawate, Director General, Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare and Aquatic Resources, MoFAR, Sri Lanka

He plays a key role in guiding national fisheries policy, resource management, and institutional coordination across the sector. With extensive administrative and technical experience, he has contributed to strengthening sustainable fisheries development and regulatory implementation in Sri Lanka.

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