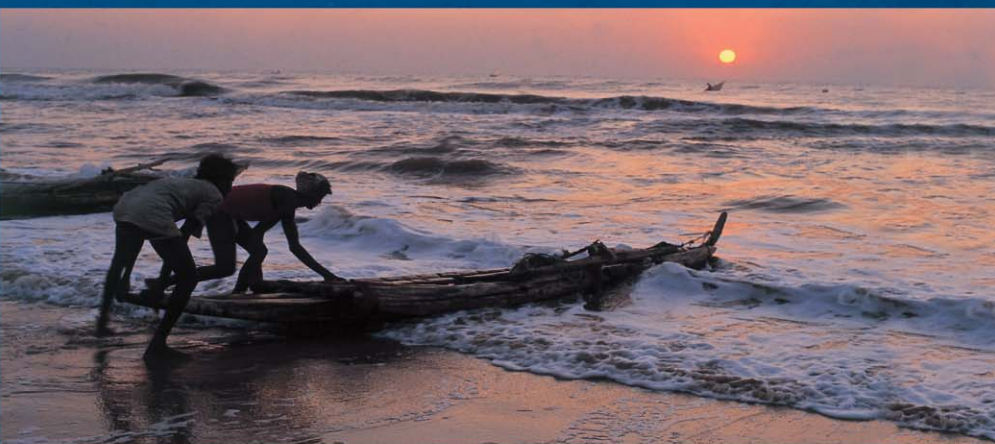


25<sub>years</sub>

BAY OF BENGAL PROGRAMME  
Inter-Governmental Organisation



For Sustainable Fisheries

*A new dawn, a new beginning . . .*

# Bay of Bengal Programme

## Inter-Governmental Organisation

The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) has evolved from the erstwhile Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The establishment of the BOBP-IGO was conceived during the early stages of the Third Phase of the BOBP (1994 – 2000) and finally endorsed through a resolution at the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the BOBP, held at Phuket, Thailand, in October 1999.

The Governments of Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka formally signed the BOBP-IGO Agreement on 26 April 2003 at Chennai and the Government of Maldives on 21 May 2003 at Chennai.



The BOBP-IGO is a unique regional fisheries body that will assist member-countries in increasing livelihood opportunities, improving the quality of life of small-scale fisherfolk, and promoting responsible fishing practices and environmentally sound management programmes.

### Vision

Our vision is to enable sustainable coastal fisheries development and interventions that positively impact on the lives of fishers in the Bay of Bengal region.

### Mandate

The BOBP-IGO is mandated to enhance co-operation among member-countries as well as other countries and organisations in the Bay of Bengal region and provide technical and management advisory services for sustainable coastal fisheries development and management.

### Core Functions

The BOBP-IGO will:

- ▶ Implement programmes and activities for the sustainable development and management of coastal fisheries.
- ▶ Enable shared learning, information exchange, and increased awareness on the needs, benefits, and practices of coastal fisheries management.
- ▶ Train key personnel for coastal fisheries planning, research, training, extension, and development.
- ▶ Transfer between countries knowledge and solutions related to technologies,



*Balancing the future of fishers with the cost of progress and the benefits of economic gain has been an area of concern for the global fishing industry. And BOBP-IGO is committed to managing change and partnering with stakeholders for a brighter tomorrow.*





techniques, processes and livelihood opportunities, and lessons, learnings and insights from the field.

- ▶ Develop interventions and programmes for women in fisheries.
- ▶ Initiate feasibility studies, project formulation, human resources planning, and awareness campaigns.

## Background and Evolution

Over the past 25 years, the BOBP has worked closely with fisherfolk, policy-makers, fisheries officials, scientists, NGO representatives and donors to understand the special needs of fishing communities and how to meet them. Development or management issues have been studied; problems highlighted; solutions evolved; training organised; information disseminated. Fishers have been encouraged to explore alternative livelihood options and adopt sustainable fisheries practices.

BOBP was a pioneer in the region in many areas of small-scale fisheries development and management, and in systematic debate, discussion and documentation on these subjects. Examples: Women in fisheries; people's participation in fisheries; post-harvest technologies; fishery resources; bio-socio-economics. BOBP's strong stress on fisheries management during its third phase which began in 1994, plus the many BOBP-supported pilot activities and workshops on management in member-countries, led to a gradual change in perception of fisheries management. Once advocated only reluctantly, fisheries management is today one of the buzzwords in fisheries in the region.

BOBP work (particularly in Thailand and India) has given a fillip to the concept of community-based fisheries management (CBFM), and to ideas and insights on how to bring it about. The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries has

been introduced and promoted throughout the region. So has knowledge on fisheries regulations and on development of alternative livelihoods for fishermen threatened by pressure on resources.

The IGO has ensured the logical progress of BOBP as a regional forum to enable sustainable fisheries development and management.

Measures to alleviate poverty, minimise post-harvest losses, stem resource depletion and ensure safety at sea, require an innate understanding of fishers and their culture, and of coastal ecosystems. Such an understanding has been promoted by the BOBP and the IGO – through action (pilot activities), discussion (workshops and seminars) and information



*At BOBP, we never lose sight of the fact that it is the small-scale/ artisanal fishermen who need us most. All our activities are aimed at improving their quality of life.*



# Bay of Bengal Programme

## Inter-Governmental Organisation

### Issues and Programmes

(publications).

#### *Reducing Conflicts at Sea*

The modernisation of the fishing industry has improved the fishing capabilities of many fishing vessels. Consequently, fleet capacities have also been enhanced, resulting in tremendous pressure on target species. Overfishing destroys fishing grounds, often to the point of no return, resulting in newer species moving into the capture chain. This development has also widened the gulf between the haves and have-nots. Artisanal fishers cannot compete with mechanised fishing boats. Result: tension and conflicts at sea. BOBP-IGO aims at working with the stakeholders to optimise fleet capacity and also reduce ongoing conflicts between the two groups.

#### *Promoting Safety at Sea*

Fishing at sea is probably the most dangerous occupation in the world. Every year thousands of fishermen worldwide die on account of poor safety regimes. The problem is all the more acute in the Bay of Bengal region, where sea safety measures among artisanal and small-scale fishermen are rudimentary or non-existent.

In October 2001, BOBP organised a Regional Workshop which suggested a Regional Programme on Sea Safety for Artisanal and Small-Scale Fishermen. The “Chennai Declaration” adopted at the Workshop will be carried forward through a programme that will include analysis of accident data; education and training; better fisheries management and enforcement; stronger collaboration between fishermen, fishermen’s organisations and governments.

#### *Strengthening Fish Stocks Assessment*

Information on fish stocks in the Bay of Bengal is sparse. Some characteristic features of fisheries in



the region are open access, excessive fishing capacity and resource conflicts. While inshore stocks are either optimally exploited or overexploited, little is known about offshore resources or their exploitation. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is said to be rampant and fish stocks in several parts of the Bay are threatened.

BOBP-IGO would seek to provide a mechanism through which member-countries could participate in a regional stock assessment programme and also develop their national capacities to carry out resources surveys and improve fishery statistics in support of fisheries management.

#### *Assisting in Poverty Alleviation*

Fishing communities are mired in poverty. Many





fishers are not equipped/skilled enough to migrate to more promising livelihood options and are wary of unfamiliar terrain. Some realise that resources are dwindling but see no alternatives. Education, coupled with viable income-generating interventions and initiatives from within the community, is the only hope for progress. This is the direction BOBP-IGO will work towards.

#### *Encouraging and Empowering Women in Fisheries*

Women play a major role in small-scale fisheries; they are responsible primarily for post-harvest activities – processing and marketing fish. Their strong traditional role – as wives, mothers and home-makers – continues to sustain families.

Currently, many NGOs and social work organisations train women in fishing communities to make fish pickles, mats, nets, cleaning agents, and other small-scale industry products. However, many of these initiatives lack sound marketing strategies, leading to short-term projects with wafer-thin margins. Women in fisheries understand the need to learn new skills and explore small business ideas. Many women are willing to learn, but need support, training and encouragement. BOBP-IGO will draw on past experience to implement tangible programmes.

#### *Reducing Post-Harvest Losses*

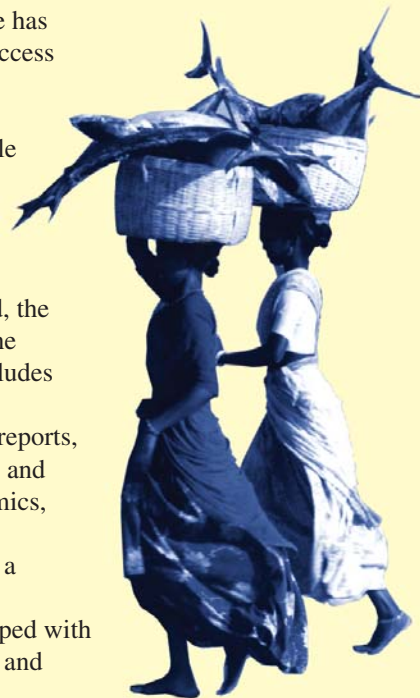
Fish is cash only after the harvest. Preservation, transportation and marketing form the latter half of the profit cycle. Improper icing, delayed transportation, and blowfly/maggot infestation result in large-scale post-harvest losses. With education and changed attitudes, most fishing communities clean the catch well, use fresh ice for storage, and charter commercial transport to move their catch to the market. This has reduced post-harvest losses but systematic implementation of good post-harvest practices is yet to become a habit. BOBP-IGO aims at suitable interventions

to reduce post-harvest losses and increase the availability of fish for human food.

#### *Strengthening Information Services*

The Information Service has powered the BOBP's success and longevity, and strengthened interest worldwide on small-scale fisherfolk communities in the Bay of Bengal region. Well-researched and professionally presented, the multi-media output of the Information Service includes publications of many kinds (books, technical reports, newsletters, field guides and manuals, brochures, comics, calendars), besides posters, video films and a CD-ROM package. The BOBP's library is equipped with books, technical reports and literature and reference materials on small-scale fisheries, plus a large photo collection.

All the BOBP publications from 1979 to December 2000 are available on the "Onefish"



*BOBP-IGO places high priority on making better use of existing catches. The possibilities include: retaining by-catches that are usually discarded at sea; reducing post-harvest losses; diverting to human consumption more of the fish at present converted to fish meal/ animal feed.*







website (<http://www.onefish.org/id/3232>). Copies of the publications, posters, CD-ROMs and video films can be ordered directly from BOBP-IGO.

#### *Creating e-bobpigo*

Effective collection of information and enabling electronic access to information medium are integral parts of BOBP-IGO's mandate. Web-based networking (e-bobpigo) will help member-countries to strengthen national capabilities in development and management of coastal fisheries.

#### *Taking the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries to the Grassroots*

There is strong optimism that the Bay of Bengal region can produce significantly more fish than at present, through better management of resources. What is needed, apart from appropriate technology inputs, are institutional capacity building, better all-round awareness of management and adoption of a community-based participatory approach.

The BOBP has actively participated in formulating the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and its Technical Guidelines. The BOBP has also been a pioneer in promoting the CCRF in the region. As an Inter-Governmental Organisation, BOBP will continue to promote the adaptation and implementation of the Code, its Technical Guidelines and International Plans of Action at all levels in member-countries.



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#### Funding the BOBP-IGO

The BOBP-IGO is funded jointly by the governments of member countries. Funds are available only for small and basic projects. Donors are invited to support or strengthen interventions in some important areas such as:

- Women's empowerment
- Stock assessment
- Safety at sea
- Post-harvest activities

Donor funds are perceived as seed money to encourage or stimulate sustainable development processes, as short-term bridges to enable long-term self-reliance.





### Strategies for a Better Tomorrow

- Networking, advisory services, formulation of guidelines, shared learning, transfer of technologies & methodologies.
- Workshops, seminars, awareness-raising, training.
- Information exchange.
- Community-level action.
- Feasibility studies, project formulation.



**BOBP** For Sustainable Fisheries  
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*Better Days Ahead . . .*



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