



# BOBP

# BREEZE

## A Quadri-semester Newsletter

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*Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) is a Regional Fisheries Advisory Body (RFAB) for promoting sustainable fisheries in the Bay of Bengal and associated regions. Its current members are Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka. It serves as the think tank on transboundary and contemporary national issues of the member countries concerning fisheries management.*

### ***In this issue...***

- 02 - Viewpoint
- 04 - Salient Programmes/Events
- 10 - Strengthening Cooperation
- 14 - Meetings/Events participated
- 25 - Perspective
- 31 - Study Report
- 35 - BOBP-IGO in the Media

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



## The Year 2024 in Perspective: A Leap in Regional Collaboration for Sustainable Fisheries

*The Bay of Bengal's story in 2024 is one of hope and progress, characterized by countries united by a shared goal: ensuring thriving marine ecosystems, flourishing livelihoods, and robust regional cooperation as the foundation for a sustainable future. As we reflect on the year, the balance sheet reveals reasons for celebration despite substantial challenges.*

*The region leapfrogged to a period of systemic cooperation and building multi-front regional synergy. The member-countries of BOBP-IGO took decisive steps to define the contours of cooperation, with BOBP at the centre of many such progressive initiatives.*

*This year also saw BOBP-IGO delivering on its promise to function as the interface between the region and rest of the world. Carpe diem!*

### Crafting cooperation

The year began on a high note with the launch of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Phase II project in December 2023. Funded by GEF and NORAD and executed by FAO, this quinquennial initiative focuses on implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) and Marine Managed Areas (MMA), curbing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and building a platform for sustaining regional cooperation. National workshops in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, and the Maldives provided stakeholders with a platform to explore pathways to achieve project objectives.

In Sri Lanka, the Negombo workshop emphasized integrating fisheries livelihoods with marine conservation. In Bangladesh, the discussions were on aligning the BOBLME project with national sustainable development goals. Chennai became the epicenter of India's vision for fortifying coastal

ecosystem resilience while tackling IUU fishing and reducing marine pollution. The Maldives workshop focused on how island communities can adopt to EAFM and MMA. These workshops reaffirmed a vital principle: effective management must harmonize ecological priorities with socio-economic imperatives.

### A Year of Breakthroughs

A significant milestone was the launch of the BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network (BIMReN), an initiative driven by BOBP-IGO and supported by India's Ministry of External Affairs. This network spurred joint studies and twinning programs that fostered scientific inquiry into fisheries and marine biodiversity. BIMReN exemplifies how partnerships facilitated by BOBP-IGO can bridge gaps between regional academic institutions and global organizations.

Stock assessment emerged as another cornerstone of BOBP-IGO's efforts to build bonds within maritime countries. The Bay of

Bengal Stock Assessment Network (BOBSAN), guided by BOBP-IGO, harmonized methodologies across member nations and produced a "Compendium of Fish Stock Assessment Practices in South Asia." The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) constituted by BOBP-IGO brought global experts together to modernize stock assessment techniques.

Collaborative workshops with FAO integrated advanced tools like SDG reporting and data visualization platforms into regional fisheries management, enhancing technical capabilities while strengthening the link between scientific evidence and policymaking.

### Forging Bonds Beyond Borders

Collaboration with FAO extended to critical areas such as combating IUU fishing and addressing climate change impacts on fisheries. Capacity-building workshops enhanced Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) systems while developing actionable strategies for

data-driven fisheries management. A significant milestone was the Strategic Outlook on Regional Cooperation developed during the Regional Fisheries Bodies Secretariat Network meeting and Sustainable Ocean Initiative Dialogue. BOBP-IGO facilitated these platforms alongside FAO and CBD Secretariat to align priorities among stakeholders.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) was another focal point discussed during the Workshop on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement hosted by BOBP-IGO. This specialized workshop underscored BOBP-IGO's leadership in collaboration diplomacy by fostering partnerships among regional policymakers, researchers, and international organizations emphasizing high-seas governance's interconnectedness with regional fisheries management.

The BOBP-IGO hosted also its first Regional Dialogue in Chennai focusing on integrating fisheries into National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs). This dialogue led to forming the Bay of Bengal Global Biodiversity Framework Working Group (BOB-GBF WG), promising sustained inter-country dialogue and accelerated regional cooperation.

## Empowering People and Enhancing Governance

Capacity building remains a forte of BOBP-IGO. From workshops on the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement to new academic partnerships, the region prioritized equipping functionaries with tools to navigate fisheries governance complexities.

In collaboration with Tamil Nadu National Law University (TNNLU), BOBP-IGO laid the groundwork for a postgraduate diploma in Fisheries Law and Policy aimed at empowering policymakers to address transboundary resource challenges effectively.

Continuing its commitment to enhance human resources, BOBP-IGO reintroduced its residential flagship training program focusing on EAFM in November 2024. Participants from five countries engaged in scholarly lectures, thought-provoking exercises addressing real-world problems, and field visits that strengthened networking among practitioners.

Inclusivity was emphasized throughout 2024; regional programs adopted gender-sensitive approaches ensuring women and marginalized groups found their voices in policy dialogues. BOBP-IGO collaborated with SEAFDEC and UNODC to provide fisheries officials from member countries with hands-on training programs in Port State Measures (PSM) and combating fishing crime. The SEAFDEC's training program, completed in November 2024, provided eight fisheries officers insights into procedural measures for PSMA implementation as demonstrated in Thailand. Since member countries of BOBP-IGO do

not typically engage in regular port state activities, this training offered valuable learning experiences from leading practitioners.

## Improving Fisheries Management

On improving fisheries management, the year was particularly remarkable for us. Sri Lanka, Maldives and India have formally endorsed the Bay of Bengal Regional Plan of Action to prevent, deter, and eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (BOB RPOA-IUU), developed by BOBP-IGO in collaboration with FAO. BOBP-IGO's role as the BOB RPOA-IUU Secretariat will ensure continuous coordination among member nations, fostering trust and collaboration. BOBP-IGO has also started collaborating with Ai2 to access their fisheries monitoring platforms viz., Skylight and EarthRangers to address IUU fishing and safety-related issues.

We are also proud to inform that this year, on World Fisheries Day (21 Nov 2024), India adopted its National Plan of Action on Sharks (NPOA-Sharks), a key document developed with support from BOBP-IGO.

## Towards a Unified Vision

As the year drew to a close, 2024's achievements vividly depicted what is possible when nations come together. The Bay of Bengal region's journey toward sustainable fisheries demonstrates the power of collective action and the resilience of fisher communities in the region.

The road ahead demands even greater collaboration. Bridging policy gaps, embracing technology, and fostering equity will be crucial to overcoming future challenges. This year's lessons – and the successes they have inspired – offer a compelling blueprint.



Serving as a fitting conclusion for this milestone year, BOBP-IGO signed an MoU with FAO as a Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) partner. The signing ceremony at FAO Headquarters symbolized a global leap toward transparent evidence-driven fisheries management. Welcoming the partnership, Dr. Manuel Barange from FAO said that the partnership was forged when FAO is embracing a new data strategy, and it represented a paradigm shift from a top-down model to one where regional voice like BOBP-IGO play a key role.

# Salient Programmes/Events

## Regional Training Programme on CCRF and EAFM Held in Chennai

BOBP-IGO's flagship programme, Regional Training Course on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM), commenced in Chennai on November 15, 2024. Nineteen participants from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Thailand attended the programme. The programme was until November 30, 2024. The course aimed to build capacity among junior and middle-level fisheries officers, equipping them with essential skills and knowledge in responsible fisheries management.

The event was inaugurated by Dr. Grinson George, Director, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CMFRI), Kochi. Mr. R Mukherjee, International Consultant, BOBP-IGO welcomed the participants and gave a background of the programme. Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO presented an overview of the Organisation and

the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) project. Dr. E Vivekanandan, International Consultant, BOBP-IGO, detailed the participants about the course objectives and modules. Following the inauguration, participants mingled through a Memory Match Game.

The programme included intensive sessions on governance,

ecological considerations, socio-economic impacts, and technological advancements in fisheries management. Additionally, participants participated in field visits that included fisheries institutions in Chennai and Kochi, interactive workshops, and practical exercises designed to translate theoretical knowledge into actionable applications.





This programme was organized as a part of the BOBLME project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). By fostering regional collaboration, the course sought to address key challenges, such as overexploitation of marine resources, habitat degradation, and marine pollution in the Bay of Bengal region.

### Houseboat Getaway

As part of the training programme, the participants travelled from Chennai to Kochi on November 24, 2024 to enjoy a unique learning experience. The Trainees attended sessions on a houseboat in the serene backwaters of Alleppey and also participated in interactive activities focused on creating an enabling environment for small-scale fishers and promoting women's empowerment in fisheries.



## Field Visits

**National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai**, a leading institute for coastal research. Participants interacted with the scientists and visited state-of-the-art facilities and collected information on the advancements in coastal research.



**Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA), Chennai** (Indian Council of Agricultural Research), a pioneering institute in aquaculture. Participants explored the recent developments in research in the shrimp and finfish aquaculture farms and hatcheries of the Institute.



**Munambam Fishing Harbour, near Kochi**, where the participants witnessed different craft and gear, as well as the major fish species landed in the harbour. Participants also interacted with fishers to discuss fish prices, markets, and product development.



**Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi** (Indian Council of Agricultural Research), a pioneering institute for marine fisheries research. After interaction with the scientists on fisheries data collection, management and mariculture, the participants had hands-on experience in fish biological investigations and fish otolith analysis.

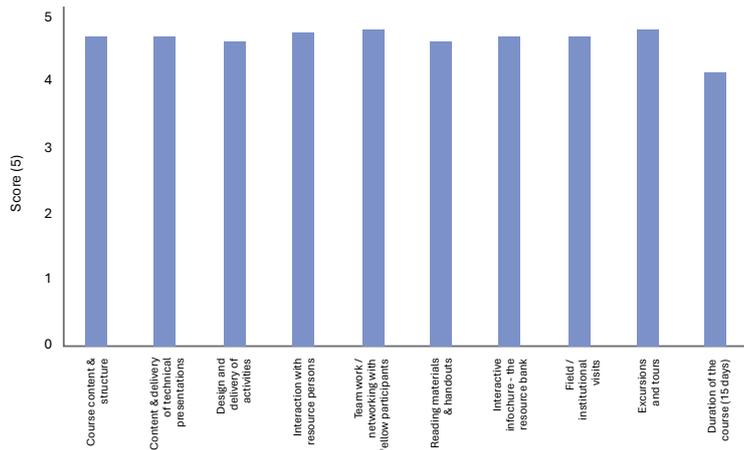


**Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), Kochi** (Indian Council of Agricultural Research), a leading institute in research on harvest and post-harvest fishing technologies and fish quality assurance. After attending technical sessions, the participants visited the research facilities on craft and gear, fish processing and packaging units, and National Reference Laboratory on fish and fish products.



**Academy of Maritime Education and Technology (AMET), Chennai**, a Deemed-to-be University, committed to cater to the maritime capacity building. The participants were exposed to various facilities connected to shipping like Engine Simulator, ECDIS, Navigation Simulator Chamber and Workshop Units.





**Participants feedback on the Training Course**



Dr. Kuldeep Kumar Lal, Director, ICAR-CIBA, delivered the valedictory address, emphasizing the urgent need to manage aquatic genetic resources for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. He advocated an ecosystem-based approach to tackle challenges such as overexploitation and habitat degradation, highlighting the pivotal role of biodiversity conservation.

The programme received overwhelmingly positive reviews. Participants appreciated the mix of theoretical and practical learning, the collaborative environment, and the opportunity to interact with experts and peers from across the region. They highlighted the field visits and scenario-based planning activities as particularly impactful in translating knowledge into actionable strategies.



## Colloquium on WTO Highlighted the Need for a Differential Treatment for Equitable Benefits of Developing Nations in WTO Fisheries Talks

BOBP-IGO, along with ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), and other organizations, arranged a colloquium to discuss the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies on the sidelines of the ongoing Regional Training Course on CCRF & EAFM. Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO moderated the discussion.

Dr. Pinar Karkaya from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), expressed optimism about the WTO agreement's potential to curb illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and over-exploitation. Dr Karkaya also elaborated on the legal and practical implications of the agreement.

Dr. Grinson George, Director, CMFRI, focused on the historical inequities caused by subsidies in developed nations, which enabled large

industrial fleets to overexploit marine resources and create economic disparities. He emphasized that India's fisheries are predominantly small-scale and integral to food security and livelihoods, necessitating a focus on protecting artisanal fishers in ongoing WTO negotiations.

Prof. James J Nedumpara from the Centre for Trade and Investment Law, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), called for robust scientific evidence to identify overfishing, overfished stocks, and IUU fishing as outlined in the agreement. He emphasized the importance of regional fisheries management organizations like BOBP in building capacity and fostering international collaboration.

Other panellists include Dr. M Karthikeyan, Director, MPEDA ; Prof. S Amirthalingam, Tamil Nadu National Law University; Dr. Kishore Dhavala, Dean, Nalanda University, Bihar; Dr. P S Ananthan, Principal Scientist, ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai; and Ms. Sunanda Tewari, Legal Consultant, IIFT, New Delhi. The discussion concluded with plans to enhance



## Regional Policy Dialogue on Coastal Governance Called for Collective Action

The Global Nature Fund (GNF) and South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resource Studies (SaciWATERS), in collaboration with BOBP-IGO and the Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA), organized a webinar on the topic 'Coastal Governance in South Asia: Strengthening Coastal Regulatory Policies' on 16th October 2024. The webinar was attended by experts, researchers, and representatives from various Civil Society Organizations (CSO) from across South Asian countries, viz., India, Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka.

Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, while delivering the keynote address, presented an overview of the policy and legal frameworks for coastal governance in SA countries and highlighted the challenges in implementing them. He emphasized the urgency to form regional collaboration to establish a healthy coastal governance system.

The panel was chaired by Prof. Janakarajan, Former Director of MIDS (Madras Institute of Development

Studies), and the panel comprised Ms. Ajanta Dey, Nature Environment & Wildlife Society (NEWS); Mr. Maksudur Rahman, Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS) and Mr. Sajeewa Emmanuel, Nagenahiru Foundation from Sri Lanka. The panellists presented an overview of the status and issues in coastal governance from their respective country's scenario and called for a strong participatory approach in the coastal governance framework, involving local communities in the decision-making process.



# Strengthening Cooperation

## BOBP-IGO Holds the First BIMReN Virtual Partners Conclave

A virtual partners conclave was organized on 1st September 2024 under the aegis of the BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network (BIMReN) scheme implemented by BOBP-IGO and funded by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

The objective of the Conclave was to network the marine researchers from BIMSTEC member countries who have been shortlisted to implement the BIMReN twinning research projects in the current fiscal year (2023-2024).

Forty researchers from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand participated. The principal investigators from the Lead Research Institutes in India, viz., ICAR-CMFRI, ICAR-CIFT, ICAR-CIFRI, TNJFU and Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, presented their collaborative research proposals.

In his opening remarks, Dr. P. Krishnan, Director of BOBP-IGO, welcomed all the partners and presented an overview of the scheme. The BIMReN Project Task Force (PTF) narrated the required input to strengthen the research outcome.

The Co-Chairs of the BIMReN Project Task Force, Dr. A.G. Ponniah (Ex-Director of CIBA & NBFGR), and Dr. B. Manimaran (Ex-Vice Chancellor, TNJFU), highlighted the significance of partnerships in addressing regional marine research challenges and called upon all the researchers to make the best use of this Regional Collaborative Framework.

The institutions that participated in the meeting include ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (ICAR-CIFT), Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Fisheries University (TNJFU), ICAR-Central

Inland Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CIFRI), ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CMFRI), and Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology (SIST) from India; Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, University of Jaffna, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, University of Ruhana, and the University of Kelaniya from Sri Lanka; Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute and the University of Chittagong, from Bangladesh; and Prince of Songkla University from Thailand.

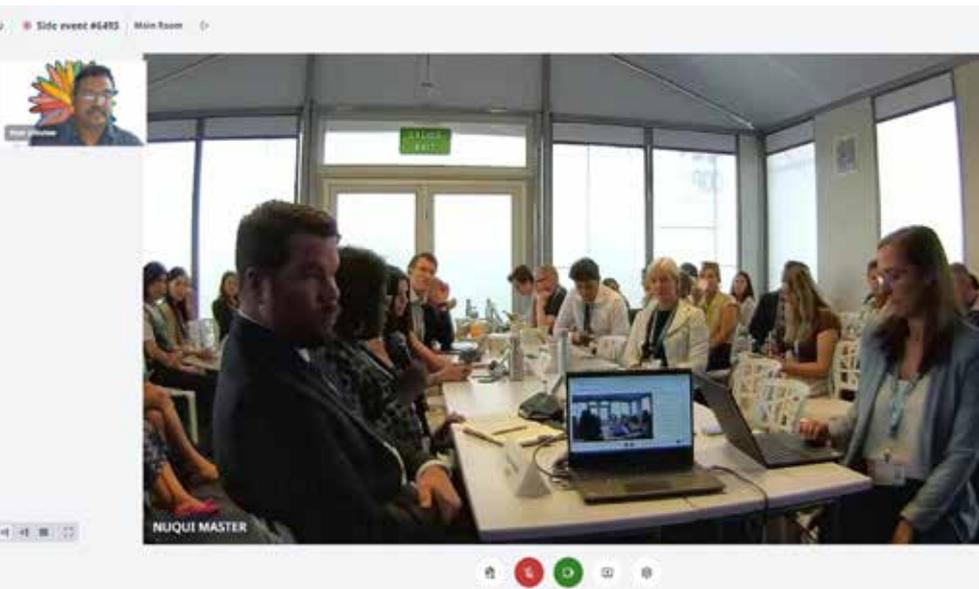


## BOBP-IGO's Support for KM-GBF and BBNJ Implementation Highlighted in COP16 Side Event

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat organized a Side Event at COP-16, on 22nd October 2024 in Cali, Columbia, under the aegis of SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations (RSOs) and Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) to Support the Changing Global Ocean Policy Landscape.

Dr P. Krishnan presented the significant developments in regional cooperation for the ocean, especially on

the initiatives of BOBP towards the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the BBNJ in the Bay of Bengal region. His presentation portrayed how the 3rd and 4th SOI Global Dialogues helped in designing the regional roadmap for collaboration and cooperation, which further led to mainstreaming BBNJ and KM-GBF, respectively. He elaborated on how BOBP-IGO, SEAFDEC, IUCN, FAO, and the governments of member countries are attempting to collaboratively address transboundary issues



The Regional Dialogue on Promoting Cooperation through NBSAPs and the Regional Workshops on BBNJ and the Conservation of Marine Mammals and turtles were highlighted as capacity-building initiatives in implementing KM-GBF and BBNJ, respectively, in the Bay of Bengal region. Dr. Krishnan stressed that the SOI Global Dialogue energized the spirit of collaboration between RFB and RSOs in the region, along with other contributions.

in the region, like IUU fishing, Marine Protected Areas (MPA), fisheries management, fish stock assessments, etc., under the BOBLME Project. He highlighted how the collaboration platforms created by BOBP-IGO, viz., BOB-GBF Working Group, BIMReN, BOB-SAN, etc., contribute to strengthening the cooperation among the member countries.

## Cooperation with OP Jindal Global University

Dr. Pooja Bhatt, Director of the PK Jha Centre for Security Studies (PKJCSS) at OP Jindal Global University, visited BOBP-IGO to discuss the Centre's ongoing program on non-traditional maritime security issues and explore possibilities for collaboration. On behalf of the Director, BOBP-IGO, Mr. Rajdeep Mukherjee briefed Dr. Bhatt on the Organization's ongoing efforts to curb IUU fishing, regional challenges, and emerging opportunities for synergy as countries endorse a Regional Plan of Action to combat IUU fishing.

Dr. E. Vivekanandan, Senior Consultant, and Dr. S. Jayaraj, Publication Officer at BOBP-IGO, participated in the discussions. The meeting explored potential areas for collaboration, including joint research programs, expert exchange, and internship opportunities for students of the Centre.



## BOBP-IGO Signed Partnership Agreement with FAO to Support FIRMS

BOBP-IGO signed an agreement with FAO as a Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) Partner on 13th December 2024. Signing the agreement on behalf of FAO, Dr. Manuel Barange, Assistant Director General, FAO welcomed BOBP-IGO as its newest partner. He said that FAO is reconfiguring its data architecture, and FIRMS is all set to be the central database, serving as a main feeder for FAO's State of Stocks Index (SOSI) and Status of Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA), the flagship biennial report from the next cycle, i.e., 2026. This signals a paradigm shift from a top-down approach to cooperative resource assessment, with FAO as the coordinator and RFBs and countries as key collaborators and contributors.

Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, assured that the BOBP-IGO will strive to strengthen the participation of the region in the global march towards evidence-driven fisheries management, in alignment with the global sustainability targets. He hoped that BOBP's participation would ensure better visibility of the regional fisheries' performance to the global audience. BOBP also called for support from FAO for capacity-building and organizing regional assessment workshops in the initial phase of engagement.

The FIRMS serves as a global hub for high-quality information on the monitoring and management of marine fishery resources. It was established in 2004 under a Partnership Arrangement with FAO and various regional fishery bodies. Evolved over time, the FIRMS aims for comprehensive monitoring coverage through collaborative efforts with regional and national institutions. The database is accessible in multiple languages, emphasizing global cooperation and data transparency.

The signing ceremony took place during the 9th Technical Working Group (TWG9) meeting of FIRMS held at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 10-13 December 2024, coinciding with the 20th

Anniversary of the FIRMS. The TWG discussed the roadmap for the smooth upgrade and transition of FIRMS. It also deliberated and finalized the plan of implementation of the next round of data cycle beginning in 2025.



## India, Maldives and Sri Lanka Endorse Bay of Bengal RPOA-IUU

The Government of Sri Lanka endorsed the Plan in 2023, setting the stage for regional action. The Governments of India and Maldives have officially endorsed the Bay of Bengal Regional Plan of Action to prevent Illegal Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (BOB RPOA-IUU). This landmark commitment strengthens regional cooperation to combat IUU fishing and aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 14 - conserving and sustainably using marine resources. India's decision was communicated during the commemoration of World Fisheries Day 2024

(21 November 2024) in the presence of the Honourable Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Panchayati Raj, Mr Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lallan Singh); Dr Abhilaksh Likhi, IAS, Secretary (Fisheries), other senior Government Officers, foreign dignitaries, Dr Manuel Barange, ADG, FAO and Dr P Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO.

On behalf of the Government of Maldives, Dr Aminath Shafia, Permanent Secretary, handed over the endorsement by the Maldivian Government on 20th November 2024. On behalf of the Government of India, Ms Neetu Kumari Prasad, Joint Secretary (Marine Fisheries), Ministry

of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, endorsed the Plan.

Jointly developed by the FAO and BOBP-IGO in consultation with member countries during 2019-2020, the BOB RPOA-IUU is a voluntary instrument designed to foster trust and build capacity. Its phased approach begins with information sharing and vessel listing and then progress toward the possible joint patrolling between 2025 and 2030. The Plan's scope includes the exclusive economic zones of member countries and adjacent high seas, and BOBP-IGO will serve as its Secretariat, facilitating collaboration and capacity-building efforts.

With Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives becoming partners in the joint Action Plan, the Bay of Bengal nations are making significant strides toward a united front for deterring IUU fishing, safeguarding livelihoods, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of marine ecosystems.



## BOBP-IGO and UNODC Indian Ocean East Office Discussed Strengthening Cooperation to Battle IUU Fishing

The Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) discussed the scope of cooperation to improve fisheries MCS in the region. The organizations also agreed to jointly commence a training program on fishing vessels boarding operations in Sri Lanka in January 2025. The program will bring together fisheries, navy and coast guard officers from the region together to get hands-on training on approaching and searching suspected fishing vessels within their waters.



# Meetings/Events Participated

## Australia-India Cooperation on Climate Security in the Indian Ocean

Dr. P Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, participated in a Round Table Discussion on “Australia-India Cooperation on Climate Security in the Indian Ocean: Impact for Islands and Coastal Communities” held with the Australian Consulate-General in Chennai on 13 September 2024. The event brought together key participants from national governments, think tanks, other civil organizations, and universities to enhance climate security for island and coastal communities. The discussions included evaluating current initiatives, the roles of stakeholders, and future collaboration prospects.

Mr. David Eggleston, Australian Deputy Consul-General, set the context of the meeting. Ms. Lisa Singh, CEO of the Australia India Institute (All), Canberra, and Dr. Dhanuraj, Chairman of the Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR), briefed on the need to enhance Australia-India cooperation on climate security in the Indian Ocean.



Dr. Krishnan highlighted the specific challenges faced by the BOB countries on the climate front and welcomed the India-Australia Partnership framework towards building the capacity of these countries to generate evidence for localized action and to develop technological solutions to adapt to climate change. Further, he called for leveraging the existing cooperation frameworks in the region, like BOBP-IGO, BIMSTEC, etc., to implement capacity-building programmes.

## International Water Conference 2024

The 2024 International Waters Conference (IWC) returned after a six-year hiatus for its 10th edition, which was held from 23 to 26 September 2024, hosted by the Government of Uruguay in Punta del Este. The IWC of Global Environment Facility (GEF) is

the key learning and exchange event for projects funded by the GEF in the focal area of International Waters. The GEF’s International Waters (IW) is the world’s largest funding mechanism for multi-country collaboration on freshwater and the ocean. The IWC-10 had more





than 400 participants, comprising GEF IW project managers, institutional stakeholders from beneficiary countries, non-governmental and civil society organizations, transboundary and regional management institutions, UN agencies, Development Banks and Intergovernmental Organisations, and the private sector. The event was themed “Transformative Actions and Impacts for the Water and Ocean SDGs: The GEF IW Response to the Global Challenge”.

Prior to the main event, four Pre-Conference Workshops: Project Management, SIDS, Financial Sustainability, and Communications, took place from 21-22 September 2024 in Montevideo, attended by over 200 participants, including Project Managers, Government Officials, Donors, and Bankers.

The pre-workshops provided insights on project cycles, design requirements, results frameworks, adaptive management, and M&E frameworks, thus laying a strong foundation for managing GEF IW projects. The ‘Communications Marketplace’ provided practical tips on social media strategies, participatory communication, and crafting elevator pitches to enhance stakeholder engagement and advocacy of BOBP initiatives.

Dr. Krishnan participated in the IWC-10, representing the GEF-funded BOBLME Phase II Project being implemented by BOBP in collaboration with SEAFDEC and IUCN in the BOB region. Collectively, the participants represented about 100 active GEF IW projects, from 80 countries and various GEF Agencies, which aim to facilitate cross-sectoral and portfolio-wide learning & experience sharing.

The IWC-10 was an interactive training and experience-sharing event, where challenges were discussed, solutions highlighted, and good practices showcased. The four-day Conference started with a plenary followed by multiple parallel interactive sessions, thematic Workshops, panel discussions, talk shows, IW Clinics, etc. The Conference summarized the impact achieved and generated ideas for new projects.

Other attractions of the IWC-10 included the Technical Session wherein participants were taken to GEF IW project sites in Uruguay and networking dinners in exotic locations.

## 2nd IORA Seminar on IUU Fishing Highlights Regional Cooperation

The 2nd IORA Seminar on IUU Fishing held at the Naval War College (NWC IN) in Goa, brought together experts and officials to address the pressing issue of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Indian Ocean. The seminar focused on enhancing regional cooperation, operational strategies, and capacity building to combat IUU fishing.

The International Seminar began with Cmdre Prashant Chandrasekharan, Deputy Commandant, NWC IN, welcoming the participants

and setting the context. Rear Adm Arjun Dev Nair, VSM, delivered the opening remarks. The Chief Guest, Ms. Paramita Tripathi, Joint Secretary (Indo-Pacific Division),



Government of India, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the regional and global implications of IUU fishing.

Mr. Rajdeep Mukherjee, IUU Consultant for the BOBLME Project and representing BOBP-IGO, participated in the seminar. He discussed why some states may be lenient towards IUU fishing and proposed solutions to foster cooperation. Mr. R Mukherjee highlighted examples from the ongoing BOBLME project, funded by GEF and NORAD, which makes a holistic approach to tackling IUU fishing. He also shared insights on initiatives by BOBP-IGO, such as BOBPRG, BOBSAN, and BIMReN, aimed at promoting regional cooperation, which was applauded by the participants.



## Fisheries Geopolitics Highlighted in Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) 2024

The Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) 2024, under the theme, 'Resource-Geopolitics and Security in the Indo-Pacific', was organized by the Indian Navy and National Maritime Foundation (NMF) from 03-05 October 2024 at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi.

The event brought together serving seniors and retired navy officials, diplomats, academic experts, and defence analysts from different parts of the world. The event had plenary talks from global experts and thematic discussions on crucial topics, such as the geopolitical issues concerning minerals, energy, and fish stocks, exploring regional and country-specific imperatives, etc.

Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan (Retd), Director-General of NMF, welcomed the attendees. Admiral



Karambir Singh, Former Chief of the Naval Staff, emphasized the growing geopolitical importance of marine resources, from fish stocks to critical minerals.

Addressing during the commemorative session, Shri. Rajnath Singh, Honourable

Union Minister of Defence, Govt. of India, highlighted India's plans for maritime security and cooperation. The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the tri-service chiefs participated in the deliberations. Mr. Asok Kumar, National Marine Security Adviser, GoI, called for close regional cooperation to harness the blue economy.

Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, delivered a lecture on 'Fisheries-driven Geopolitics in the Bay of Bengal and BIMSTEC', highlighting the transboundary challenges faced in managing shared fishery resources. He highlighted the need to avert the escalation of conflicts through expanding trade in the region and strengthening research collaboration.



## WorldFish & FAO Workshop on EAF Implementation in Asia

The EAFM Workshop was co-organized by WorldFish and FAO in Penang, Malaysia, during 08- 10 October 2024 to share experiences and insights on EAF implementation in South and Southeast Asia. Experts representing the countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam) and the RFABS (BOBPIGO and SEAFDEC) from the BOB region participated in the Workshop.



Eddie Allison and Juliana Lopez-Angarita from WorldFish opened the Workshop and detailed the context. Marcelo Vasconcellos from FAO provided an overview of the global EAF initiative.

Dr. P. Krishnan presented a case from India and also provided the initiatives from the BOBP-IGO to mainstream the EAF in South Asia. BOBP is committed to undertaking wider dissemination of the approach across the sector in close collaboration with FAO, in the region. The workshop provided a great platform for sharing experiences and strategizing actions for the future. The experts were taken through the GIFT hatchery at WorldFish headquarters in Penang.



## United Nations at 80: Development, Issues, Challenges (UN80DIC)

Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO participated in the International Conference on “United Nations at 80: Development, Issues, Challenges (UN80DIC)” held at the Tamil Nadu National Law University (TNNLU). He made a lead talk on ‘International Fisheries Laws - Connecting Missing Dots in Implementation’. While talking as part of a panel discussion, he stressed that international fisheries laws play a significant role in better management of the

oceans and their resources. He highlighted the specific challenges in managing transboundary fish stocks among the shared resources and stressed the need for cooperation at all levels.

He illustrated how a lack of holistic understanding of the regional dynamics, capacity gaps, challenges in generating the required evidence, problems in dealing





The Conference was organized by TNNLU, Tiruchirappalli and Lincoln Global Law Chambers from 23-25 October 2024, to commemorate 80 years after the UN’s inception. It had sessions covering diverse themes like international laws, enforcement, and dispute settlement processes. Legal luminaries from academia and different national and international organizations participated in the UN80DIC.

with disproportionate conservation burden in fisheries management, and gaps in laws to address emerging situations like climate change, hamper the effective implementation of international fisheries laws.

## World Fisheries Day 2024

Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, spoke on the occasion of World Fisheries Day marked by the Department of Fisheries, Government of India on 21st November 2024 at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan in New Delhi.



Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, IAS, Secretary (Fisheries), Ms Neetu Prasad, Joint Secretary (Marine Fisheries), Mr. Sagar Mehra: Joint Secretary (Inland Fisheries & Administration), other senior Government Officers, foreign dignitaries, and Dr. Manuel Barange, ADG, FAO attended.

Dr. Krishnan highlighted the plight of the small-scale fisheries (SSF) and proposed intervention for their sustainable development. He highlighted that the SSF sector faces numerous challenges, including the lack of a clear and universally accepted definition, which limits policy outreach and targeted action. Dr. Krishnan pointed out that the SSF sector is characterized by non-mechanized or minimally mechanized operations conducted primarily by coastal communities, yet its diverse and complex nature often leads to gaps in recognition and policy support. He called for urgent action to “turn the radar” on SSF challenges.

The proposed measures, including leveraging government schemes, cultural heritage preservation, and formal safety frameworks, aim to empower SSF communities while ensuring sustainability and resilience in the face of climate change.

Dr. Krishnan urged the support of the Government of India in setting a regional agenda for SSF safety.

Mr. Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Honourable Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Panchayati Raj;

## Legal Framework Report on EAFM in India Released



On World Fisheries Day 2024, the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Government of India, unveiled a comprehensive report titled “Legal Framework for Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in India.” This collaborative effort by the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) assessed India’s policies and legal structures concerning the implementation of EAFM. The report features a foreword by the Secretary of the DoF, underscoring the government’s commitment to sustainable fisheries management.

The publication provides an in-depth analysis of existing legal frameworks and offers recommendations to enhance the alignment of national policies with EAFM principles. It serves as a valuable reference for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders dedicated to promoting sustainable fisheries practices in India.

## Adoption of the National Plan of Action on Management of Sharks (NPOA-SHARKS) by India

The Government of India announced the adoption of NPOA-Shark during the celebration of World Fisheries Day (21 November 2024) at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan at in New Delhi, The announcement was made by the Honourable Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Panchayati Raj, Mr. Rajiv Ranjan Singh in the presence of Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, IAS, Secretary (Fisheries), Ms. Neetu Prasad, Joint Secretary (Marine Fisheries), Mr. Sagar Mehra: Joint Secretary (Inland Fisheries & Administration), other senior Government Officers/Officials, foreign dignitaries, Dr. Manuel Barange, ADG, FAO and Dr. P Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO.

The NPOA-Shark was developed by the BOBP-IGO with support from the BOBLME project, and subsequently

refined with the support from community organizations, including AD SGAF and Scientists from ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CMFRI), Fishery Survey of India (FSI) and other fisheries institutions.

As one of the largest shark fishing nations, India's adoption of NPOA-Shark shows the commitment of the country to ensure sustainable marine fisheries in the Indian Ocean region.



## Regional Training Course on Enhancing Capacity for Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS)

The Regional Training Course on Enhancing Capacity for Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) of Domestic and International Fishing Vessels to Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing was conducted successfully in Samut Prakan, Thailand.

Organized by the SEAFDEC Training Department, the programme was held from November 19–22, 2024, and brought together fisheries officers from Bangladesh, Maldives, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. BOBP-IGO supported the participation of officials from the member-countries under the BOBLME-II Project.

The training focused on building capacity among participants to strengthen MCS mechanisms, especially in the context of the Port State Measures and address the pressing challenges of IUU fishing in the Bay of Bengal region. Through a series of discussions and technical sessions, the participants explored strategies and tools for improving fisheries monitoring and control measures.

As part of the programme, BOBP-IGO organized a dinner event on

20th November 2024, in which an interactive discussion titled “Participatory Risk Assessment of IUU Fishing in the BOBLME Region” was facilitated. This session highlighted critical challenges faced by countries in assessing and addressing IUU fishing risks. Insights from the event revealed the importance of maintaining systematic records of IUU incidents, such records being sparse across many nations. Mr.

Rajdeep Mukherjee, International Consultant (IUU Fishing), BOBLME-II, BOBP-IGO, coordinated the event. The side event was attended by representatives from FAO, IUCN and SEAFDEC along with the training participants. Dr. Simon Funge Smith, Consultant, FAO, provided the technical input to the event.

The training and side event highlighted advancements in legislation, interagency coordination,



and data collection efforts across the region while identifying transparency in data sharing as a key area for improvement. The programme concluded with participants expressing their commitment to applying the knowledge gained and enhancing regional collaboration in combating IUU fishing. The participants also agreed to set up an informal group for information sharing which will be coordinated by BOBP-IGO and SEAFDEC.



## Second International Conference on Fishing Communities 2024

The Second International Conference on Fishing Communities 2024 (ICFC 2024) was held from 24–27 November 2024 at the International Convention Center, Jeju (ICC Jeju), Republic of Korea. This year’s event theme was “One Ocean, One Fishing Community: Challenges for Fishing Communities in an Era of Great Transformation”. The conference brought together experts, government officials, and community leaders from 34 countries to address pressing challenges such as climate change, ageing populations, and the loss of traditional fishing heritage.



BOBP-IGO coordinated the participation of representatives from its member-countries, which included Mr Ahmed Shafiu, the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Government of Maldives, and Md. Zillur Rahman, Director General, Department of Fisheries, Government of Bangladesh . On behalf of BOBP-IGO, Dr. R Soundararajan and Mr. R Mukherjee participated in the Conference. Other participants included Mr Md Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury, Senior Upazilla Fisheries Officer, Bangladesh; Mr Samrath Hasssan, Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Republic of Maldives, and Mr J. Suthaharan, Assistant Director, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resource, Government of Sri Lanka.



The event highlighted the role of smart technologies, gender inclusivity, and international cooperation in building resilience and sustainability. BOBP-IGO’s participation reflects its commitment to leveraging global best practices to improve fisheries management and community welfare in the Bay of Bengal region.



## Scaling Up Deepsea Fishing in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Fisheries University (TNJFU) and the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu, jointly organized a consultative workshop on “Fisheries and Aquaculture Production in Tamil Nadu - Status and Way Forward” at the Institute of Fisheries Post Graduate Studies, (IFPGS) campus on 30 November 2024 in Chennai.

The event brought together experts from academia, industry, research organizations and senior officials from the state fisheries department. Dr. S. Felix, Vice Chancellor, TNJFU welcomed the gathering. Mr. Satyabrata Sahoo, IAS, Principal Secretary, Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department, Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN) set the context of the Workshop.

Delivering the keynote speech, Dr. Krishnan, Director of BOBP-IGO, highlighted the strategies for scaling up deep sea fishing in Tamil Nadu, particularly the tuna fisheries, and sustainable fisheries management. He highlighted the potential and

key challenges and also the need for balancing small-scale fisheries sector in order to ensure sustainable fisheries and improved fishers’ livelihoods in the state. Dr. Krishnan stressed that the time is opportune to give a fillip to the sector, when the state has identified deep water fisheries as one of the drivers of its ambitious target of achieving \$1 trillion economy by 2030. Ms. R. Gajalakshmi, IAS, Director of Fisheries,

GoTN presented an overview of the fisheries sector and the new initiatives taken by the State Government.



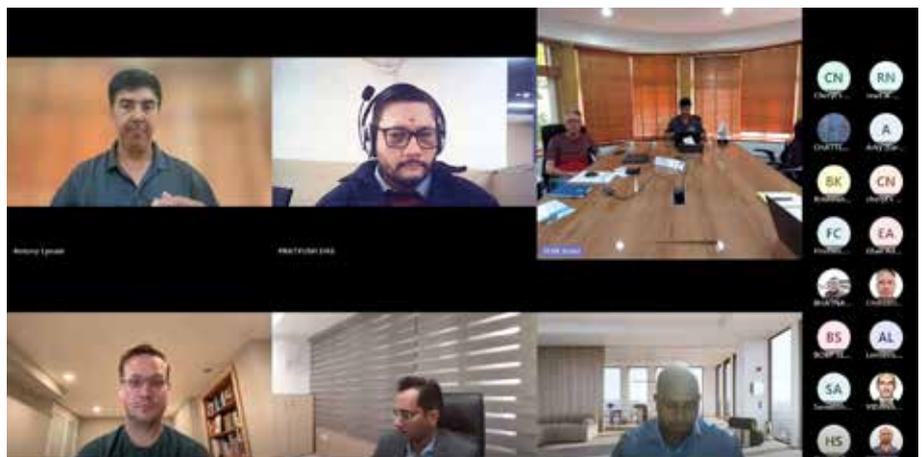
## Regional Workshop on Introducing AI Tools for Monitoring IUU Fishing and MPA Effectiveness

Dr. P. Krishnan, Director of BOBP-IGO, and Mr. R. Mukherjee, IUU Consultant, BOBP-IGO, participated in a regional workshop titled “Introduction to EarthRanger and Skylight for Monitoring IUU Fishing and MPA Effectiveness” in the workshop organized by IUCN as part of the BOBLME-II project on 13 December 2024.

Held in a hybrid format, the workshop gathered stakeholders from the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) network, including BOBLME II partners, government project coordinators, IUCN National Coordinators, and other conservation stakeholders.

The event provided insights into the use of advanced technologies: EarthRanger: A comprehensive

data visualization platform that integrates information from multiple sources for real-time monitoring



of marine and wildlife assets; and Skylight: An advanced maritime analytics platform leveraging AI to detect and deal with illegal fishing activities. Both platforms are part of the Allen Institute for AI (AI2), a non-profit institute founded in 2014 by the late Paul G. Allen, philanthropist and Microsoft co-founder. AI2 conducts high-impact AI research and engineering studies in service of the common good.

The workshop also featured case studies on the application of these tools in the Maldives and coastal fisheries management in the Philippines under the Fish Forever Program.

These examples highlighted the potential of AI tools to combat IUU fishing, improve MPA management, and foster collaboration with

organizations like AI2. The event underscored the importance of leveraging data-driven decision-making to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources and promote compliance with regulations across the region.

## BOBLME Second Regional Technical Committee and Project Steering Committee Meetings Held in Bangkok

The 2nd Regional Technical Committee and Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meetings of the BOBLME II Project were held in Bangkok on 16th and 17th December 2024. The purpose of the meetings was to update members on the progress made since the project's inception in December 2023 and get consent to the project work plan and budget for 2025-26. The PSC also elected Sri Lanka and Thailand as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for the second consecutive term.

PSC members and the National Project Coordinators from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand; observers from Indonesia, Malaysia and NORAD; and other experts and officials from project implementing and executing agencies, viz., FAO, IUCN, BOBP-IGO and SEAFDEC took part.

Dr. P Krishnan, Director and Mr. R Mukherjee, Policy Analyst and Consultant of BOBP-IGO participated in the meetings and presented a comprehensive overview of the project's key components being handled by BOBP-IGO, namely, the promotion of EAFM, curbing IUU fishing and reducing pollution from fisheries apart from support to regional coordination.

The PSC members expressed satisfaction that the project has been grounded well and that a necessary operational framework has been instituted in the countries during the inception year. The Work Plan proposed by the executing agencies was endorsed by the PSC.

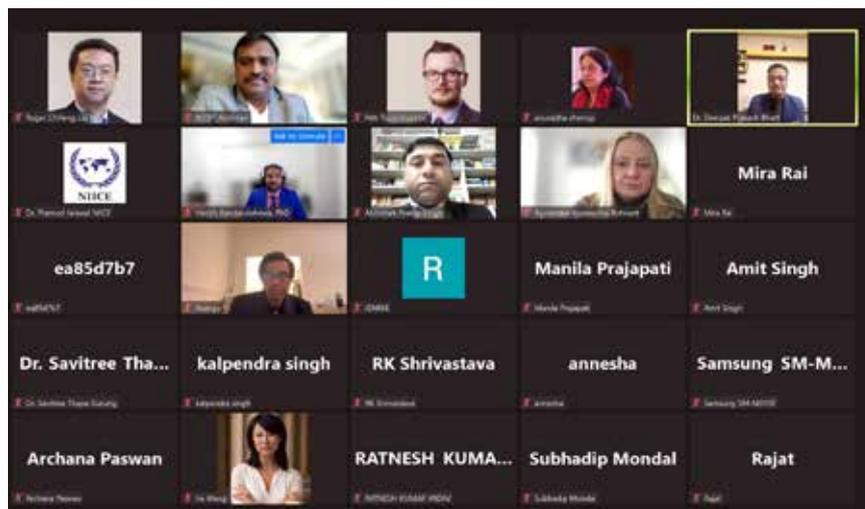


## Indo-Pacific Future Forum Meeting 2024

Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, participated as a panellist and lead speaker at the Indo-Pacific Future Forum Meeting 2024 on Dec 15-16, 2024.

Dr. Krishnan shared his experience with South Asia's role in the Indo-Pacific region and emphasized the need for overall cooperation in fisheries management in the Bay of Bengal/BIMSTEC region. He emphasized the need to address pressing issues in fisheries in the Bay of Bengal, where, despite the slight increase in production, the region's share in fisheries production has declined. He highlighted the challenges related to diverse stocks and their statuses.

Dr. Krishnan elaborated improving fisheries management, promoting



trade, and research collaboration to address these challenges. He emphasised that the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

(BIMSTEC) could play a crucial role in promoting cooperation among member countries.

## NAAS Brainstorming on Climate Adaptive Conservation of Aquatic Genetic Resources

The National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) hosted a Brainstorming Session (BSS) on “Climate Adaptive Conservation of Aquatic Genetic Resources” at New Delhi on December 20, 2024. Dr. W.S. Lakra, Secretary, NAAS, welcomed the participants, which was followed by introductory remarks by Dr. U.K. Sarkar, Director, ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR), Lucknow.

Participating as an expert resource person, Dr. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, emphasized the need for sustainable practices in fisheries, projecting an optimistic yet cautious view of how technology could transform fishing practices in the next 50 years. He outlined the severe implications of climate change on marine ecosystems, noting that the Indian Ocean has seen a significant rise in temperature, with projections indicating an increase in marine heatwave days from 20 to 250 per

year by 2100. This warming trend threatens fish populations and livelihoods, particularly in lower-middle-income countries that rely heavily on marine resources.

Dr. Krishnan called for proactive adaptation measures for fishing communities, like early weather warnings, improved vessel tracking, etc., and underscored the importance of developing a climate-

smart value chain to minimize losses and optimize fishing efforts. He advocated for a shift in climate research paradigms to focus more on practical applications and urged the National Agricultural Research & Education System (NARES) to consider expanding its research scope beyond the national frontier, thus taking the advances in climate research to the benefit of the region and at the global level.



## Other Events/Meetings Attended by BOBP-IGO Staff

### Dr. P. Krishnan, Director

- Round Table Discussion on “Australia-India Cooperation on Climate Security in the Indian Ocean on Impact for Islands and Coastal Communities,” held at the Australian Consulate General in Chennai on 13th September 2024.
- Inter-ministerial meeting held on 11th September 2024, at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, to discuss the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project (Phase-II). The meeting was attended by representatives from various government agencies, research institutions, and international organizations, including the FAO and IUCN.
- National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) launch of NAAS-YUVA on 25th September 2024, to promote innovative solutions in agriculture through scientific programs, consultations, and engaging young students and scholars.
- Virtual meeting held on 26th September 2024, to discuss the draft document on the National Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks in India.
- Virtual workshop conducted by the FAO, in collaboration with BOBP-IGO, from 24-26 September 2024, on “Developing Guidelines on Inspection and Valuation of Small-Scale Fishing Vessels.”
- Virtual meeting held on 25th September 2024, to discuss the Revised Final Report of the Expert Committee on Purse Seine fishing. The meeting was organized by the Department of Fisheries, Government of India.
- Meeting on 7th October 2024, chaired by the Joint Secretary (Marine Fisheries), Department of Fisheries, Government of India, to discuss legislative provisions for ratifying the FAO-Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA).
- Regional Training Workshop on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Implementation Monitoring Tool (EAF-IMT) held on 22-23 October 2024 under the aegis of FAO-Nansen Programme for scoring and setting baselines of fisheries in South and Southeast Asia, including the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem.
- Virtual meeting held on 7th October 2024, to discuss enabling legislative provisions required for the ratification of the FAO-Port State Measures Agreement organized by the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Government of India (GOI).
- Virtual meeting held on 9th October 2024, marking the first meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee aimed to propose suitable amendments to the ‘Maritime Zone of India (Regulation of Fishing by Foreign Vessels) Act, 1981. The meeting was convened by the Department of Fisheries (DOF), Government of India (GOI).
- Introductory meeting of the consultative group of the India Coastal Think Tank Network on 29th October 2024. This meeting, conducted by the Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR), marked the beginning of a collaborative effort to address coastal management and sustainability issues in India.
- Virtual meeting to launch the Aquaculture Working Group within the IFISH network on 20th November 2024, building on the momentum from the January 2024 IFISH 6 meeting in Rome, Italy.
- National Academy of Agricultural Sciences Brainstorming Session on “Climate Adaptive Conservation of Aquatic Genetic Resources” on 20th December 2024.
- Scoping meeting with Dr. Aaron Savio Lobo, Programme Head of Marine Conservation at Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) - India.
- Several meetings on the Fisheries Management Database, a prototype being developed by FAO, in which BOBP is assisting in data collection.
- Monthly partner meetings on the BOBLME Project (Phase II) in connection with the preparation of the BOBLME work plans.

## Strengthening Representation of Regional Stock Assessment in Global Reporting: BOBP-IGO’s Initiatives Towards Promoting Transparency and Data-driven Fisheries Management

P. Krishnan<sup>1</sup>, Rishi Sharma<sup>2</sup> & Marc Taconet<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>BOBP-IGO, Chennai; <sup>2</sup>FAO, Rome

### 1. Background

For over half a century, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been a global leader in providing vital information on the state of fish stocks. Using the State of Stocks Index (SoSI), FAO has delivered invaluable insights to stakeholders worldwide. Since 1971, these assessments have been central to FAO’s flagship publication, The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA). Published biennially since 1995, SOFIA provides data, statistics, and analyses that have become indispensable for scientists, policymakers, and decision-makers working towards sustainable fisheries management.

The FAO’s journey in assessing marine fishery stocks began with the first global review of marine fishery resources in 1971. Since then, FAO has continuously monitored the state of world marine fishery resources. Beginning in 1997, these assessments were formally incorporated into ‘The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture’ (SOFIA) reports. The primary objective of these evaluations is to provide a comprehensive overview of global and regional marine fishery resources, supporting policy and management actions that secure the long-term sustainability of fishery resources.

Given the dynamic nature of fisheries assessment and management, as well as evolving fishery target species, FAO updates its methodology and the list of fishery stocks included in the assessment, from time-to-time.



The key milestones are summarised as under:

Year	No. of Stocks	Brief Overview
1974	146	Initial global review of marine fishery stocks published (Gulland, 1971)
1997	200	Results started to be reported in The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture reports.
2012	500	Standardised methodology to ensure the integrity of its time series analyses; about 500 stocks based on 445 species (for some species, multiple stocks were used).
2024	531	2012 list slightly increased with 530 stock units based on 445 species
2026	2580	A paradigm shift in terms of expanding the number of stocks assessed now building as much as possible on stocks assessed at operational level by RFBS and countries; revisiting the process of assessment wherein the stocks for the region were finalized with the inputs from the countries; reporting using a tiered approach (Tiers 1, 2, 3).

The new methodology will prioritise transparency, incorporate updated reporting formats, and actively engage the growing global, regional, and national community of experts in assessment and management.

### 2. SOFIA Approach till 2024

The current stock assessment methodology classifies fish stocks into three categories – non-fully exploited, fully exploited,

and overexploited – based on stock abundance, spawning potential, catch trends, and size/age composition. It uses a tiered approach to incorporate data from formal assessments, alternative methods, and expert judgment. Simplified categories and standardized procedures improve consistency and regional comparability, while an uncertainty score highlights data reliability.

The estimation process for biologically sustainable stocks involves four critical steps:

- **Selection of Stocks:** Establishing a reference list of stocks, which stands at 531 in 2024. The representativeness of this selection remains a challenge.
- **Data Collection and Collation:** Gathering information from stocks assessed by RFBs, researchers and unassessed stock landings included in FishStatJ.
- **Application of Classification Methodology:** Using tiered methods for stock status classification.
- **Computation of the Indicator:** Calculating the percentage of stocks at biologically sustainable levels.

Challenges in this process include representativeness, reliance on expert elicitation, and the lack of transparency and replicability in the unweighted stock assessments.

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### 3. New Paradigm Since SOFIA 2026: Transparent Fish Stock Assessment Framework

The list of fishery stocks analysed in each FAO region were upwardly revised to better reflect current fishing activities. Candidate lists of stocks were compiled by regional experts and from global databases (GRSF and national Sustainable Development Goal 14.4.1 reporting), and a reference list for each FAO major fishing area was decided through a series of consultative workshops held with fisheries experts from each area.

#### Step 1: Revising the List of Fishery Stocks

- The revision process is conducted collaboratively

with local institutions, experts and RFBs through regional workshops and consultations.

- Input is gathered from the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management of the FAO Committee on Fisheries and national reporting of SDG Indicator 14.4.1 (Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels).

#### Step 2: Emphasizing Robust and Representative Stock Selection

- Includes both assessed and unassessed stocks to align with SDG 14.4.1 and national priorities, as well as stocks under RFBs' mandates.
- **Target:** Cover over 80% of stocks with high-quality, comprehensive data.

### Key Terminologies

**FIRMS (Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System):** An information sharing partnership for a global database offering high-quality information on the global monitoring and management of fishery marine resources.

**GRSF (Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries):** The Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF) is a virtual research environment (VRE) that provides access to information on stocks and fisheries. The GRSF was developed to: collate, standardize, and harmonize data from multiple providers; monitor the status and trends of world stocks and fisheries; and integrate data from authoritative sources, including the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)

**SOSI (State of Stocks Index):** A metric developed by FAO to assess the health of global fish stocks. It aggregates stock status data to present an overarching picture of fisheries sustainability at global and regional levels.

**Reference List:** A systematically compiled inventory of finfish, crustaceans, molluscs, and other aquatic animals that are exploited in a specific region or country and used for stock status indicator monitoring purposes. It is based on reliable data from the considered area, represents a sample of key stocks, and is developed through stakeholder consultation. The list remains stable over time and is only updated when necessary to ensure consistency and accuracy in stock assessments

**UUID:** UUIDs are machine readable codes and aimed to respond to any global IT standard. This is a unique digital object identifier and does not change once assigned. With the UUID, the GRSF overcomes the problem of providing access to data that is described using different classification schemes. Each GRSF record receives a universally unique identifier (UUID) to facilitate management, merging, traceability of stocks between diverse data sources, over time, data enrichments, etc. UUIDs also enable interoperability among databases which adopt the inclusion of this identifier.

#### Step 3: Categorizing Data Sources

*The data sources fall into three categories:*

- **Category 1:** Data from model-based assessment outputs, such as RFB assessments, peer-reviewed publications and official country assessments, including SDG 14.4.1 reports.
- **Category 2:** Unassessed stocks. For these, additional data such as catch, catch per unit effort (CPUE), length data, and other biological metrics are gathered. Where available, input from national or regional fisheries bodies ensures proper scaling and documented expert judgment.
- **Category 3:** Stocks assessed with empirical methods, such as

a weight-of-evidence approach that incorporates economic, social, and qualitative inputs, or data-limited methods, such as catch-only methods or length-based methods.

#### Step 4: Implementing a Tiered Assessment Approach

Depending on the quality and availability of data, a tiered assessment approach was piloted in 2022 and the same will be used in the future assessments.

**Tier 1:** Stocks with reliable, model-based stock assessments. Results are reported by regional fishery bodies (RFBs), national authorities and /or published in peer-reviewed publications.

**Tier 2:** Stocks without formal assessments but for which alternative approaches, such as stock reduction analysis plus (SRA+), can be used. This requires supplementary information such as fishery-dependent data on landings, abundance indices, or expert-driven priors for depletion.

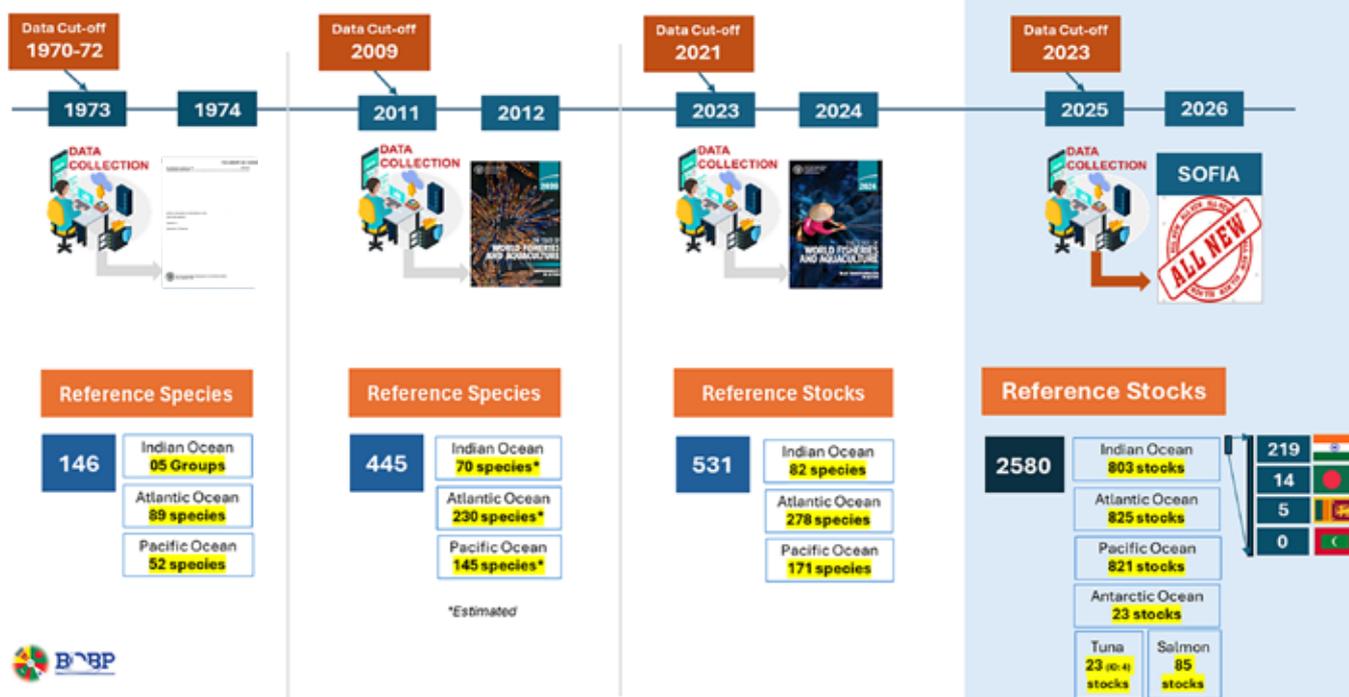


**Tier 3:** Stocks with insufficient data for Tier 1 or Tier 2 approaches where empirical methods, such as weight-of-evidence approach using qualitative or semi-quantitative information can be employed.

This improved methodology seeks to achieve better coverage of global fisheries, more accurate assessments, and greater

transparency in frameworks and reporting. By 2025, the FAO aims to introduce a new edition of its technical documentation to incorporate detailed comparisons between the old and new methodologies. The updated approach will provide full transparency regarding stock assessments, methods used, and classification results.

**A Schematic Depicting the SOFIA Cycle, Highlighting the Representation of South Asia in Indian Ocean Stock Assessment**



## Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS): An Overview

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of United Nations has established the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS), the principal objective of which is to build a community of responsible institutions that report objectively on fisheries status and trends, contributing to the promotion of responsible fisheries management.

The FIRMS partnership, which currently includes 19 intergovernmental institutions representing 23 Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), focuses on the development, sharing, and maintenance of scientific information related to fisheries. The FIRMS partnership is designed to foster international cooperation in the development and maintenance of a comprehensive fisheries and resources monitoring system, based on best information sharing practices including use of data and information standards which facilitate harmonization among data sources.

The FIRMS website and database can be accessed at <https://firms.fao.org/firms/en/home>

### Key Benefits to Countries

- *At the national level, FIRMS plays a crucial role in providing easy access to high-quality information, which is essential for the development and enhancement of fisheries policies and management plans both nationally and regionally.*
- *By ensuring the visibility of national and regional data on a global platform, FIRMS not only supports informed decision-making but also elevates the status of these fisheries on the global policy agenda.*
- *This global visibility facilitates the monitoring of stock status worldwide and promotes the adoption of sustainable practices, aligning national and regional efforts with international sustainability goals.*

The FIRMS platform will disseminate SoSI data, allowing users to explore global and regional aggregated indicators and access detailed information about the list of operational stocks included in the SoSI index across all tiers.

## 5. Underrepresentation of Regional Assessments: A Regional Challenge

Many countries in the region remain underrepresented in global fisheries data due to the lack of adequate reporting mechanisms. Factors such as limited resources, insufficient data collection systems, and limited technical capacity have created gaps in stock assessments. This underreporting affects the representativeness of global statistics and hinders effective policymaking at the regional and international levels.

*When the countries do not report the full details of the status as per the requirement against the reference list of stocks, FAO either uses the past status or adopts expert validation based on published information available in the public domain including peer reviewed publications. This leads to variation in the status of stocks reported by the countries and the FAO.*

## 4. FIRMS in the New Data Architecture

At the 13th FIRMS Steering Committee meeting in June 2023, significant advancements were made to align FIRMS' workflows with the updated SoSI methodology.

Key recommendations included:

- *Conducting biennial data calls (in November) to ensure timely updates for the SoSI workflow.*
- *Incorporating catch and effort data to improve assessments, particularly for Tier 2 stocks.*
- *Strengthening partnerships with regional fishery bodies and national stakeholders.*

In addition to FIRMS' contributions, stock status data reported by countries will play a significant role, especially in the context of SDG

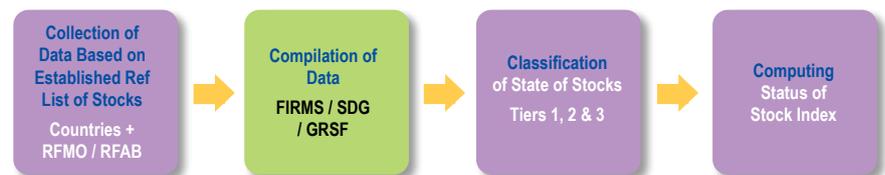
Indicator 14.4.1 reporting. By 2026, stock status information submitted by FIRMS partners will be explicitly and transparently reflected in FAO's SoSI.

### Schematic Depicting the Transition in Data Architecture for Global Resource Assessment

#### OLD



#### NEW



## 6. Initiatives of BOBP-IGO Towards Bridging the Gap

*BOBP-IGO has signed a Partnership Arrangement with FIRMS, to further strengthen IGO's commitment to addressing these gaps, particularly to ensure better representation of the regional assessments in the global stock status reports.*

With the restructuring of the FAO data architecture wherein FIRMS would feed the SOSI, BOBP-IGO envisions to play a pivotal role in engaging with the Governments and the concerned agencies in its member countries to create awareness about this development and prepare for the transition.

### Capacity Development

BOBP-IGO has been actively engaged in addressing these gaps by strengthening capacity in the region during the past decade. It has also played a significant role in creating institutional mechanisms and knowledge networks that will sustain evidence-based resource management and aid in knowledge sharing among the members.

### BOBSAN (Bay of Bengal Stock Assessment Network)

BOBP-IGO created a virtual network of stock assessment practitioners from South Asia, which aims to harness its members' collective wisdom and experiences to improve stock assessment methodologies and contribute to coordinated regional fisheries management.

### Partner in FAO Regional Workshops

BOBP-IGO partnered with FAO in organizing regional workshops in order to validate the new methodology for FAO fishing Area 51 and Area 57. During the workshops held in August 2023 and April 2024, formal reference list of stocks for each country were established. In addition, the status of currently reported stocks and lessons learned were discussed. The participating countries also discussed strategies for improving stock status reporting accuracy at the national level.

## 7. Proposed Framework for Engagement with Member Countries

BOBP-IGO would partner with the respective national agencies to collate the stock details with respect to the reference list of stocks. It will also facilitate in harmonising the regional and global databases, in due course. This BOBP-FIRMS partnership will be helpful in providing more accurate, transparent, and actionable fisheries data and more importantly, the stock status reports of the FAO will be in alignment with those of the national reports and thus would drive the national policy making.

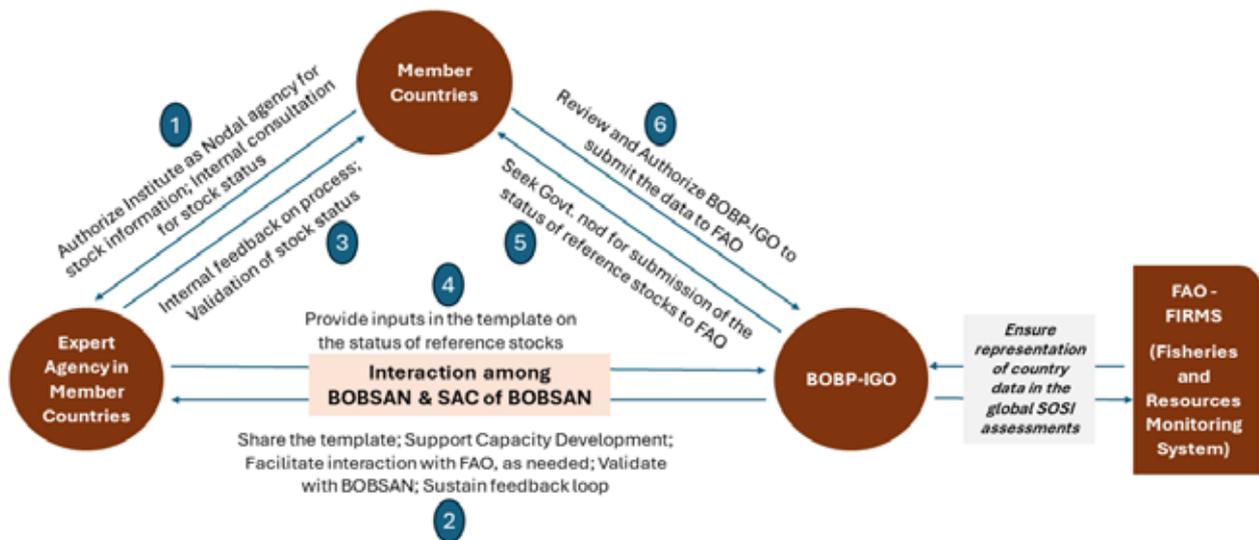
This initiative will strengthen regional fisheries management and contribute to the sustainable management of global fisheries resources.

*The member countries will have the option to share the stock information for inclusion in the global status of stocks as per FAO Areas (51 and 57) while restricting the display of national information (country-wise) in the FAO site. BOBP-IGO would ensure the directions of the member countries are respected in terms of data reporting in public interfaces.*

### 7.1 Role of Countries

- **Recognize Change:** Review the existing data reporting mechanism and align them to the new data reporting paradigm of FAO.
- **Reference Stocks:** Countries shall maintain the list of reference stocks and institute a framework for catch and effort data collection for the same.
- **Stock Assessment Framework:** The countries may notify a national institute as nodal agency for the stock status information, which in turn shall develop and implement the data collection/analysis process. The mechanism shall provide for effective peer review, development of management plan for different stocks and monitor the management efficiency.
- **Legitimize the Institutional Mechanism:** The countries may notify the methods and the process apart from the nodal agency, in order to establish a robust fisheries management system at the national level.





**Proposed Framework for Biennial Collection and Validation of Status of FAO Reference Stocks in Global Status of Stocks Index**

### 7.2 Role of BOBP-IGO as a FIRMS Partner of FAO

- **Data Collection and Reporting:** BOBP-IGO will coordinate the collection of required data with respect to the FAO reference stocks from member countries, in a timely manner, conforming to FIRMS standards.
- **Capacity Building:** BOBP-IGO will conduct training programs and workshops to enhance the technical capabilities of national fisheries departments in utilization of FIRMS tools.
- **Regional Stock Assessments:** Leveraging the collected data, BOBP-IGO will perform regional stock assessments, providing comprehensive insights into the status of shared and transboundary fish stocks through the BOBSAN (comprising experts from all members).
- **Data Integration and Sharing:** BOBP-IGO will integrate the reported data into FIRMS, facilitating global access to regional fisheries information and contributing to global stock status assessments.

### 7.3 Role of FAO

- **Capacity Development:** Facilitate in preparing the countries for the new paradigm and support capacity development of the national agencies through BOBP-IGO.
- **Status of Stock Index (SOSI):** Coordinate the data collection from the countries through BOBP-IGO, the FIRMS partner and assess the SOSI for the FAO areas, as per the new methodology and widely disseminate the status through SOFIA for data-driven fisheries management.

The key features of the revised approach are:

- **Transparency:** Detailed reporting ensures that all stakeholders can access stock status classifications, methods, and results.
- **Replicability:** Standardized workflows enable consistent application across regions.
- **Consultative Nature:** Engagement with regional and national experts fosters collaboration and buy-in.

## 8. Epilogue

It is hoped that the partnership between the member countries and the BOBP-IGO in FIRMS framework would aid in addressing the gaps in reporting, promoting transparency, and integrating advanced methodologies. The arrangement would ensure timely submission of data from the countries, better representation of national data in the global reporting frameworks, and harmonization of approaches in the region.



## Are Plastics Reinforcing Gender Barriers in Fisheries? Exploring a Research Agenda

Ahana Lakshmi, K Nirmala & Rajdeep Mukherjee

### 1. Introduction

Plastics in fisheries are largely synonymous with fishing gear, and consequently, abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), including nets, lines, etc., is the largest contributor to sea-based sources of marine plastic debris. Since men are dominant in the harvest sector and use boats and gear composed of plastics, loss of gear, especially large nets, is seen to affect them economically. Women, in general, do not go out to sea to fish and hence may not use fishing gear such as large nets, and are often not recognized as fishers. Hence few marine plastic management projects targeting fishers include women, effectively marginalizing their knowledge or needs (Veena and Kusakabe, 2023); few studies actually examine the use and impact of plastics on women in fisheries. Here, we highlight the importance of looking at the problem of plastics through a gender lens, with a primary focus on women in fisheries.

### 2. Use of Plastics by Women in Fisheries

The dominant use of plastics by women in fisheries is in the post-harvest sector. Women fish vendors use single-use plastic bags as they are practical for transporting wet commodities. They use plastic trays and baskets for carrying fish and mats woven of plastic fibre for drying fish as plastics are cheaper. Women, who harvest fish sometimes, use small rafts made of thermocole for paddling. However,

the exact quantum of plastics used by women as part of their livelihood activities has not been estimated.

### 3. Impacts of Plastics on Women in Fisheries

There is considerably more information on the impacts of plastics on women in fisheries, though even here, a lot of it is from scattered news reports and communications during workshop discussions.

**Direct Impacts:** Fisherwomen are actively engaged in the harvest of shellfish, prawns, and fish and prawn seeds in the Indian coasts in Kerala, West Bengal and Odisha. Around 58% of seed fish/shrimp

seed collectors are women (Gopal and Ananthan, 2022). During workshop discussions on women in fisheries (e.g., ICSF, 2022), fisherwomen reported often finding fewer prawns but more plastics in their nets, such as nylon bags, broken nets, straws, and plastic bottle caps. This not only causes lesser yields but also cleaning up these materials consumes a significant amount of their time, which is a time-consuming task apart from causing potential injuries. Gleaning, a large subsistence activity supporting food security, is also carried out by a large number of women, especially in shallow waters. Gleaning amidst plastic has also resulted in an increase in skin



diseases among women. In Tamil Nadu, in the Gulf of Mannar coasts, women seaweed collectors dive into deeper waters of around 15m depth without any protective gear except strips of cloth around their fingers and are affected by marine litter that snags onto corals and rocks. In Mumbai, as in other places, women offering prayers to the sea during Narali Purnima have to stand amidst piles of accumulated plastic trash that affects them aesthetically and culturally (Behal, 2024).

A number of women also work in the processing sector where plastics are extensively used in packaging. In the case of processing and value addition, the plastics used for packaging or for drying and heat sealing of packages may release volatile compounds that have adverse effects on women working in the sector.

**Indirect Impacts:** Women in fisheries are also indirectly affected by plastics used by their menfolk. Loss of fishing gear can prove to be very expensive, resulting in loss of livelihoods for both men and women and pushing them deeper into debt. Removal of plastics caught along with fish in nets can result in lower catch and additional time required

to clean and repair nets, which in turn reflects lower incomes. The lowered catches by fishermen put pressure on women, who are in supporting roles in the post-harvest sector or home-makers, to find alternate income sources to meet the demands of the family.

An overview of the causal chain of the use and impacts of plastics on women in the fisheries sector is presented in Figure 1.

#### 4. Way Forward

Though there is considerable discussion on the generation of marine litter, especially plastics, and their impacts on ocean and coastal resources, discussions on the impact of marine plastics on women in fisheries are few and far between. Based on the above analysis and literature, we propose the following hypotheses and way forward for future research in this area:

**1. Economic Impact:** Women in fisheries experience economic effects of marine plastic pollution that are distinct from men's, due to their roles in post-harvest activities. For example, women's reliance on single-use plastics and other tools for

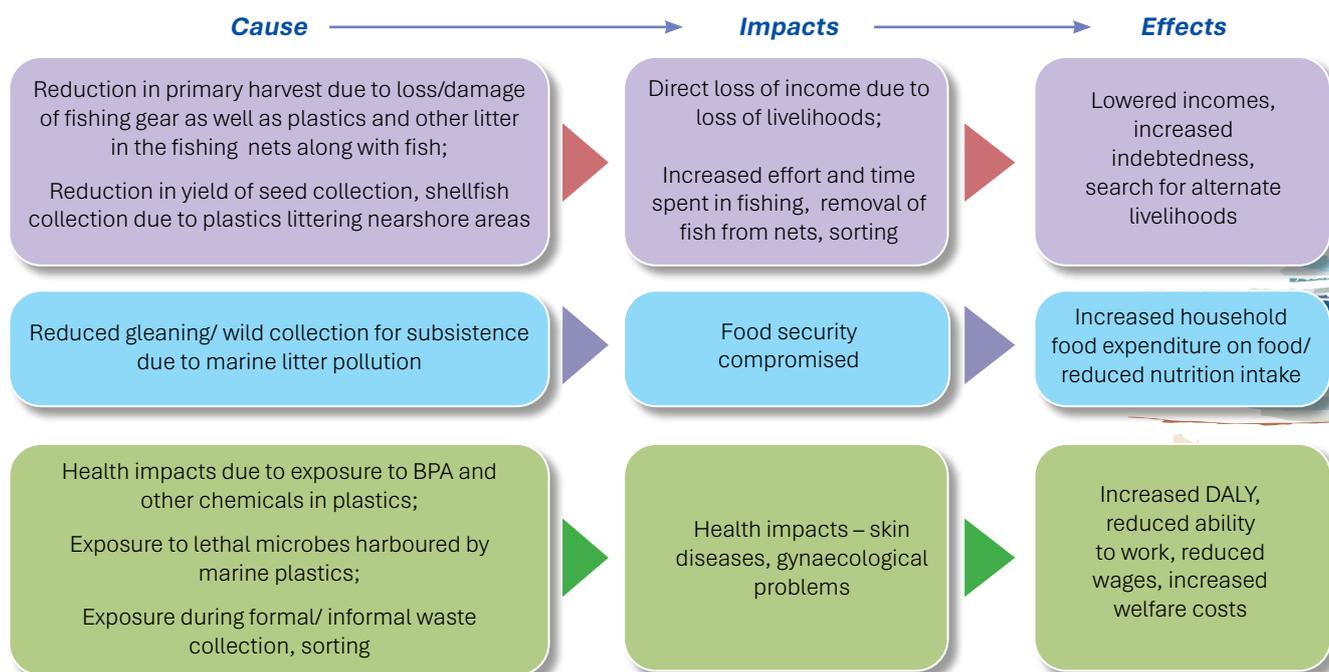
vending and processing fish suggests the need for targeted interventions to quantify these impacts.

**2. Health Impact:** Plastics in fisheries expose women to specific health risks, including injuries and diseases during gleaning and processing activities, but the extent of these risks compared to men remains under-researched. Direct exposure to plastic-related toxins and debris calls for a better understanding of health disparities.

**3. Cultural and Social Impact:** The cultural and social impacts of plastic pollution, such as disruptions to traditional rituals and community aesthetics, are experienced by women in ways that are deeply tied to their roles in coastal communities. These impacts require detailed exploration to evaluate their socio-cultural significance.

**4. Data Collection and Quantification:** The current gap lies in quantifying the specific ways in which plastics impact women's livelihoods, health, and cultural practices. Collecting

**Figure 1: Causal chain of plastics and impacts on women in fisheries**



gender-disaggregated data is essential for framing these effects accurately. Future research should prioritize quantifying these impacts through robust data collection and analysis. Such efforts would provide evidence-based insights to inform inclusive policy frameworks and interventions for managing marine plastic pollution.

Women are part of the fresh fish vending and processing sector, which also uses a considerable amount of single-use plastics. Despite a ban on single-use plastics, they continue to be used due to a lack of alternate options. Research conducted in the Mumbai coasts revealed that the majority of the respondents in the fishing community wish to reduce plastic litter and are very much willing to reuse or use eco-friendly biodegradable bags for shopping if such systems are made mandatory (Reshi et al.2022). This is but a microscopic effort but indicates that any effort in reducing marine litter has to have a broader appeal.

## 5. Scope in the BOBLME II Project

Component 3 of the BOBLME Phase II, being currently implemented by BOBP-IGO in its member countries, focuses on ‘Management of coastal and marine pollution to improve ecosystem health’ in which Outcome 3.1 is ‘Pollution from discharge of untreated sewage and wastewater; solid waste and marine litter; and nutrient loading reduced or minimized in selected hotspots in river, coastal and marine waters’. Among the targets are a) Specific needs of men and women identified and taken into consideration, b) Women and men involved in implementing good practices, and c) Gender disaggregated reporting.

For this, it is planned to collect gender-disaggregated field-level data on the consumption and disposal of plastics along the value chain in the fisheries sector. The perceptions of both men and women on how responsible use of plastics can be promoted, as well as potential alternatives, are planned to be collected. Simultaneously, inputs into the impacts of plastics – economic, health, and environmental – will also

be collected. This could be built up as a guidance document where gendered information on plastics usage in the fisheries sector, as well as the impacts of plastics disposal, will be available. Following this, an action plan for responsible use of plastics in fisheries incorporating gender-focused interventions can be formulated.

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## Up Coming Events

### **UNODC & BOBP Regional Training Programme on Fishing Vessel Boarding Operations**

**06–17 Jan 2025 | Trincomalee Navy Base, Sri Lanka**

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP), in collaboration with the BOBP-IGO, is organizing a two-week specialized training for Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE) officers. The training will focus on Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) operations targeting fisheries-related crimes, including Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. Officers from BOBP-IGO member-countries will receive practical and theoretical training on international fisheries management, legal frameworks, and risk assessments.

### **National Sensitization Workshop on the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) to Combat IUU Fishing**

**10–11 Feb 2025 | Hotel Taj Vivanta, Kochi, India**

Organized by FAO and BOBP-IGO, and hosted by the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, this workshop will provide an in-depth discussion on India's preparedness for PSMA ratification. Participants will include government officials from the Ministry of Fisheries, Commerce, Navy, Coast Guard, fisheries departments from various Indian states, researchers, and NGOs.

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

**14 Feb 2025 | Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi, India**

Hosted by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying (MFAHD) and co-organized by FAO and BOBP-IGO, this meeting will bring together senior government officials, FAO representatives, and key maritime agencies to assess the need of ratification of the PSMA as a critical tool in combating IUU fishing regionally and globally.

### **High-Level Meeting on Policy Guidance for Mainstreaming Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management in Small-Scale Fisheries**

**20 - 22 Feb 2025 | Lankanfinolhu Island, Maldives**

The High-Level Meeting aims at strengthening the small-scale fisheries in the member-countries with better policy targeting and integration of EAFM principles and strategies for dealing with climate change. The meeting is organized under the BOBLME-II project and in association

with the Government of Maldives. Senior policy makers, diplomats and regional and international organizations will be attending this meeting that integrates national priorities and regional cooperation.

### **XIII Governing Council Meeting (GCM-XIII) of BOBP-IGO**

**21 Feb 2025 | Lankanfinolhu Island, Maldives**

This annual meeting of the BOBP-IGO Governing Council will review regional fisheries governance issues, ongoing projects, and future strategic directions. Member states will discuss policy initiatives aimed at enhancing sustainable fisheries and marine resource management.

### **Regional Conference on Strengthening Legal Measures Against Illegal Fishing in the Indian Ocean**

**03–06 Mar 2025 | Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Organized by UNODC and BOBP-IGO, this regional conference will address legal frameworks, enforcement challenges, and cooperative mechanisms to combat IUU fishing in the Indian Ocean. Experts, government officials, and international organizations will explore ways to harmonize legal measures across jurisdictions.

### **Regional Fishing Vessel Boarding Operations (FVBO) Training**

**10–21 Mar 2025 | Colombo, Sri Lanka**

The second installment of the UNODC & BOBP-IGO FVBO training, this session will focus on advanced VBSS techniques, intelligence sharing, and interagency collaboration for maritime security enforcement. It aims to enhance the capacity of MLE officers from Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh, and India to combat fisheries-related crimes.



# BOBP-IGO in the Media

**WTO subsidy talks must focus on protecting small-scale fishers**

**NEED OF THE HOUR.** Experts call for differential treatment of developing nations

VOICING CONCERNS. CMRI Director Grinson George speaking at a panel discussion on the WTO agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in Kochi

Grinson George, economist at WTO Liaison Office in Geneva said... "Historically, these subsidies enabled developed countries to build large industrial fleets, causing significant environmental impacts and inequalities in resource distribution".

Compared to this, India's fish catch is predominantly small-scale based, making it a matter of food security and livelihood.

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**Money Tinker**

**'WTO subsidy negotiations must focus on protecting small-scale fishermen'**

Experts on the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on fisheries subsidies should focus on protecting small-scale and artisanal fishermen while encouraging sustainable growth in the fishing sector. A discussion panel suggested. Experts speaking at the meeting also called for differential treatment of developing nations.

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**'Negotiations on subsidies should focus on protecting small-scale fishermen'**

Panel of experts on WTO Fisheries Subsidies agreement in Kochi

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# Visitors



**Amb. Venu Rajamony**, *Former Diplomat, MEA, Gol*



**Dr. N. Godhantaraman**, *Indian Maritime University, Chennai*



**Artist Diana Sathish**, *BOBP WoA Ambassador, Chennai*



**Mr. Basil Srinivasan**, *Crime Branch, Tamil Nadu*



**Md. Khaleel Shareef**, *BDO*



**Prof. Raman Kumar Trivedi**, *Director, RPCAU, Bihar*



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