



सत्यमेव जयते

DEPARTMENT OF
FISHERIES

National Launch Workshop on

Development of the Plan of Action for Securing Sustainable Marine Small-Scale Fisheries in India

(NPOA-SSF Marine)

31 August – 01 September 2026

Hotel Accord, Puducherry



*Organised Under the
Aegis of BOBLME-II Project*

Implemented By



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY
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1. The National Workshop

The National Workshop (NW) on the Development of the Plan of Action for Securing Sustainable Marine Small-Scale Fisheries in India (NPOA-SSF Marine) will be held in Puducherry on 31 August – 1 September 2026.

The Workshop is being organised by the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Government of India, in collaboration with the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) under the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project and hosted by the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare, Government of the Union Territory of Puducherry. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is providing technical oversight.

The overarching goal of the Workshop is to initiate the development phase of the NPOA-SSF following a successful Initiation Phase that started in November 2025. Towards this, the proposed NW would review the legal analysis and the small-scale fisheries profile developed by the BOBP-IGO in collaboration with FAO in support of the NPOA process and the intervention logic developed during the first phase. The key outputs from the NW will be the validation of the draft Intervention Logic and an agreed stakeholder consultation plan for the development of the NPOA-SSF.

The NW will contribute towards realising the policy goals of the National Policy on Marine Fisheries, 2017, while complementing the ongoing global process of securing sustainable small-scale fisheries. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2026 notes that, although the SSF Guidelines have gained wide international recognition since 2014, their impact ultimately depends on effective national implementation. The NPOA-SSF is intended to assist countries with effective implementation, and the NW is a step in this direction.

India is preparing two NPOAs-SSF: one for marine fisheries and one for inland fisheries. Both have completed the Initiation Phase, and draft Intervention Logics have been prepared. These plans are intended to strengthen sustainability, equitable access to resources and opportunities, livelihoods and food security of small-scale fishing communities in the country.

What is NPOA-SSF?

- A systematic national process for implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).
- A participatory, multi-stakeholder mechanism for identifying challenges faced by the small-scale fisheries sector and agreeing on strategic interventions to address them.
- A framework for strengthening the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development.
- A platform for collaboration among relevant stakeholders to secure fair incomes, food security and nutrition in the small-scale fisheries sector.



2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the NW is to launch the NPOA-SSF development phase and agree on a plan for stakeholder consultations that will lead to the inclusive development of the NPOA-SSF.

The specific objectives are to:

- Inform stakeholders about the NPOA-SSF development methodology;
- Review and validate the problem statements by thematic area: responsible fisheries and sustainable resource management (tenure, access and co-management); social development, decent work and gender equality; value chains, post-harvest and trade; and disaster risk, climate change and safety at sea;
- Present the outputs from the Initiation Phase, namely the legal and policy review and the country SSF profile;
- Review the assumptions, risks and proposed mitigation measures, and identify institutional responsibilities and partnerships;
- Develop a time-bound and inclusive stakeholder consultation plan for the preparation and finalisation of the NPOA-SSF, including responsibilities, financing options and an agreed schedule.

3. Background & Process

India's marine fisheries comprise a wide range of fishing systems, from shore-based and non-motorised operations to motorised and mechanised fleets. Since the 1970s, mechanisation, market integration and changes in fishing technology have increased production and altered the economic structure of the sector. The benefits, however, have been unevenly distributed. Differences in access to capital, technology, fishing grounds and markets have contributed to conflicts, economic differentiation and the marginalisation of some small-scale fishing groups. Recent demographic, ecological and market changes are further reshaping these relationships (Fig. 1).

The policy environment provides a stronger basis for addressing these challenges. The National Policy on Marine Fisheries, 2017, identifies seven pillars for sustainability and adopts the ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM) as a guiding principle. Revisions to State Marine Fisheries Regulation Acts and programmes such as the *Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana* (PMMSY) have expanded the available policy and implementation instruments. The remaining challenge is to translate this broad framework into interventions that respond to the diversity and internal differentiation of the sector. Similar challenges are evident across the Bay of Bengal, although their scale and form differ.

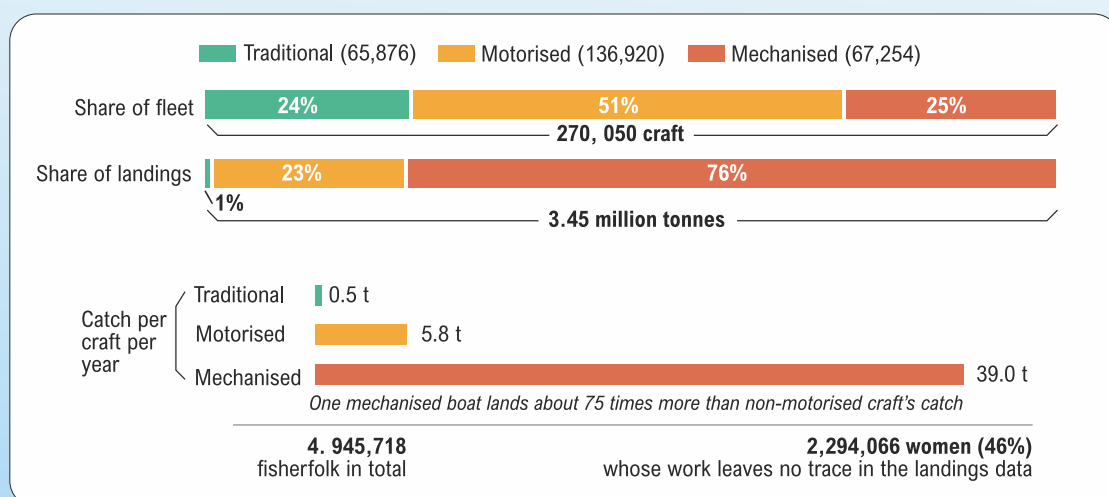


Fig. 1. A snapshot of India's marine fisheries sector

The Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project, initiated in 2023, provided an opportunity to advance EAFM planning in the region. At the BOBP-IGO High-Level Meeting held in Maldives in February 2025, which India chaired, Fisheries Secretaries from member countries, together with regional and international organisations and community representatives, noted that the predominantly small-scale character of fisheries in the region required EAFM implementation to be closely linked with national planning for small-scale fisheries.

SOFIA 2026 describes NPOA-SSF as a systematic and holistic national framework that identifies priority fisheries, brings government, fishers, fishworkers, research and civil society into the planning process, and develops actions covering tenure, sustainable resource management, livelihoods, value chains, gender and climate risks. This makes the NPOA-SSF particularly important for implementing EAFM in a predominantly small-scale fisheries context: **EAFM provides the management principle, while NPOA-SSF creates the institutional, participatory and implementation architecture needed to apply it at national and local levels.**

The 13th Governing Council of BOBP-IGO subsequently endorsed this direction and requested the Secretariat to support the development of NPOA-SSF in its member countries. Acting upon this direction, FAO and BOBP-IGO organised a Regional Capacity Development Programme on the development of NPOA-SSF in Chennai in September 2025, followed by a Regional Inception Workshop in Colombo in November 2025. Table 1 provides a consolidated overview of these developments. The FAO framework for developing NPOA-SSF was adopted to guide the process (Fig. 2).

Table1. Key milestones in the NPOA-SSF preparation process

No.	Activity / Milestone	Description	Date / Period	Location / Remarks
1.	Development of key preparatory documents	BOBP-IGO worked with national governments with support from FAO, to develop the key documents required for preparation of NPOA-SSF in line with FAO guidelines namely the legal report and the country SSF profile for all four BOBP-IGO countries.	April to September 2025	All four BOBP-IGO countries
2.	Regional Capacity Development Programme	A regional capacity development programme was held as part of the NPOA-SSF preparation process.	17 - 19 September 2025	Chennai, India
3.	Regional Inception Workshop	A regional inception workshop was organised as a follow-up to the Chennai programme.	20 - 22 November 2025	Colombo, Sri Lanka
4.	Designation of BOBP-IGO as Secretariat	FAO designated BOBP-IGO as the Secretariat to support the process of preparing NPOA-SSF in the four BOBP-IGO countries.	December 2025	Applies to the four BOBP-IGO countries
5.	India-specific announcement	At the Chennai workshop, it was announced that separate NPOA-SSF would be prepared for marine fisheries and inland fisheries in India.	17 - 19 September 2025	Announced at Chennai workshop; India-specific decision



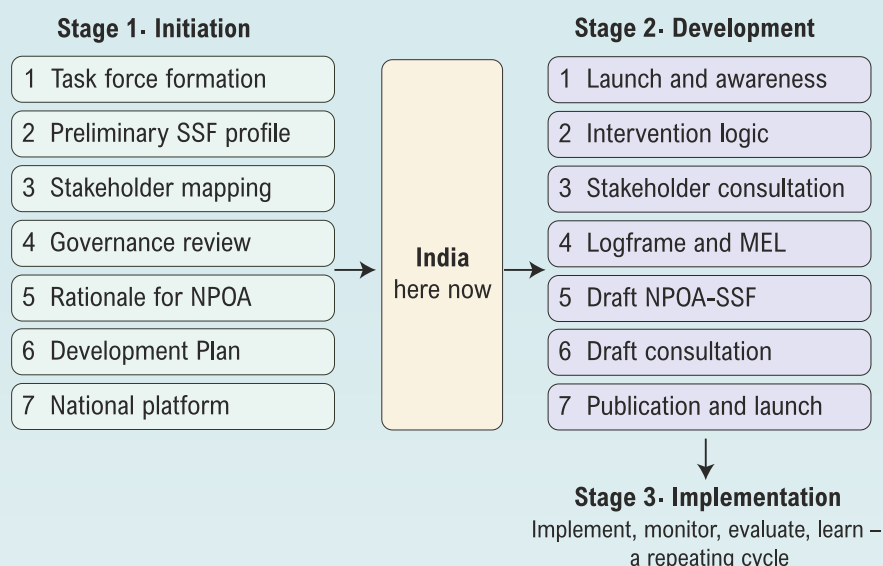


Fig. 2 The NPOA-SSF development process proposed by FAO and adopted for India

Where the process stands

The National Task Force (NTF) constituted by the DoF for the development of the NPOA-SSF [Marine] prepared the Initiation Phase Reports (Phase 1) in collaboration with BOBP-IGO and FAO. These reports include the legal and policy review and the SSF profile prepared using the FAO methodology and a draft Intervention Logic was developed, setting out the problem statements, objectives, outcomes, outputs and proposed activities that will guide preparation of the NPOA-SSF (Phase 2).

The next step is the formal launch of the NPOA-SSF (Marine) Development Phase, followed by technical review and validation of the draft Intervention Logic and preparation and finalisation of the draft NPOA-SSF through multi-stakeholder consultations. This process will bring together central ministries, State governments, research institutions, civil society organisations, fisher organisations, women's groups and development partners. The Implementation Phase (Phase 3) will follow the public launch of the final NPOA-SSF (Marine).

Identification of stakeholders: A detailed stakeholder-identification process was carried forward from the Chennai consultation to the Colombo consultation and subsequently through the NTF meeting to ensure that the development process remains fully inclusive. Accordingly, stakeholders and their representative organisations at different levels were identified. This draft list will guide future consultations at the sub-national level and across professional, occupational and livelihood groups. The list will be validated during the Workshop for subsequent use by the States.

4. Arrangements for the National Workshop

Date and Place: 31 August – 1 September 2026, Puducherry

Organising partners: DoF-India, DFFW-Puducherry, BOBP-IGO

Technical oversight: FAO

Language of conduct: The Workshop will be conducted in English. However, it will be ensured that language does not become a barrier for effective participation. Vernacular versions of key workshop documents will be provided, where possible. Fisheries officers, representatives from academia and organisers will act as translators and interlocutors if participants face difficulty in following the workshop proceedings.

Workshop methodology

Workshop materials: Summary documents on legal review, SSF profile and intervention logic in English; Translated versions in Bangla, Hindi, Odia, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati (AI-translated and corrected by respective Fisheries Departments).

Facilitation: Fisheries officers from each State along with the organisers will act as facilitators.

Grouping: Two broad groups: primary stakeholders; and administration, research and academia. Primary stakeholders may further be divided based on gender and region (Men/Women and East/West). In other cases, participants may be grouped according to the task at hand. Each group will work with a prescribed format for consolidation of inputs.

Expected outputs

The workshop is expected to result in:

- Improved awareness of the NPOA-SSF development process, purpose and progress so far.
- Presentation of the Initiation Phase outputs (legal and policy review and SSF profile) and validation of the draft Intervention Logic, including problem statements, objectives, outcomes and outputs.
- Agreement on assumptions, risks and mitigation measures, with indicative lead and supporting institutions for key outputs.
- A time-bound, community-led and state-led consultation plan for development and finalisation of the NPOA-SSF, including allocation of responsibilities, financing options and an agreed schedule.
- A workshop report incorporating the recommendations adopted by the National Task Force (Marine).

Participants

The expected participants will include 23 National Task Force members (Marine), 13 representatives from State and UT Fisheries Departments, 29 representatives from fisher organisations, cooperatives and federations, including women in fisheries representatives and SHG federations, and 10 representatives from BOBP-IGO, FAO and among experts, making a total of 75 participants in the room. The representatives from fisher organisations, cooperatives, federations, women's groups and SHG federations will include two representatives from each coastal State/UT, with five representatives from the host State, along with other stakeholders such as civil society organisations and development partners.



Programme

Day 1 (Monday, 31 Aug 2026)

Venue: Accord Puducherry, Puducherry

Time	Session and item	Resource Person
0900 – 0930	Registration	BOBP-IGO Secretariat
0930 – 1100	Session I: Inaugural Session <i>[The broad objective of this session is to set the stage, understand participants' expectations and allow for informal introductions]</i> Seating arrangement: Participants seated at their respective group tables [(i) East, (ii) West, (iii) Women, and (iv) Administration, Research and Academia].	
0930 - 0940	Welcome Address	Dr. P. Krishnan <i>Director, BOBP-IGO</i>
0940 – 0950	NPOA-SSF: Purpose and objective	Ms. Angela Lentisco <i>Fishery and Aquaculture Officer, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok</i>
0950 – 1000	Fishers' Expectations from the NPOA-SSF	Fisher community representative
1000 – 1010	Release of the Initiation Phase Report (Marine), the Country SSF Profile and the Legal Report	Dignitaries on the dais
1010 – 1020	Inaugural Address	Dr. D. Manikandan, IAS <i>Commissioner-cum-Secretary to the Lt. Governor & Secretary (Fisheries and Tourism), Govt of Puducherry</i>
1020 – 1025	Vote of Thanks	Shri A. Mohamad Ismail <i>Director, DFFW, Government of Puducherry</i>
1025 – 1100	Group Photograph, Networking & Refreshments	
1100 – 1230	Session II: Setting the foundation <i>[The broad objective of this session is to understand the governance arrangements in the marine fisheries sector and how the Intervention Logic was developed, so that participants can effectively contribute to its review and validation. The basis for validation will be further clarified by considering the criteria for characterisation of small-scale fishers.]</i> Moderator: Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, Chennai	
1100 – 1120	National Legal Review and SSF Profile: Brief Overview	Dr. Ahana Lakshmi <i>Sr. Scientific Consultant, BOBP-IGO</i>
1120 – 1130	The Intervention Logic Framework: how it was built and how it will be validated	Dr. P.S. Ananthan <i>ICAR-CIFE NTF Member</i>
1130 – 1230	Who is a Small-Scale Fisher? A Pictorial Exercise Sorting a deck of character cards, followed by an explanation of the sorting criteria	Participants Facilitators: BOBP-IGO / Academia

The subsequent sessions will cover the nine themes identified in the Intervention Logic. The group arrangement remains the same. Each group will have one facilitator and one rapporteur. Each thematic discussion will start with a brief presentation on the theme followed by discussion and consolidation of the group findings.

There will be no separate group presentations. At the end of the day, group rapporteurs will hand over the thematic group inputs to the Workshop Secretariat.

Time	Session and item		Resource Person
1230 – 1315	Session III: Social Development, Employment and Decent Work <i>[The broad objective of this session is to examine the conditions of work, social protection and employment along the fisheries value chain, with particular attention to the situation of small-scale fishing communities. Through a thematic presentation followed by group discussion, participants will review the intervention logic pertaining to social development and decent work, identify gaps and validate the proposed actions in light of national circumstances.]</i>		
1230 – 1240	Thematic presentation on Social Development, Employment and Decent Work		Dr. P.S. Ananthan ICAR-CIFE NTF Member
1240 – 1315	Group Discussion (4 Groups)		Participants Facilitators: DoF officials /BOBP-IGO / Academia
1315 – 1415	Lunch		
1415 – 1545	Session IV: Fisheries Livelihoods, Equity and Resilience, and Supporting Institutional Mechanisms Thematic presentation and discussion on value chains, post-harvest and trade; gender equality; and disaster risk and climate change. Group briefing on institutional mechanisms [policy coherence; institutional coordination and collaboration; information, research and communication; capacity development] <i>[The broad objective of this session is to consider the interconnected themes of value chains, post-harvest practices and trade; gender equality; and disaster risk and climate change as they bear upon the livelihoods and resilience of small-scale fishing communities.]</i> A parallel track will examine the institutional arrangements — policy coherence, coordination, information and research, and capacity development — needed to support these outcomes. The session is designed to give gender perspectives dedicated attention through a separate working group, while ensuring that all three tracks contribute to a consolidated review of the intervention logic.		
1415 – 1430	Thematic Presentation		Dr. Nikita Gopal ICAR-CIFT NTF Member
1430 – 1545	Group Discussion (4 groups)		Participants Facilitators: DoF officials / BOBP-IGO / Academia
	Track 1: East & West (Two Groups) East and West groups will discuss all three items	Track 2: Women Women's group will discuss all three items but will especially focus on evaluating and strengthening gender perspectives	Track 3: Admin, Research & Academia Group briefing on institutional mechanisms (Dr. P.S. Ananthan ICAR-CIFE NTF Member)
1545 – 1600	Refreshments / Reflections		

Time	Session and item	Resource Person
1600 – 1730	Session V: Responsible governance of tenure and sustainable resource management <i>[The broad objective of this session is to review the intervention logic relating to governance of tenure, resource stewardship and management measures, including the regulatory and participatory frameworks that underpin sustainable use of marine living resources. Participants will assess whether the proposed interventions adequately address the governance challenges facing small-scale fisheries and suggest amendments where needed.]</i>	
1600 – 1620	Thematic presentation on Responsible Governance of Tenure & Sustainable Resource Management	Dr. P.S. Ananthan ICAR-CIFE NTF Member
1620 – 1730	Group Discussion (4 Groups)	Participants Facilitators: DoF officials /BOBP-IGO / Academia
1730	Close of the day	



Day 2 (Tuesday, 01 Sep 2026)

Venue: Accord Puducherry, Puducherry

Time	Session and item	Resource Person
0930 – 1030	Session VI: Intervention Logic: Findings from Group Discussions <i>[This session will provide space for any spillover issues from Day 1, followed by a presentation of a consolidated summary of group inputs.]</i>	
0930 - 1000	Feedback on Proceedings of Day 1	BOBP-IGO / NTF
1000 - 1030	Presentation and Discussion on Stakeholders' Inputs on the Intervention Logic	BOBP-IGO / NTF
1030 – 1100	Refreshments / Networking / Reflections	
1100 – 1300	Session VII: Preparation of Stakeholder Consultation Plan <i>[The broad objective of this session is to prepare a roadmap for stakeholder consultations to be carried out by the Government and stakeholder groups. Participants will work in the following groups, and seating arrangements will be made accordingly.]</i>	
1100 - 1115	Presentation on the broad contours of the Stakeholder Consultation Plan <i>The format for preparing the stakeholder consultation plan will be explained [where and when; who must be in the room, by category and number; language and materials; the three themes needing most local adaptation; live definition questions; costing; risks]</i>	Dr. P. Krishnan Director, BOBP-IGO
1115 - 1145	Group Discussion (4 parallel tracks) Group 1: Stakeholder Mapping and Prioritisation of Issues for Stakeholder Consultations Identifying the priority themes and questions that must be placed before stakeholders, drawing on the Intervention Logic and the gaps and concerns raised during the Workshop, and identifying any special-interest groups that should be consulted. Group 2: Expected Outcomes and Indicators of Success Defining what a successful consultation process should deliver: the format and process, the nature of outputs at each stage, and benchmarks for adequate participation and coverage. Group 3: Timeframe, Documentation, Synthesis and Feedback into the NPOA Determining when and where consultations will take place, how consultation findings will be recorded, consolidated across states and stakeholder categories, and fed back into the drafting and revision of the Intervention Logic and the national plan of action. Group 4: Funding sources, scale and responsibilities Estimating the scale and reach of the consultation process, identifying potential funding sources – government budgetary provisions, project support and partner contributions – and assigning institutional responsibilities for planning, execution and reporting at the national and State levels.	Participants



Time	Session and item	Resource Person
1145 – 1215	Group Presentations	Participants
1215 – 1300	Meeting of the NTF for consolidation of the workshop inputs	NTF / BOBP-IGO
1215 – 1430	Lunch (non-NTF participants may proceed to lunch from 1215; NTF members join after the meeting at 1300)	
1430 – 1600	Session VIII: Valedictory Session	
1430 – 1440	Opening Remarks	Dr. D. Manikandan, IAS <i>Commissioner-cum-Secretary to the Lt. Governor & Secretary (Fisheries and Tourism), Government of Puducherry</i>
1440 – 1500	Presentation of the Workshop Summary	Dr. P. Krishnan <i>Director, BOBP-IGO</i>
1500 – 1510	Reflections from the Fishers	
1510 – 1520	Comments from SSF Unit, FAO (<i>online</i>)	Mr. Varun Tandon <i>International Fisheries Specialist, NFIFM Assessment and Management, FAO, Rome, Italy</i>
1520 – 1530	Comments from Chair, NTF (Marine) on the Workshop Recommendations and Stakeholder Consultation Plan	Dr. Surabhi Rai, IAS <i>Joint Secretary (Marine), DoF, GoI</i>
1530 – 1535	Closing Remarks	Dr. Sanjay Pandey <i>Dy. Commissioner, DoF</i>
1535 – 1600	Interaction / Group Photo / Parting Tea	





For further information, please contact

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