



# Sub-Regional Consultation on Development of BOBLME Project Work Plan: 2026-27

16-17 April 2026 | Fortune Beach Resort, Chennai

Implemented By



Food and Agriculture  
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 **Norway**

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The Work Plan will be Reviewed and  
Endorsed by the BOBP-IGOs  
**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**  
on 18th April 2026



Hosted by



भारत सरकार  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
मत्स्यपालन विभाग  
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

# 1. Background

The BOBLME II project addresses urgent challenges in transboundary fisheries and marine sustainability in seven countries – Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It is implemented by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO RAP) and executed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC). It is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) International Waters and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). BOBP-IGO responsible for three of the project's five components for implementation in its member-countries: Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. These components are Component 1 (Sustainable Fisheries Management, covering both EAFM and IUU fishing); Component 3 (Pollution control in fishing harbours); and Component 5 (Regional Mechanism for Planning, Coordination and Monitoring) and provide support to the implementation of the other two components, namely, marine managed areas and sustainable livelihoods. The operational period of the project is from 2023 to 2028, that is it is at the halfway mark now and moving from **planning to implementation**.

## 2. Progress till Date

Following national inception workshops and a sub-regional planning workshop between January and May 2024, notable progress was achieved in meeting the project objectives conducted under the project and other complementary activities of BOBP-IGO.

**Mainstreaming EAFM:** On EAFM, two Fisheries Management Units (FMUs) have been selected in each country and site-specific EAFM plans are being prepared under the Focus Area approach. Recognising the fragmented landscape of EAFM promotion across agencies and institutions, a national EAFM networking centre has been established in India to consolidate expertise, coordinate working groups, and deliver structured training. This directly supports Outputs 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 and is working towards the mid-term milestone of 250 practitioners and 8 institutions actively applying EAFM. *A proposal to establish similar centres in Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka, and eventually connect them into a regional network, will be considered at the April consultation.*

**Combatting IUU:** The headline achievement of the first half of 2026 was the adoption of the Bay of Bengal Regional Plan of Action on IUU Fishing (BOB RPOA-IUU) at the Sub-Regional Consultation in Malé in February 2025, which was made effective when Bangladesh endorsed the plan through an official communication on 23 November 2025. This is the first regional IUU governance instrument for the Bay of Bengal, fulfilling a core commitment under Output 1.2.1 and providing the operational foundation for the remaining IUU workstream. Getting there required sustained groundwork: national MCS system reviews, iterative engagement with national IUU working groups, and multiple rounds of sub-regional consultation.



**Strengthening resource management:** Stock assessment capacity has been strengthened through the Bay of Bengal Stock Assessment Network (BOBSAN), which is building the scientific foundations for managing shared and transboundary stocks across the region. This activity supported by BOBP-IGO and its partners (HD, EAF-NANSEN), complements outcomes 1.1 and 1.2 of the BOBLME Project and also component 5 on regional collaboration.

**SSF, Value Chains & Traceability:** Three workshops addressing small-scale fisheries and value chains were held in the second half of 2025 and early 2026. Regional workshops on NPOA-SSF held in September and November 2025 produced country-specific roadmaps for small-scale fisheries governance, filling a recognised gap in the original project design. Regional and international workshops on fisheries value chains in December 2025 and February 2026 addressed post-harvest quality, market access, traceability and IUU mitigation as interconnected issues. Most recently, a National Workshop on Traceability in Fisheries and Aquaculture was held in Kochi in March 2026 in collaboration with MPEDA, examining India's National Digital Traceability System as a model with regional potential. BOBP-IGO is working with EDIF on scaling up traceability. The output supports the BOBLME outcome 1.2.

**Capacity Building:** Over 100 officials, scientists and community representatives have been trained in EAFM, and approximately 80 government officials in MCS competencies covering legal frameworks, port state inspection and at-sea vessel boarding. On Component 3, harbour waste management baseline assessments are complete and national working groups on waste management and gear marking have been activated. On Component 5, BOBP-IGO has contributed to the design of the CCR-BOBLME governance architecture and has embedded gender-disaggregated data collection in the project M&E framework from the outset.

In short, the first half of the project has put in place the institutional foundations: endorsed instruments, activated working groups, initiated EAFM plans, and a growing cadre of trained practitioners. The second half is about turning that foundation into measurable outcomes on the water and within government systems.

### 3. Purpose of the Workshop

The overarching objective of this meeting is to develop a work-plan for the BOBP-IGO for implementation during 2026-27. A focused work-plan on implementation of the BOBLME project objective will be nested within this larger work-plan. The BOBLME workplan will be presented to the 3rd Regional Project Steering Committee (RPSC) meeting scheduled in May 2026 in Colombo to develop a project workplan for all partners combined. Therefore, this meeting serves a dual purpose: a review of where things stand, and an agreed plan for 2026-27 that BOBP-IGO can take to the RPSC and



**A session to plan piloting of shared fish stocks management in the Bay will be held on Day 1. The session will contribute to the transboundary fisheries management advancing the BOBLME Project objectives and the directions of the BOBP Governing Council on, "Managing the Unmanaged Fisheries". The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) and EAF Nansen are partnering with BOBP to support the session.**



to the XIV Governing Council Meeting of BOBP-IGO (GCM-XIV, scheduled for late May 2026 in Mumbai) for discussion and validation.

The consultation runs across two days of substantive thematic sessions followed by the formal XI TAC Meeting on Day 3. The thematic sessions are organised as follows.

**Day 1 forenoon** covers two EAFM sessions. The first takes up implementation status across the eight EAFM sites, presents the proposal to establish national EAFM networking centres in Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka modelled on the India centre, and hear from country representatives on implementation challenges and priorities. The second session is dedicated to shared stock management – a framework presentation followed by working group discussion on species selection criteria, national management diagnostics, institutional pathways for translating regional scientific advice into management action, and the longer-term financing strategy for a regional shared stock programme.

**Day 1 afternoon** covers the cross-cutting agenda under the session title "Addressing transboundary issues, unlocking transboundary prosperity." Three thematic presentations run back-to-back — pollution management and gear marking, small-scale fisheries and progress on NPOA-SSF country roadmaps, and blue economy alignment – followed by four working groups focused on integrating these issues into national policy, institutional coordination, financing, and priority regional actions. The day closes with a plenary rapporteur session and formal closing of the Sub-Regional Consultation.

**Day 2** is devoted to IUU fishing. It opens with an overview of the proposed RPOA-IUU implementation plan, followed by country presentations on national MCS systems and capacity gaps across flag state, coastal state and port state responsibilities. A synthesis presentation on digital traceability — drawing on the 2025–26 workshop series – closes the forenoon session. The afternoon is structured working group time, with four groups addressing national MCS strengthening, catch documentation and traceability systems, institutional arrangements and the RPOA secretariat question, and priority-setting for the RPOA implementation roadmap. Groups report back in the plenary before close.

**Day 3** is the XI Technical Advisory Committee Meeting of BOBP-IGO. It opens with the full inaugural session – including welcome remarks, opening remarks by the outgoing TAC-X Chair, election of the TAC-XI Chairperson, a special address and adoption of the agenda. The substantive agenda covers the inter-sessional work progress presentation by the Secretariat, thematic work plan presentations across RPOA-IUU, traceability, use of artificial intelligence, shared stocks, EAFM, pollution and gear marking, gender mainstreaming, and SSF.

After a working lunch, TAC members deliberate and formally endorse the 2026–27 work plan. The meeting closes around 1600hrs, after which participants are invited to join a field visit.



### **3.1. EAFM Implementation and National Networking Centres**

By mid-2026, EAFM plans should be grounded in all eight EAFMs. The consultation will:

- **Review implementation status at each of the eight Focus Area EAFMs**, identifying specific bottlenecks in government capacity, stakeholder engagement or data availability
- **Consider and agree on a proposal to establish national EAFM networking centres** in Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka, modelled on the centre established in India, with a phased plan for connecting them into a regional network capable of sustaining knowledge exchange and training beyond the project period
- **Review utilisation of the E-EAFM and Training of Trainers platforms** and assess progress towards a self-sustaining regional trainer cadre.

### **3.2. EAFM: Piloting Shared Stocks Management Framework**

Managing shared and transboundary fish stocks is among the most consequential and wicked challenges in Bay of Bengal fisheries governance. BOBSAN has been building the scientific foundations, but the pathway from regional stock assessment to coordinated management among sovereign states remains largely undefined.

Following a framework presentation on piloting shared stock management in the BOB region, four working groups will engage with: the criteria for selecting species for piloting and the minimum information requirements; national management diagnostics and comparative management approaches; institutional pathways for translating regional scientific advice into national and bilateral management decisions; and the financing and institutional strategy for scaling a pilot into a sustained regional programme. The outputs of this session feed directly into Deliverable 4.

### **3.3. Addressing Transboundary Issues, Unlocking Transboundary Prosperity**

#### **3.3.1. Pollution Management and Fishing Gear Marking**

Component 3 has completed its baseline work. The remaining task is to produce usable outputs before the project closes. The consultation will:

- **Agree on priority fishing ports and landing sites for waste management interventions** in 2026-27 and confirm engagement modalities with the GloLitter Partnership and Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML)
- **Review the status of gear marking studies** and agree on a timeline for developing and adopting regional gear marking guidelines across all four member-countries

#### **3.3.2. Small-Scale Fisheries and NPOA-SSF**

Following the September 2025 workshop, a regional secretariat to support the development of NPOA-SSF has been established with the support of FAO. BOBP-IGO, jointly with the national experts has developed the DRAFT roadmaps for NPOA-SSF development in the countries.

The consultation will:

- **Review progress against those roadmaps** and agree on BOBP-IGO support for 2026-27
- **Agree on how the NPOA-SSF agenda connects operationally with EAFM and RPOA-IUU workstreams** at the country level – small-scale fishers are both the primary participants in FMU-level management and the communities most directly exposed to IUU fishing dynamics

#### **3.3.3. Blue Economy**

The blue economy discourse in the region has largely been about growth: expanding aquaculture, developing port infrastructure, attracting investment into maritime industries. However, the Bay of Bengal also needs, as the LME philosophy guides, a 'blue economy' that ensures the recovery of fish stocks, the restoration of coastal habitats, the reduction of marine pollution and the

rebuilding of small-scale fishing livelihoods. Healthy ecosystems are the precondition for any sustainable maritime economy, and the project's outputs across EAFM, IUU control, pollution management and SSF support are, taken together, a practical programme for ecosystem restoration at scale.

### **3.4. BOBRPOA-IUU Implementation and Digital Traceability**

Adopting the RPOA-IUU was the milestone. Making it work across four countries with different legal systems, different institutional capacities and different political starting points is the harder task, and that is what Day 1 is designed to begin. The consultation will:

- Present and seek validation of the proposed RPOA-IUU implementation plan, covering the priority actions for 2026-27 and the longer horizon to 2030
- Hear from country legal and MCS experts on the current state of national systems, identifying specific gaps in flag state control, coastal state surveillance and port state inspection
- Examine digital traceability as the most practical near-term tool for simultaneously advancing IUU mitigation and value chain development, drawing on lessons from the 2025–26 workshop series and India's National Digital Traceability System
- Through four working groups, develop agreed positions on: national MCS strengthening priorities; catch documentation and traceability system design; institutional arrangements for RPOA coordination; and an implementation roadmap with phased priorities and indicators of success

## **4. Expected Outputs**

The consultation is expected to produce five trackable deliverables; each linked to the project results framework and feeding directly into the RPSC and GCM-XIV.

### ***Deliverable 1: BOBLME-II Stock taking***

A structured, frank assessment of progress across all components benchmarked against the results framework – what is on track, what needs corrective action, and what needs a revised approach. This forms the core of BOBP-IGO's submission to the 3rd RPSC (Supports Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 3.1 and 5.1).

### ***Deliverable 2: Regional EAFM Agenda and National Networking Centre Proposal***

- A. Covering agreed corrective actions for each of the eight FMUs and a formal proposal for national EAFM networking centres in Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka with a phased regional network plan (Outputs 1.1.1-1.1.3, Outcome 1.1).
- B. An agreed modality for sub-regional cooperation on shared stock management, a priority species list for piloting, and an institutional pathway for translating regional scientific advice into national and bilateral management decisions, with an initial financing and sustainability strategy for scaling the pilot into a regional programme.

### ***Deliverable 3: RPOA-IUU Operationalisation and Traceability Package***

Comprising the validated Legal Basis Matrix for all four countries, country-specific action plans for NPOA-IUU and MCS capacity development, a scoping of AI/DPI applications for IUU monitoring, and a prioritised regional traceability work programme with pilot interventions identified by country and value chain segment. This is the primary substantive input to GCM-XIV (Outputs 1.2.1-1.2.4, Outcome 1.2).

### ***Deliverable 4: Cross-Cutting Action Plan***

An agreed set of priority actions covering: pollution management interventions at identified fishing ports and landing sites, with confirmed engagement modalities with the GloLitter Partnership and GPML; a timeline for developing and adopting regional gear marking guidelines across all four member-countries; agreed BOBP-IGO support actions for integrating SSF and gender considerations into national fisheries policies; and a blue economy alignment matrix with communication and advocacy actions for 2026–27. (Outcomes 1.1, 3.1, 5.1 and 5.2)

### ***Deliverable 5: BOBP-IGO Work Plan for 2026–27***

A costed work plan incorporating all decisions taken during the consultation, with activity timelines and responsible parties across Components 1, 3 and 5, aligned to the results framework and presented to the 3rd RPSC for endorsement. (Output 5.2.4, Outcome 5.2)

## **5. Participants and Meeting Format**

Each member-country delegation will comprise:

- Nominated TAC member
- BOBLME-II National Project Coordinator
- Country representative to BOBSAN
- Fisheries officer responsible for MCS
- Nominated national legal expert
- Nominated representative(s) from the Navy and/or Coast Guard

In addition, partner organizations (FAO, UNODC, IUCN, HD, etc.) and invited experts will also be participating.

This will be a three-day event featuring short plenary sessions, and interactive discussions (e.g. breakout groups). Participants will share experiences, identify challenges and collaborate on solutions for strategizing the workplan for sustainable fisheries management in BOB region.

The meeting will be conducted in English.



# Sub-Regional Consultation on Development of BOBLME Project Work plan: 2026-27

## Provisional Agenda

**Day 1 | Thursday, 16 April 2026**

Time	Activity	Person/Venue
<b>0900 - 0945</b>	<b>Inaugural Session</b>	
0900 - 0930	Registration and Welcome / Opening Remarks Inaugural Remark Introduction of Participants and Adoption of Agenda	
0930 - 0945	Context-setting: BOBLME-II at the Halfway Mark	<b>BOBP-IGO</b>
<b>0945 - 1000</b>	<b>Group Photo / Tea / Coffee Break</b>	
<b>1000 - 1130</b>	<b>Session 1: EAFM Implementation and National Networking Centres</b>	
1000 - 1030	Status of EAFM Implementation; Proposal: Establishing National EAFM Networking Centres in Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka, and a Regional Network	<b>Dr. P. Krishnan</b> <i>Director, BOBP-IGO</i>
1030 - 1045	National EAFM Networking Centre, India: Progress and Lessons	<b>Dr. Muktha Menon</b> <i>ICAR-CMFRI</i>
1045 - 1130	<b>Panel-Experience Sharing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges in Implementing</li> <li>• Setting up of National Networking Centres and Regional Centre</li> <li>• Gender Mainstreaming</li> <li>• Capacity Building Needs for Better Implementation of EAFM</li> <li>• EAFM Implementation Priorities for 2026-27</li> </ul>	DoF Representatives  <b>Moderator:</b> <b>Dr. E. Vivekanandan</b> <i>Sr. Consultant, BOBP-IGO</i>
<b>1130 - 1300</b>	<b>Session 2: EAFM: Managing Shared Stocks</b>	
1130 - 1200	Management of Shared Stocks – Framework for Piloting in Bay of Bengal Region	<b>Dr. P. Krishnan</b> <i>Director, BOBP-IGO</i>
1200 - 1300	<b>Group Discussion</b> <p><b>Group 1:</b> Selection Criteria for Piloting Shared Species and Minimum Information Framework</p> <p><b>Group 2:</b> National Management: Diagnostics and Comparative Management Matrix</p> <p><b>Group 3:</b> Institutional Pathways for Translating Regional Scientific Advice into National and Bilateral Management</p> <p><b>Group 4:</b> Scaling the Pilot into a Regional Shared Stock Management Programme: Financing and Institutional Strategy</p>	

Time	Activity	Person/Venue
1300 - 1400	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
1400 - 1430	Group Presentations and Discussion	
1430 - 1630	<b>Session 3: Addressing Transboundary Issues, Unlocking Transboundary Prosperity</b>	
1430 - 1455	Pollution Management and Gear Marking: Status and Way Forward	<b>Mr. R. Mukherjee</b> <i>BOBP-IGO</i>
1455 - 1530	Small-scale Fisheries and NPOA-SSF: Progress against Country Roadmaps	<b>Dr. P. Krishnan</b> <i>Director, BOBP-IGO</i>
1530 - 1600	<b>Tea / Coffee Break</b>	
1600 - 1630	Blue Economy Alignment: Mapping BOBLME-II outputs to National Blue Economy Frameworks	<b>Dr. E. Vivekanandan</b> <i>BOBP-IGO</i>
1630	Close of Day 1	
1900 - 2100	<b>Cultural Evening &amp; Networking Dinner</b>	



## Day 2 | Friday, 17 April 2026

Time	Activity	Person/Venue
<b>0930 - 1315</b>	<b>Session 4: Technical Presentations on IUU Fishing</b>	
0930 - 1000	Recap of Day 1	BOBP-IGO
1000 - 1045	BOB RPOA-IUU: Proposed Plan for Implementation	<b>BOBP-IGO</b>
<b>1045 - 1100</b>	<b>Tea / Coffee Break</b>	
1100 - 1230	National MCS Systems and Capacity Gaps: Flag State, Coastal State and Port State Responsibilities <i>(15 mins presentation from each member followed by discussion)</i>	<b>Legal / MCS experts</b>
1230 - 1315	Digital Traceability as an IUU Mitigation and Value Chain Tool: Synthesis of the 2025–26 Workshop Series & Plan for Intervention	<b>BOBP-IGO / Resource Person</b>
<b>1315 - 1415</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
<b>1415 - 1700</b>	<b>Session 5: Group Discussion: Implementation of BOB RPOA-IUU</b> <i>(Discussion 1: Country Groups &amp; Discussion 2: Mixed Groups)</i>	
1415 - 1515	<b>Each Group shall Strive to Answer the Following Questions:</b> 1. What should happen in 2026–27? 2. What should happen in 2028–30? 3. What support is needed from BOBP-IGO? 4. Which external agencies can support RPOA-IUU? 5. What support may be sought? 6. What should be the indicators of success?	
1515 - 1530	Plenary: Rapporteur Summary of Group Discussion – Plan for Implementation of RPOA-IUU	
<b>1530 - 1545</b>	<b>Tea / Coffee Break</b>	
1545 - 1630	<b>Group 1:</b> Strengthening National MCS Systems under RPOA-IUU <b>Group 2:</b> Supporting Traceability / Catch Documentation Systems <b>Group 3:</b> Institutional Arrangements and RPOA Secretariat <b>Group 4:</b> Prioritizing RPOA Activities & Implementation Roadmap	
1630 - 1700	Group presentations and Plenary	
<b>1700 - 1900</b>	<b>Field Visit</b>	





# Meeting of XI Technical Advisory Committee of BOBP-IGO

**Saturday, 18 April 2026**

Time	Activity	Person/Venue
<b>0900 - 0940</b>	<b>Inaugural Session</b>	
0900 - 0905	Opening of the TAC-XI: Lighting of the Lamp	Members
0905 - 0910	Welcome Remarks	<b>Dr. P. Krishnan</b> <i>BOBP-IGO</i>
0910 - 0920	Opening Remarks	Chairperson, <i>TAC-X</i>
0920 - 0925	Election of Chairperson TAC-XI	Members
0925 - 0935	Special Address	Chairperson <i>TAC-XI</i>
0935 - 0940	Adoption of Agenda	Members
<b>0940 - 1100</b>	<b>Session 2: Inter-Sessional Work Progress</b>	
0940 - 1020	Presentation on the Inter-Sessional Work	<b>Dr. P. Krishnan</b> <i>BOBP-IGO</i>
1020 - 1035	Comments and Observations	TAC Members, observers
1030 - 1100	Remarks by National Delegates on Vision for 2026-27 (5 mins each)	Country Delegates
<b>1100 - 1120</b>	<b>Group Photo / Tea / Coffee Break</b>	
<b>1120 - 1245</b>	<b>Session 3: Development of Workplan 2026-27: Issues, Priorities and Proposals</b>	
1120 - 1230	Presentation of Work Plan for 2026-27	<b>Dr. P. Krishnan</b> <i>BOBP-IGO</i>
	1. Regional Cooperation in EAFM	
	2. Regional Cooperation in SSF	
	3. Managing Shared Fish Stocks	
	4. Implementation Strategy for BOB RPOA-IUU: 2025-2030	
	5. Community-led Traceability and Catch Documentation Framework	
	6. Navigating the Bay with Intelligence	
	7. BOBLME Workplan for 2026-27 – Component 1,2, 3	
1230 - 1245	Deliberations and Endorsement of the 2026-27 Work Plan	TAC members
<b>1245 - 1430</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	
1430 - 1500	Adoption of the TAC Report TAC Members	
1500 - 1510	Any Other Matter	
1510 - 1525	Closing Remarks by Members & Chair	
1525 - 1530	Vote of Thanks	<b>Dr. P. Krishnan</b> <i>BOBP-IGO</i>
<b>1530 - 1600</b>	<b>Tea/ Coffee Break</b>	
<b>1600 - 1900</b>	<b>Field Visit</b>	



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