



Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation

**Ocean Partnership for Sustainable Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation
– Models for Innovation and Reform: Bay of Bengal Project (TF 018233)**

**Regional Dialogue on “Management of Highly Migratory Fish Species
in the Bay of Bengal”**

23 November 2017; Kochi, India

**Ocean Partnership Project for Sustainable Fisheries and Biodiversity
Conservation – Models for Innovation and Reforms: Bay of Bengal¹**

ABSTRACT

The Ocean Partnership Project – Bay of Bengal (OPP-BOB) is part of an international programme aiming to promote better management of fisheries for highly-migratory species such as tuna – one of the most valuable fish resources in the world. This programme is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the World Bank. The OPP-India is being implemented by the Bay of Bengal Programme - Inter Government Organisation (BOBP-IGO) in close collaboration with the governments.

It is recognised that managing fisheries involving shared stocks of highly-migratory fish, which are distributed between national and international waters and often fished by fleets from both coastal states and distant-water fishing nations (DWFN), is a major challenge. The OPP-BOB aims to explore ways in which this challenge can be addressed in the waters around India and its neighbours in the Bay of Bengal (BOB) region. If effective ways of managing and using these fisheries in a sustainable way can be developed, the benefits for countries like India, and for fishing communities based there, can be very significant. Sustainable use of tuna resources in the BOB can provide an important, and renewable source of income, employment and food.

For many years, countries bordering the BOB have aimed to encourage fishers to move offshore and exploit fisheries resources such as tuna in the deep sea. The OPP-BOB will support these efforts by exploring ways of ensuring that the development of the tuna industry is economically viable, appropriate to the conditions of fishers, and sustainable in the long-term.

To meet these objectives, the OPP-BOB conducted a series of scoping consultations to identify issues and opportunities in tuna fisheries. The major issues identified from the Consultations are the following: (i) Challenges to ensure sustainability; (ii) Challenges to increase economic efficiency; (iii) Human capacity not in tune with the requirement; and (iv) Strong partnership does not exist among the stakeholders.

¹ Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation, Chennai – 600 018, Tamil Nadu, India.
Email: info@bobpigo.org; Website: www.bobpigo.org, www.oppbob.org

The identified issues have given an opportunity to develop business plans for future investment in fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species. The following business plans have been proposed to be developed: (i) Establish effective MCS systems; (ii) Improve catch quality; (iii) Fisheries management system for neritic tunas (longtail tuna in Gujarat); (iv) Establish a regional approach to fisheries development; and (v) Management system for skipjack tuna fisheries in Lakshadweep.

OPP-BOB is working for establishing partnerships with a full range of stakeholders, namely, fishing communities and fishing businesses, fish processors and exporters, the fisheries research community and governments, and the regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. The project recognises that piloting business plans requires effective collaboration, but that a successful outcome will bring significant and sustainable benefits to large numbers of people in the region.
