

Hon'ble Vice President of India launched the Letter of Authorisation (LoA) for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas and Odisha Deep Sea Fishing Mission Document

Fostering Inclusive Growth of Fisheries sector through Empowered FFPOs, Fisheries Cooperatives and Digitization

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The Department of Fisheries, Government of India organized the **National Launch of Letter of Authorisation (LoA) for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas** on 9th July 2026 in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**. The Hon'ble Vice President of India, **Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan** launched the Letter of Authorisation for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas. Hon'ble Vice President also launched the Odisha Deep Sea Mission Document during the event.



The National launch program was graced by the august presence of Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati, Hon'ble Governor of Odisha; Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha; Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Union Minister for Education; Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj, along with Prof. S. P. Singh Baghel, Hon'ble Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj; Shri Gokulananda Mallik, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Fisheries & ARD and MSME, Government of Odisha; and Shri Sukanta Panigrahi, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Kandhamal; The

event also witnessed participation of approximately 1,000 fish farmers and fishers including women fish farmers and fishers in person, along with officials from various states and UTs, line Ministries and Departments.



Hon'ble Vice president, **Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan** appreciated the efforts of the Department of Fisheries, GoI, Government of Odisha and all fisheries stakeholders in advancing sustainable and responsible development of the fisheries sector. He noted that the Union Budget 2025–26 had recognised the importance of harnessing fisheries resources in India's EEZ and High Seas and stated that the launch of the Letter of Authorisation (LoA) framework marks a new chapter in the country's fisheries sector. He highlighted that the fisher-centric framework will open access to high-value marine resources, strengthen livelihoods and create new opportunities across the seafood value chain. Underscoring the importance of quality standards, traceability and international certifications, he noted that these measures would help Indian seafood access premium global markets and further boost exports. He also emphasised the need to strengthen Fisheries Cooperatives and Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) and encouraged the youth to view fisheries as a modern, science-driven sector offering significant employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Stressing that growth must be aligned with sustainability, he called for responsible management of marine resources to ensure long-term benefits for future generations and continued growth of the Blue Economy.



During the event, the Hon'ble Vice President distributed LoA to the fisheries cooperative societies including National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL) and fishing vessel owners, enabling eligible Indian-flagged fishing vessels to undertake regulated fishing operations in the high seas. The fisheries cooperative societies awarded include Shree Mahavir Machhimar Sahakari Mandali Ltd, Shri Martanda Prassanna Colaba Matsyodyog Vividh Karyakari Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit, South Goa Mechanized Boat Owners Coop. & Marketing Society Ltd, Paradeep Marine Primary Fish Production & Marketing Co-op. Society Ltd, Thengapattanam Deep Sea Fish Producers Cooperative Society and Malpe Fishermen's Primary Co-Operative Society Ltd.

Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati, Hon'ble Governor of Odisha, highlighted India's vast Exclusive Economic Zone and immense marine wealth, noting that the country's fishing activities have traditionally remained concentrated in coastal waters. He emphasized that the launch of the Letter of Authorisation (LoA) is an important step towards sustainably harnessing high-seas fisheries resources through a

transparent and technology-driven framework. Emphasising that growth must be accompanied by sustainability, he noted that the initiative will promote responsible fishing, strengthen fisheries value chains, generate livelihood opportunities for youth and improve the incomes of fishing communities. He also appreciated the Department of Fisheries for achieving record seafood exports despite global trade challenges. Stressing the role of Fisheries Cooperatives and Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs), he called for empowering fishers with suitable vessels, equipment and technologies to tap high-value resources such as tuna and tuna-like species.

Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, noted that Odisha is steadily building a robust fisheries ecosystem through investments in modern fisheries infrastructure, including wholesale fish markets and Aquapark, to support value addition and seafood exports. Emphasising the State's commitment to harnessing the untapped potential of the EEZ and oceanic fisheries resources, he stated that the digitally enabled LoA framework, featuring an end-to-end online process and real-time tracking, will promote transparency and ease of doing business. He further underscored the importance of developing deep-sea fishing, tuna fisheries, processing and export-oriented fisheries activities to enhance incomes, generate employment and position Odisha as a leading hub for marine fisheries and seafood exports in the country.

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Union Minister of Education, shed light on the immense potential of India's Blue Economy and appreciated the transformative initiatives undertaken by the Government of India to strengthen the fisheries sector. Referring to Odisha's rich maritime heritage and abundant fisheries resources, he noted that the State has emerged as an important contributor to India's seafood exports and possesses significant untapped potential, particularly in brackish water aquaculture and deep-sea fisheries. He emphasised that harnessing these resources in a sustainable manner can enhance fish production, boost exports and create new livelihood opportunities for coastal communities. The Minister underscored the pivotal role of fisheries cooperatives and Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) in strengthening the fisheries value chain, improving market access and ensuring that the benefits of sectoral growth reach fishing communities. He further stated that the LoA framework and the Odisha Deep Sea Fishing Mission would help position Odisha as a key fisheries and seafood export hub in eastern India, while contributing to the vision of a vibrant Blue Economy.



Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, highlighted that the Union Budget 2025–26 announced the creation of an enabling framework for the sustainable harnessing of fisheries resources in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and High Seas, which has been operationalised through the launch of the Access Pass and the national rollout of the Letter

of Authorisation (LoA). He stated that the LoA is a historic milestone for India's marine fisheries sector that will unlock the vast untapped potential of high-seas fisheries through a transparent and fully online system. The Minister emphasised that Fisheries Cooperatives and Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) are prioritized under the initiative to ensure inclusive participation in the emerging high-seas fisheries ecosystem. He further highlighted that the Government has invested more than ₹39,000 crore in the fisheries sector through various flagship schemes, resulting in more than 100% growth in fish production and record seafood exports of ₹73,891 crore in 2025–26 despite global trade challenges. Referring to the Union Budget 2026–27, he highlighted that fish catch by Indian vessels in the EEZ and High Seas has been made duty-free and foreign port landings will be treated as exports, creating new opportunities for growth in the sector. He called upon all stakeholders to work collectively towards the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047* and further strengthen India's Blue Revolution and Blue Economy.

Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, Secretary (Fisheries), Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, welcomed the dignitaries and participants and underscored the significance of the national launch of the Letter of Authorisation (LoA) as a transformative step towards facilitating sustainable and regulated high-seas fisheries in the country. He stated that the recently notified EEZ Rules, 2025 and High Seas Fisheries Guidelines, 2025 provide a robust framework for the responsible harvesting of high-value marine resources such as tuna and tuna-like species. Emphasising the fisheries sector's role in supporting the livelihoods of nearly 3 crore fishers and fish farmers, he called for a whole-of-government approach and strengthened collaboration among State Governments and fisheries stakeholders. He also highlighted the pivotal role of Fisheries Cooperatives and Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) in strengthening the fisheries value chain and ensuring inclusive growth of the sector.

The Letter of Authorisation (LoA) and the Odisha Deep Sea Fishing Mission Document represent an important step towards establishing a transparent, accountable and sustainable framework for high-seas fishing by Indian vessels. These initiatives will facilitate responsible participation of Indian-flagged fishing vessels in high-seas fisheries, while ensuring sustainable utilisation of marine resources. It reinforces the Government's commitment to boost economic well-being of fishers, boosting seafood exports, strengthening global competitiveness and advancing the objectives of the Blue Economy in line with national development priorities.

Background

Odisha, located on the eastern coast of India along the Bay of Bengal, is one of the country's leading fisheries states with a rich and diversified fisheries resource base encompassing freshwater, brackish water, and marine ecosystems. About 95% of the population in Odisha consume fish with per capita consumption of 19.16 Kgs. The sector plays a significant role in the state's economy, livelihoods, food security, and export earnings. As of 2025-26, Odisha produced **12.70 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of fish**, supporting the livelihoods of over **16 lakh fishermen and fish farmers** across the state. The state possesses abundant fisheries resources, including **~7.12 lakh hectares of freshwater resources, 4.18 lakh hectares of brackish water resources**, and a **24,000 sq. km continental shelf area** for marine fisheries. Fish production during 2025-26 comprised **8.27 lakh MT from freshwater fisheries, 1.86 lakh MT from brackish water aquaculture**, and **2.56 lakh MT from marine fisheries**,

Odisha has also emerged as an important seafood exporting state. During 2025-26, the state exported **1,00,897 MT of seafood valued at ₹5,428.67 crore**, driven primarily by shrimp and other high-value aquaculture species. Key export-oriented districts include Balasore, Bhadrakh, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khordha, and Sambalpur. Major export is from shrimp and marine fish varieties.

The state has been a proactive participant in flagship fisheries development programmes of the Government of India, particularly under the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)**. Since 2020, projects worth over **₹1,301 crore** have been approved under PMMSY, covering aquaculture expansion, seed and feed infrastructure, fish marketing, cold chain development, aquatic animal health, fishermen welfare, insurance coverage, and fisheries infrastructure. Significant achievements include coverage of approximately **8.47 lakh fishermen under group accident insurance**, establishment of hatcheries, feed mills, reservoir cage culture units, cold storages, fish markets, and fishing harbour infrastructure.

The Letter of Authorisation (LoA) is a mandatory provision under the Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025. Designed as a transparent and accountable framework for Indian-flagged vessels undertaking fishing or fishing-related activities in the high seas, the LoA is vessel-specific, non-transferable and integrated with the ReALCraft Fishing Vessel Registration Portal, ensuring orderly, traceable and monitored operations. Issued and renewed at minimal cost, with no procedural constraints and real-time application tracking, the LoA facilitates ease of compliance for fishers and vessel operators. Vessels issued with an LoA are required to comply with conservation and management measures prescribed by the relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), including catch limits, gear regulations, bycatch mitigation measures, Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) management, voyage reporting and other requirements for responsible and sustainable fishing.

The LoA initiative will strengthen Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) and fisheries cooperatives by facilitating their participation in sustainable deep-sea and high-seas fisheries, enhancing access to high-value resources and creating greater income opportunities for fishers. It also places a focus on digitization, with the entire LoA process being online, transparent, and time-bound, thereby improving service delivery, transparency, traceability, and governance in the fisheries sector.

The Odisha Deep Sea Fishing Mission (2026–2036) is a flagship Blue Economy initiative of the Government of Odisha aimed at unlocking the State's offshore and deep-sea fisheries potential and establishing Odisha as a leading deep-sea fishing and marine export hub. Through investments in modern fishing infrastructure, value chains, scientific fisheries management and market linkages, the Mission seeks to enhance fish production, generate employment, boost fisher incomes and drive sustainable growth of the marine fisheries sector.

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