

PROMOTION OF INLAND FISHERIES EXPORT

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To promote sustainable seafood exports from Inland States and Union Territories, the Department of Fisheries, in consultation with the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Export Inspection Council (EIC) and National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), has prepared a draft guidance document for promoting the participation of Inland States and Union Territories in India's seafood export value chain. The guidance document provides a roadmap for strengthening export readiness by promoting quality assurance, traceability, institutional coordination, post-harvest management, value addition, market access and capacity building. Further, the Department, in collaboration with MPEDA and NFDB, is undertaking awareness programmes, exposure visits and capacity-building initiatives to promote export-oriented inland aquaculture and facilitate greater participation of inland States and Union Territories in seafood exports.

(b) The Government has undertaken several measures to strengthen the inland fisheries export value chain. Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF), priority has been accorded to post-harvest handling, cold chain development, fish processing, logistics and marketing. The Department of Fisheries has approved the proposals amounting to ₹2,797 crore for development of cold chain and marketing infrastructure across the country. The approved projects include 775 cold storages and ice plants, 28,489 fish transportation units, 1,394 live fish vending units, 6,018 fish kiosks, 117 retail fish markets and 24 wholesale fish markets, thereby improving post-harvest management, cold chain, transportation and market connectivity.

To support quality certification and compliance with international standards, the EIC conducts inspection, certification and capacity-building programmes for seafood exporters. The MPEDA promotes market access through Buyer-Seller Meets (BSMs), Reverse Buyer-Seller Meets (RBSMs), participation in international seafood trade fairs and collaboration with Indian Missions abroad.

(c) The Department of Fisheries, Government of India, is promoting the adoption of emerging technologies and innovative logistics solutions to improve the transportation of high-value fish and fishery products from production centres to processing and export hubs. To facilitate this, the ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CIFRI), in collaboration with the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), is implementing a pilot project to assess the feasibility of using drone technology for transportation of live fish over short distances. The pilot project has been approved at a total cost of ₹116.85 lakh and aims to develop and evaluate a drone system capable of transporting up to 100 kg of live fish over a distance of approximately 10 km, while maintaining fish health and quality and reducing transportation time compared to conventional methods. As part of the project, ICAR-CIFRI has successfully demonstrated transportation of a 70 kg payload over a distance of 7 km, marking significant progress towards the project objective. The project also includes scientific studies on fish behaviour and stress during drone transportation of live fishes, with the objective of ensuring safe and efficient transport

through specialised containers designed to regulate water quality, dissolved oxygen and temperature. Further, the Department has constituted a Technical Committee to prepare Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the safe and effective adoption of drone technology in the fisheries sector.

(d) PMMSY *inter alia* lays special focus on training, skill development, skill upgradation and capacity building through trainings, awareness programmes and exposure visits to various stakeholders especially fishers, fish farmers, fish workers, fish vendors, entrepreneurs, officials, fisheries Cooperatives and members of Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) for various fishing technology, aquaculture and post-harvest related activities enabling greater participation of these stakeholders in export markets. In addition, the Department of Fisheries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) with an objective to provide a digital marketplace and empower all stakeholders, including traditional fishermen, fish farmers producer organization, and entrepreneurs from the fisheries sector to buy and sell their products through the e-marketplace for better prices and profitability. Further, PMMSY has supported 2195 fisheries cooperatives as Fish Farmers Producer Organizations (FFPOs) with a project outlay of Rs. 544.85 crore through the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) as implementing agencies.

(e) The Government of India, through the Department of Commerce, is leveraging Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and other bilateral trade engagements to enhance market access for Indian seafood products, including inland fisheries products. The Department of Fisheries, in coordination with the Department of Commerce, MPEDA, and EIC, facilitates compliance with importing countries' requirements, market diversification, and export promotion through participation in international trade fairs, expos, Buyer-Seller Meets (BSMs), Reverse Buyer-Seller Meets (RBSMs), and trade delegations.

This Information was given by Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh in the Lok Sabha in response to a question asked.

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