

**OM Request to publish the Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025.**

**Dr. PR Thulasidhass** < dsune@mea.gov.in >

Tue, 09 Dec 2025 5:24:23 PM +0530

सचिव (म.)  
Secretary (Fy)

डा. सं./Dy No. .... 189400

दिनांक/Date ..... 10/12/2025

To "secy-fisheries"<secy-fisheries@nic.in>,"Jujjavarapu Balaji"<jsfy@nic.in>,"sanjay rpandey"<sanjay.rpandey@gov.in>

Cc "Acquino Vimal"<jsun@mea.gov.in>,"Dharmendra Singh"<dircc@mea.gov.in>

**Kind attention: PPS/PS/PA**

Respected Sir/Madam,

May kindly find attached the OM dated 09 December 2025 regarding '*Request to publish the Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025.*'

With regards,  
Office of  
Dr. PR Thulasidhass  
Deputy Secretary / Legal Officer  
UNES Division | + 91 11 23085497

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**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**  
**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA**  
Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan, Janpath Rd., New Delhi-110011

**2 Attachment(s)**

Guidelines for High Seas.pdf  
799.8 KB

OM 09 December Fisheries .pdf  
159.2 KB

**UI/251/10/2025**  
**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**Ministry of External Affairs**  
**(UNES Division)**  
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New Delhi, 09 December 2025

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, in exercise of its powers under clause (b) of sub-section (1) of Article 73, and Entry 10 and 57 of List I of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, in consultation with the Department of Fisheries, hereby prescribes the Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025.

And whereas the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, with a view to promoting the sustainable utilization of fisheries resources in areas beyond the limits of India's Exclusive Economic Zone, hereby stipulates that the Guidelines for 'Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas' shall be binding on all Indian-flagged fishing vessels operating in such areas. Any contravention of these Guidelines by deep sea fishing vessels shall be treated with due seriousness, and appropriate penalties or punitive measures, as deemed fit, shall be imposed on the defaulting entities.

Now, therefore, the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, hereby issues the Guidelines for 'Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas', as set forth in the annexure to this notification. These Guidelines shall come into effect from the date of issuance of this notification.

  
(Acquino Vimal)  
Joint Secretary to the Government of India

(D. Acquino Vimal)  
संयुक्त सचिव (यू.एन.ई.ए.ए.)  
Joint Secretary (UNES)  
विदेश मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली  
Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

**Copy forwarded to:**

1. Secretary, Department of Fisheries
2. Secretaries incharge of Fisheries of all coastal States/Union Territories
3. Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice
4. Secretary, Ministry of Home affairs
5. Secretary, Ministry of Defence
6. Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences
7. Secretary, Ministry of Commerce
8. Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways
9. Secretary, Ministry of Communication
10. Directorate General of Foreign Trade
11. Director General, Coast Guards
12. Director General Shipping
13. Chairman, Central Board of Excise & Customs,
14. Chairman, MPEDA
15. Deputy Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)
16. XP Division of MEA (with a request for posting the Guidelines in the website of this Ministry.

**Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025**

**Preamble**

Whereas the Republic of India is endowed with an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) spanning approximately 2.40 million square kilometers and a coastline measuring 11,099 kilometers, comprising abundant and diverse marine living resources;

And whereas, the marine fisheries potential within India's EEZ is estimated at 5.31 million metric tonnes (as of 2018), supporting the livelihoods of approximately 5.0 million fishers, and contributing significantly to food security, nutrition requirements, employment, income generation, and export revenues;

And whereas, while the marine living resources have significant scope for enhanced production through sustainable practices, they are finite and susceptible to overexploitation, necessitating their conservation and responsible utilization both within the EEZ and in the High Seas;

And whereas, the Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act, 1976 (hereinafter referred to as "the Maritime Zones Act, 1976") defines the maritime boundaries of India and empowers the Central Government to regulate the exploration, exploitation, conservation, and management of resources within the EEZ;

And whereas, under Entry 57 of List I (Union List) of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India, the Central Government has exclusive jurisdiction over matters relating to fishing and fisheries beyond territorial waters;

And whereas, India is a party to several international instruments, both binding and non-binding, governing the sustainable and responsible utilization of marine fishery resources, many of which have entered into force after the enactment of the Maritime Zones Act, 1976, and impose obligations on India to adopt and implement conservation and management measures for the sustainable use of such resources;

And whereas, the Government of India has, from time to time, issued executive orders and advisories promoting sustainable fishing practices, in furtherance of its powers under the Maritime Zones Act, 1976, and its international obligations;

And whereas, the National Policy on Marine Fisheries, 2017, underscores the need for regulatory measures, including, *inter alia*, input and output controls, fleet optimization, fishing effort regulation, gear and engine specifications, minimum legal sizes of fish, creation of fisheries management areas, and the adoption of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM);

And whereas, while the High Seas remain open to fishing by all nations, such activities are subject to international instruments including, but not limited to, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the FAO Compliance Agreement, the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas, the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU),

and relevant International Maritime Organization (IMO) safety standards;

And whereas, UNCLOS provides freedom of the High Seas, as well as right to fish on the High Seas to all States, subject to their treaty obligations and other such stipulations relating to conservation of shared stocks and promoting the optimum utilization of migratory fishes occurring within the exclusive economic zones and in areas beyond and adjacent to it;

And whereas, the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) provides for the measures that States have to adopt for straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks within areas under their national jurisdiction through appropriate sub-regional or regional arrangements, *i.e.*, RFMOs;

And acknowledging that, India is a signatory to the UNCLOS, the UNFSA, as well as a Contracting Party to the RFMOs, including the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), which provides for cooperation among its Members for the conservation and optimum utilization of stocks covered by this Agreement and encourages sustainable development of fisheries based on such stocks. Besides, India is also a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA);

And acknowledging that, India is a member of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), and the fishing operations in the area of competence under the CCAMLR shall be subject to the Indian Antarctic Act, 2022, and the Rules and Guidelines framed thereunder;

Therefore, in light of the above, and after due consideration, the Government of India, through the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Department of Fisheries, has resolved to introduce the Guidelines for Indian-flagged fishing vessels for the sustainable utilization of marine living resources in the High Seas;

Now therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 73(1)(b) of the Constitution of India and Entry 57 of List I of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, and in discharge of its obligations under applicable international law and agreements relating to conservation and management of marine living resources on the High Seas, the Central Government hereby issues the following Guidelines for regulation of fishing and fishing related activities by Indian-flagged fishing vessels operating in the High Seas.

## **Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025**

### **1: Definitions**

In these Guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires:

- a) **“Adjudicating Officer”** means an officer of the State Fisheries Department, not below the rank of Assistant Director of Fisheries, notified by the concerned State under its Marine Fishing Regulation Act.
- b) **“Authorised Officer”** means an officer of the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, Indian Customs, State Government, or any other officer notified by the Central Government, authorised for boarding and inspection of fishing vessels in the High Seas for the purposes of these guidelines.
- c) **“Appellate Authority”** means a designated officer, not below the rank of Joint Secretary in the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India, for the purposes of these guidelines.
- d) **“Automatic Identification System”** means a vessel tracking system used to share information, primarily the vessel’s position, identification, and other data, between ships and shore stations.
- e) **“Base Port”** means the port of operation of the fishing vessel indicated in the Letter of Authorisation.
- f) **“Catch Certificate”** means an official document, validated by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and other such authority as notified by the Central Government from time to time, accompanying a consignment of fish or fishery products to provide accurate and verifiable information about fish in the supply chain.
- g) **“Export Inspection Council (EIC)”** means the export certification body established under Section 3 of the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963 (22 of 1963).
- h) **“Fish”** means finfish, molluscs, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animals and plants, excluding marine mammals, reptiles, and seabirds.
- i) **“Fishers”** means fishermen and fisherwomen engaged in fishing and fishing-related activities for livelihood or profit, including fish workers.
- j) **“Fisheries”** means fishing and fishing-related activities, including the utilization, conservation, and management of marine fishery resources.
- k) **“Fishing”** means searching for, trailing, pursuing, attracting, catching, taking, or harvesting fish by any method.
- l) **“Fishing-related Activities”** means landing, packaging, marketing, processing, preserving, storing, live transportation of fish, transshipping, or transporting fish not previously landed at a port, or any other related operations.
- m) **“Fish Aggregating Device (FAD)”** means a permanent, semi-permanent, or temporary object, structure, or device of any material, man-made or natural, which is deployed and/or tracked, for the purpose of aggregating fish for consequent capture.

n) **“Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUU Fishing)”** means activities as classified in the FAO- International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, 2001.

o) **Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessel** means a fishing vessel that is registered in India and entitled to fly the Indian flag in accordance with the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, as amended from time to time.

*Explanation.*-Further to clarify, an “Indian-flagged fishing vessel” means a vessel that is either wholly owned by an Indian operator or a vessel intended to be operated by an Indian operator through a charter, lease, or joint venture arrangement with a foreign entity.

p) **“Issuing Authority”** means an officer in the Department of Fisheries in the Central Government, designated for issuing the Letter of Authorisation to the Indian-flagged fishing vessels for fishing in the High Seas.

q) **“Letter of Authorisation (LOA)”** means an authorisation issued by the Issuing Authority under these guidelines to an Indian-flagged vessel for fishing and fishing-related activities in the High Seas.

r) **“Mechanised Fishing Vessel”** means a fishing vessel with an engine fitted to the hull or on board, using machine power for propulsion and fishing operations such as casting and pulling nets or operating lines.

s) **“Mother Vessel”** means a vessel, also termed as a carrier vessel, receiver vessel, or factory vessel, that supports fishing vessels at sea by receiving, storing, processing, and preserving catch, and transporting it to port, and may provide fuel, food, water, medical needs of crew, or other assistance.

t) **“Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA)”** means the authority established under the Marine Products Export Development Authority Act, 1972 (13 of 1972).

u) **“Oceanic Fisheries Resources”** means living marine resources in the open ocean, beyond the continental shelf.

v) **“Operator”** means an individual or enterprise, or Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) or Fisheries Cooperatives (including multi-state cooperatives), controlling or managing an Indian-flagged fishing vessel or assuming responsibility for its operation.

w) **“Owner”** means a person, including an individual, partnership, Fish Farmer Producer Organisations, Fisheries Cooperatives (including multi-state cooperatives), or public or private body, whether incorporated or not, to whom a fishing vessel or a share in it belongs.

x) **“Port”** means a port, fishing harbour, or fish landing centre designated by the Central or State Government by notification in the Official Gazette for the purposes of these guidelines.

y) **“Registrar of the Fishing Vessel”** means the Central Government may, by notification under the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, appoint an officer to be registrar

of Indian-flagged fishing vessels at every port or place declared as a port or place of registry.

- z) **“Registration and Licensing of Fishing Craft (ReALCRaft)”** means the web-enabled application portal established by the Central Government for registering fishing vessels and issuing fishing licences, Access Passes, and LOA under relevant laws, rules, or guidelines.
- aa) **“Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO)”** means an intergovernmental fisheries organization or agreement to which India is a party, with competence to establish conservation and management measures.
- bb) **“Regional Observer”** means an individual accredited by the Issuing Authority or an RFMO to monitor fishing activities and ensure compliance with conservation and management measures.
- cc) **“Specified Area”** means an area of the High Seas as specified in the LOA for fishing and fishing-related activities.
- dd) **“Skipper”** also termed as master, means a person having command or charge of a fishing vessel or responsibility for its operation.
- ee) **“State”** means a State Government or a Union Territory administration with a coastal location.
- ff) **“Transponder”** means an electronic device fitted on an Indian fishing vessel that utilizes a satellite communication system to receive and transmit vessel-related data, including location and operational status.
- gg) **“Verifying Officer”** means an officer of a State Government as notified by the Central Government in consultation with the respective State, responsible for verifying documents and physically inspecting fishing vessels for the grant of an LOA.

## **2. Letter of Authorisation (LOA)**

No Indian-flagged fishing vessel shall engage in fishing or fishing-related activities in the High Seas without a valid LOA issued by the Issuing Authority under these guidelines.

## **3. Process for Issuing LOA**

- (a) The owner or operator of an Indian-flagged fishing vessel shall apply for the LOA online through the ReALCRaft portal as per the format specified in **Schedule I**, complete in all respects and supported by the necessary documents.
- (b) The Verifying Officer of the concerned Port of Registry shall verify the application, including documents and vessel eligibility, within 4 weeks and forward it to the Issuing Authority. If the Verifying Officer fails to submit the verified application and supporting documents within the prescribed timeframe, the pendency status will automatically be escalated to the Issuing Authority.
- (c) The Issuing Authority shall issue the LOA within 15 working days upon satisfactory verification, in the format specified in **Schedule II**.
- (d) The LOA shall specify the terms and conditions and be downloadable by the applicant. The operator shall ensure that the original LOA, in physical or digital form, is prominently displayed on board the Indian-flagged fishing vessel and produced upon

demand by any Authorised Officer. The LOA shall be issued subject to the vessel's seaworthiness as per the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025.

- (e) An LOA shall be non-transferable, non-assignable, and shall be vessel-specific, issued only for an Indian-flagged fishing vessel registered on the ReALCRaft portal. LOA shall not be sold, leased, or otherwise conveyed for any other purpose.

#### **4. Validity and Renewal of LOA**

- a) The validity of the LOA shall be for a period of three years from the date of issuance. In case of chartered, leased or joint venture vessels, the validity shall be as per the relevant RFMO stipulations.
- b) The owner or operator may apply for renewal at least 30 days prior to the expiry of the existing LOA, for a further period of three years or as per the RFMO norm as applicable.
- c) The reasons for rejection of an application for the grant of LOA or the renewal of LOA shall be recorded in writing by the Verifying Officer or Issuing Authority and conveyed to the applicant.
- d) Vessels operating under charter, lease, or joint venture arrangements and holding a valid LOA shall be prohibited from engaging in fishing or fishing-related activities within India's internal waters, territorial waters, or exclusive economic zone (EEZ). While transiting through such waters, all fishing gears of such vessels shall remain securely stowed. Any violation of this provision shall render the vessel liable for suspension or cancellation of the LOA.

#### **5. Bank Guarantee**

The operators of vessels operating under charter, lease, or joint venture arrangements shall furnish a Bank Guarantee of ₹25 lakh (Indian Rupees Twenty-Five Lakh only) per vessel, in such form and manner as may be prescribed by the Issuing Authority.

The Bank Guarantee shall:

- a) remain valid for the duration of the LOA and shall be renewed as a prerequisite for renewal of the LOA;
- b) serve as a financial security to ensure compliance with these guidelines, the conditions of the LOA, and relevant national and international conservation and management measures;
- c) be liable for forfeiture, in whole or in part, in the event of:
  - (i) repeated or serious violations of the LOA conditions as deemed necessary and recommended by the Adjudicating Officer to the Issuing Authority;
  - (ii) engagement in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing;
  - (iii) non-compliance with directions issued by the Issuing Authority or Authorised Officers;
- d) be released upon expiry or cancellation of the LOA, subject to full compliance with all applicable provisions and the absence of any pending enforcement actions or proceedings;
- e) be subject to an appeal mechanism, wherein the operator may file an appeal before the Appellate Authority within thirty (30) days of the order of forfeiture. The decision of the Appellate Authority shall be final and binding.

#### **6. RFMO and IMO Registration**

Every Indian-flagged fishing vessel issued with an LOA under these guidelines shall register with the relevant RFMO and shall obtain an International Maritime Organisation (IMO) number before operating on the High Seas.

#### **7. Operation of Chartered, Joint Venture, or Leased Vessels**

- a) Indian operators shall be permitted to operate fishing vessels in the High Seas under charter, lease, or joint venture arrangements, subject to compliance with these guidelines and such conditions as may be specified by the Central Government from time to time.
- b) The Central Government shall, as necessary, issue appropriate notification(s) under the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, or any other applicable law, to facilitate and regulate the operation of such vessels under charter, lease, or joint venture arrangements.

#### **8. Sustainable Fishing Practices**

- a) Indian-flagged fishing vessels shall comply with applicable conservation and management measures of the concerned RFMO, including catch limits, gear restrictions, bycatch mitigation, Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) management, voyage reporting, etc., to ensure sustainable fishing.
- b) Indian Operators are encouraged to sustainably harvest non-conventional resources in the High Seas, such as oceanic squids, myctophids, etc., that are presently not covered by any RFMOs, following a precautionary approach.
- c) Programs will be undertaken to provide training and capacity-building of traditional and small-scale fishers including Fisheries Cooperatives and Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs) to enhance skills for High Seas fishing and value-chain efficiencies.

#### **9. Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS)**

- a) An Indian-flagged fishing vessel issued with an LOA shall operate from and return to its base port for fish landing.
- b) In the event of a fishing vessel intending to enter any port other than that referred to in clause 9 (a), it shall intimate the Registrar of the fishing vessel, the Issuing Authority, and the Authorised Officers.
- c) Indian-flagged fishing vessels shall be equipped with a fully operational Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and Automatic Identification System (AIS), and shall share the vessel position and "ops normal/any relevant" information with the Issuing Authority/MRCC/designated control centres at least once in 24 hrs.
- d) Indian-flagged fishing vessels shall ensure full compliance with the sea-safety, communication, and manning requirements as prescribed under the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, and in accordance with the Conservation and Management Measures established by relevant RFMOs.
- e) Fishing vessels shall carry light and sound signals in accordance with Rule 26 of the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGS), and the Certificate of validity of safety / GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress & Safety System) equipment, as applicable.

## **10. Inspection and Enforcement**

The Authorised Officers shall be responsible for monitoring, control, and surveillance of Indian-flagged fishing vessels in the High Seas. The documents, such as LOA, registration certificate, details of voyage, fish catch, VMS, crew onboard, and their IDs, shall be produced by the skipper upon demand by any Authorised Officer. The Authorised Officer shall report any violations during such inspections in writing to the Adjudicating Officer, the Issuing Authority, and the Registrar of the fishing vessels concerned, for appropriate action in accordance with the guidelines and applicable Act or rules.

## **11. Origin of Catch**

- a) Fish harvested by Indian-flagged fishing vessels operating in the High Seas shall be treated to be of "Indian Origin" and shall not be subject to any import duty, cess, or levy when it is landed at a port located within the territory of India.
- b) Fish caught in the High Seas by Indian-flagged fishing vessels and landed at foreign ports shall be classified as exports and shall be governed by applicable Indian export laws and regulations.
- c) The Registrar of the fishing vessels concerned and any such other authority as notified by the Central Government shall be responsible for the verification of the catch-related data, duly authenticated by the Skipper of the vessel and recorded in the manner as prescribed under clause 14.

## **12. Catch and Health Certificates**

- a) Catch Certificates shall be issued by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), and Health Certificates shall be issued by the Export Inspection Council (EIC), for the purposes of traceability, compliance with sanitary standards, and eco-labelling, in accordance with applicable national and international regulations.
- b) Applications for Catch and Health Certificates shall be submitted through designated online portals of the respective agencies, which shall be duly integrated with the ReALCRaft portal for verification and processing of vessel and catch-related information.

## **13. Mid-Sea Transshipment**

- a) Catch by an Indian-flagged fishing vessel from the High Seas may be transhipped to a mother vessel in the High Seas in accordance with the applicable measures of the RFMO concerned and the relevant guidelines of the Reserve Bank of India as promulgated from time to time.
- b) The operators or owners shall intimate the Issuing Authority, the Registrar of the fishing vessels, and the Indian Coast Guard at least 48 hours in advance, providing details of the mother vessel, quantity of catch, species, and transshipment date, time, and the geographic coordinates, in the form specified in **Schedule III**.

## **14. Catch Reporting**

Operators of Indian-flagged fishing vessels shall submit detailed catch reports (species, weight, fishing area, trip duration) in digital format to the Issuing Authority after each fishing trip, as per the prescribed formats.

## **15. Fishers & Crew Identification**

All fishers and crew on board an Indian-flagged fishing vessel shall carry a QR-coded Aadhaar card, Digital Fisher's Identity, Passport, Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC), or other approved ID, as applicable.

## **16. Foreign Crew**

The Operators may hire foreign crew for deployment in the Indian-flagged fishing vessels as per the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, and the immigration rules shall be as per relevant notifications of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India. Any change in foreign crew shall be informed to the Issuing Authority and the *IN*, ICG at least 48 hrs well in advance.

## **17. Prohibition of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing**

- a) No Indian-flagged fishing vessels shall engage in any form of Illegal, Unreported, or Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities.
- b) Any contravention of the provisions of these guidelines, breach of the conditions stipulated in the LOA, or engaging in IUU fishing activities by such vessels shall render the LOA liable for suspension or cancellation by the Issuing Authority. In such cases, the Bank Guarantee furnished by the operator shall be forfeited, either in whole or in part, as deemed fit by the Issuing Authority.

## **18. Compliance with RFMOs and International Instruments**

The Indian-flagged fishing vessels issued with an LOA shall adhere to the conservation and management measures of relevant RFMOs, such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) or the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA), or other such RFMO, as specified in the LOA. The operators of fishing vessels shall also ensure compliance with the ILO Convention 188, which relates to maintaining standards of good working conditions on fishing vessels.

## **19. Adjudicating Officer**

Upon receipt of a report from the Authorised Officer indicating any contravention of the provisions of these guidelines or breach of one or more conditions specified in the LOA by the owner or operator of the fishing vessel, the Adjudicating Officer shall initiate an inquiry into the alleged violations in a prescribed manner. The inquiry shall be conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice, ensuring that all concerned parties are afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard before any decision is rendered. The adjudication process shall be completed within a period not exceeding 4 months.

## **20. Suspension or Cancellation of LOA**

- a) The Adjudicating Officer, after inquiry, may suspend or cancel the LOA in cases of contraventions or violations of these guidelines, or violations of one or more LOA conditions, including cases of IUU fishing, by adopting the following approach:
  - (i) **First offence:** The suspension of the LOA for a period up to 3 months and or, where applicable, forfeiture of the Bank Guarantee.
  - (ii) **Second offence:** The suspension of the LOA for a period up to 3 months and, where applicable, forfeiture of the Bank Guarantee.

- (iii) **Third or subsequent offence:** The suspension of the LOA for a period from 3–6 months or cancellation of the LOA, and, where applicable, forfeiture of the Bank Guarantee.
- (iv) **Grave or repeated violations (including IUU fishing):** LOA cancellation and, where applicable, forfeiture of the Bank Guarantee.
- b) The Issuing Authority may suspend or cancel an LOA for reasons of maritime security, law and order, or public interest.
- c) In the case of suspension of an LOA, the operator shall immediately ensure that fishing or fishing-related activities of such vessel is stopped until the suspension is revoked in writing.
- d) The suspended or cancelled LOA shall no longer be used. The status of such suspended or cancelled LOA shall be updated on ReALCRaft by the Issuing Authority.

#### **21. Appeals**

- a) An operator aggrieved by an order refusing, suspending, or cancelling an LOA may appeal to the Appellate Authority within 30 days of the order's communication.
- b) The Appellate Authority shall hear the appeal after giving a reasonable opportunity to the party to be heard and issue a final order expeditiously.

#### **22. Remittance of Revenue**

All revenue earned under these guidelines shall be remitted to *Bharat Kosh* or as notified by the Central Government.

#### **23. Institutional Mechanism**

The Central Government shall establish an Inter-Ministerial Committee and advise the coastal States/Union Territories to form State-level Committees to oversee the implementation of these guidelines.

**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying**  
**Department of Fisheries,**  
**Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi – 110001**

**APPLICATION FOR LETTER OF AUTHORISATION (LOA)**

[Under the Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025]

**Application Processing Fee to be submitted online: Rs. 25,000/-**

**Part A: Applicant Details**

1. **Name of the Applicant / Company / FFPO / Cooperative Society:**  
.....
2. **Registered Address:**  
.....
3. **Contact Person:**
  - A. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Designation: \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Mobile No.: \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Email ID: \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Type of Entity:**  
 Individual  Company  Cooperative Society  Other (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_
5. **GST No. / PAN / CIN:**  
.....

**Part B: Vessel Details**

1. **Name of the Vessel:** .....
2. **Registration Number:** .....
3. **Date of Registration:** .....
4. **Port of Registry:** .....
5. **IMO Number (if any):** .....
6. **Call Sign / MMSI Number:** .....
7. **Gross Tonnage (GT):** .....
8. **Length Overall** .....
9. **Engine Power (kW or HP):** .....
10. **Year of Construction:** .....
11. **Crew Capacity:** .....
12. **Ownership Details:**
  - A. Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Part C: Fishing Operation Details

1. **Intended Area of Operation** (RFMOs, coordinates):  
 IOTC Area  SIOFA Area  Others: \_\_\_\_\_
  2. **Target Species:**  
 Tuna  Billfishes  Other Pelagics: \_\_\_\_\_
  3. **Fishing Gear Type:**  
 Longline  Purse Seine  Pole & Line  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  4. **Number of Fishing Days Proposed per Voyage:** \_\_\_\_\_
  5. **Base Port:** \_\_\_\_\_
  6. **Observer Accommodation Onboard:**  
 Yes  No  
(Note: Mandatory for some RFMO areas)
- 

### Part D: Compliance Declarations

1.  I hereby declare that the vessel is equipped with a certified **Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)**.
  2.  I agree to comply with all **reporting requirements**, including electronic logbooks, catch certificates, and port entry declarations.
  3.  I confirm no involvement of this vessel in **Illegal, Unreported, or Unregulated (IUU) fishing**.
  4.  I undertake to follow all **conservation and management measures** issued by the Government of India and the relevant RFMOs.
  5.  I understand that violation of the LOA terms and IUU fishing may lead to suspension or revocation.
- 

### Part E: Attachments Checklist

- Copy of Vessel Registration Certificate
- Copy of LOA (if applying for renewal)
- Owner's Aadhaar / PAN / CIN Proof
- Certificate of VMS installation
- Fishing Vessel Survey Certificate
- Proof of RFMO vessel registration (if applicable)
- Undertaking of Compliance with RFMO rules
- Any other relevant document: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Official Seal (if applicable)**

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**Submit completed form to:**

Department of Fisheries, Ministry of FAHD, Government of India

✉ Email: [highseas.fisheries@gov.in](mailto:highseas.fisheries@gov.in) | 🌐 [www.dof.gov.in](http://www.dof.gov.in)

Government of India  
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying  
Department of Fisheries  
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi – 110001

**Letter of Authorisation (LOA) for High Seas Fishing**

Authorisation No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Valid Until: \_\_\_\_\_

To,

Name of Vessel Owner / Company / FFPO / Cooperative Society:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Full Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone / Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject: Authorisation for High Seas Fishing under Indian Flag.**

In accordance with the **Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025**, the undersigned hereby grants the Letter of Authorisation to the vessel detailed below to conduct fishing operations in areas beyond national jurisdiction (High Seas) under applicable Indian laws and international obligations, subject to the conditions set forth herein.

**1. Vessel Details**

A. Name of Vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Registration No.: \_\_\_\_\_

C. IMO No. / Call Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E. Port of Registry: \_\_\_\_\_

F. Vessel Type: \_\_\_\_\_

G. Gross Tonnage: \_\_\_\_\_

H. Flag State (Default: India): \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Authorised Area of Operation** IOTC  SIOFA  Others (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Geographical Coordinates or Zones: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Authorised Target Species** Tuna  Billfishes  Others: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Authorised Gear Type

Longline  Purse Seine  Pole and Line  Others (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Base Port: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Conditions of Authorisation

- A. VMS must be active at all times.
- B. Catch reporting via e-logbook is mandatory.
- C. Carry trained observers when required.
- D. No IUU fishing or violations of RFMO's CMMs.
- E. Transshipment with prior intimation.
- F. Land catch only at designated Indian ports.

#### 7. Compliance Requirements

##### The operator shall:

- A. Abide by all Indian laws and RFMO regulations.
- B. Submit catch and transshipment reports.
- C. Present this LOA upon request by the authorities.

#### 8. Validity

This authorisation is valid from [DD/MM/YYYY] to [DD/MM/YYYY] and is subject to review, suspension, or revocation in case of non-compliance/IUU Fishing, or policy changes.

#### 9. Issuing Authority

A. Authorised Signatory (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

B. Name of Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Department of Fisheries,  
Government of India

Seal: \_\_\_\_\_

##### Note:

This letter does not exempt the vessel from compliance with any other law or international obligation. Violations of the Guidelines for Operation of Indian Flagged Vessels in the High Seas will result in penalties, including suspension of LOA or other legal action.

Schedule-III

Government of India  
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying  
Department of Fisheries

**'Format for Submission of Mother Vessel Details for Transshipment at High Seas'**

**1. Vessel Operator/Owner Details**

- A. Name of Applicant / Company / FFPO / Cooperative: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Email ID: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Carrier/Mother Vessel Details**

- A. Name of Carrier Vessel: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. IMO Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Flag State: \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Port of Registry: \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Call Sign / MMSI Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Gross Tonnage (GT): \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Type of Vessel (e.g., Reefer, Supply): \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Owner / Operator Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Vessel Contact (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Transshipment Details**

- A. Proposed Transshipment Area (Coordinates or RFMO Region): \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Proposed Date and Time of Transshipment: \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Fishing Vessel(s) Involved (Name & Registration No.): \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Type of Catch to be Transshipped: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Species	Quantity (in Tons)	Preservation Method

- E. Whether Observer Onboard the Mother Vessel (Yes/No): \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Port of Landing: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Declaration**

I/We hereby declare that the information provided above is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that the transshipment and the mother vessel/carrier vessel will comply with all applicable conditions of the LOA, Guidelines and all other relevant Acts and Guidelines, including RBI Guidelines, RFMO conservation and management measures, and high seas transshipment protocols.

Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Official Seal (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

UI/221/04/2025  
Ministry of External Affairs  
[UNES Division]

\*\*\*

New Delhi, 09 December 2025

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Subject: Request to publish the Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025**

The undersigned is directed to refer to the enclosed executive order, in the form of an Office Memorandum, in relation to the Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025.

2. In this regard, the Department of Fisheries is requested to circulate the enclosed executive order, along with the Guidelines, to all the coastal States and Union Territories; and to the relevant fishing industries, associations, companies, and joint ventures.

  
(Dr. PR Thulasidhass)

Deputy Secretary/Legal Officer  
011-23085497 | dsune@mea.gov.in

*Encl: As above (1)*

**To,**  
Department of Fisheries  
Shri Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, Secretary (Fisheries)  
Room No. 220 KB, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi  
Tel: 23381994; Email: [secy-fisheries@nic.in](mailto:secy-fisheries@nic.in)

UI/221/04/2025  
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