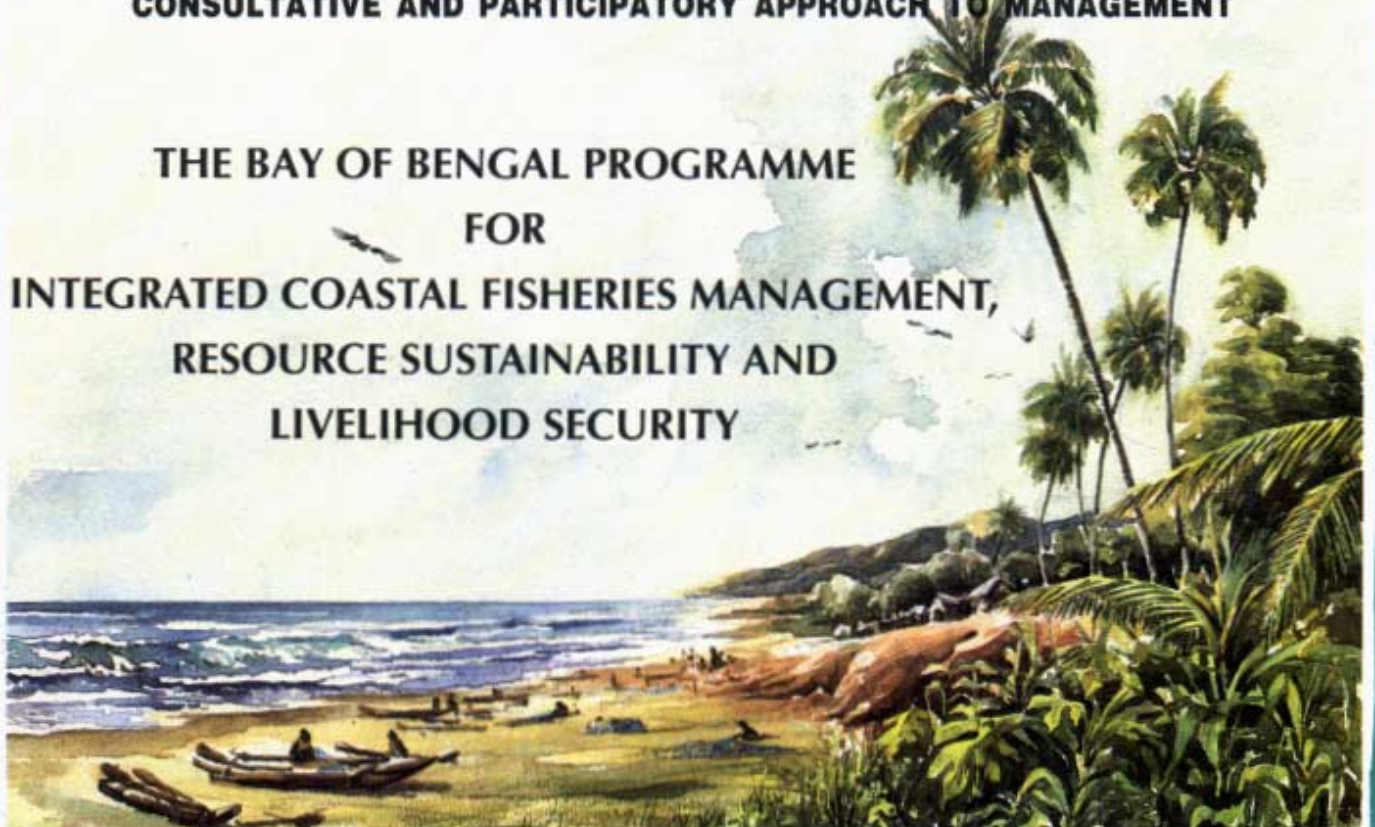




CONSULTATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

**THE BAY OF BENGAL PROGRAMME
FOR
INTEGRATED COASTAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT,
RESOURCE SUSTAINABILITY AND
LIVELIHOOD SECURITY**



The Bay of Bengal Programme



The Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP) of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a multi-agency regional fisheries Programme comprising seven member countries bordering the Bay of Bengal: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. When BOBP first started in 1979 there were only a few million fisherfolk in the region. Today, there are more than 7 million with a total fishing community population of at least 35 million. These fisherfolk, especially the smallscale, limited-resource fisherfolk, have a low standard of living and many of their villages lack basic amenities. Their low literacy further inhibits them from obtaining the necessary information to better their lives.

Increasing population pressures in this region, especially among those living in abject poverty,

have exacerbated these problems. The goal of the BOBP Third Phase, to serve as a catalyst for developing innovative participatory approaches and solutions to smallscale fisheries management, is a timely response to this need.

The main aim of BOBP during its first 15 years has been to help improve the socioeconomic conditions of these smallscale fisherfolk in member countries by playing a catalytic, consultative and interventional role. BOBP's work is closely monitored and guided by an Advisory Committee, composed of senior representatives of its member country governments, which meets at the beginning of each year.

In its first two phases, BOBP assisted in developing, demonstrating and promoting new

techniques, technologies, and development ideas to achieve its mission. In these phases, BOBP was particularly concerned with:

- Development of more efficient fishing technology: by demonstrating improved designs for fishing gear and craft.
- Aquaculture techniques: by implementing pilot projects in several countries for shrimp, oyster and seaweed culture, and finfish cage culture.
- Post-harvest fisheries: by implementing better post-harvest primary handling, secondary processing and marketing to minimize losses, and by adding value to fish and fish products.
- Assessment of fishery resource: by developing improved data collection procedures and methods of analysis to facilitate policy decision-making.
- Bio-socioeconomics: by conducting interdisciplinary studies to include a more holistic understanding of fisheries and fisherfolk.
- People's participation: by demonstrating its mechanism, process, and usefulness for fisheries development through jointly

identifying problems and arriving at and implementing solutions together.

- **Fisherfolk education:** by non-formal education of adults, youths and children in fishing communities.
- Facilitating credit: by helping to set up revolving funds and helping banks to provide institutional credit for fisherfolk to generate income, especially through non-fisheries occupations.
- Fisheries extension services: by helping to improve such services to better reach out and meet the needs and aspirations of fisherfolk communities.
- Dissemination of information: by the publication of a quarterly newsletter, called the *Bay of Bengal News*, working papers, technical reports, manuals and guides; by making video films and other audio-visual materials on fisheries; by communicating with fisherfolk communities through comic books, radio programmes, art and storytelling competitions and instruction books in local languages; and by maintaining a well-equipped library to support research and provide a reference service for those seeking fisheries information about the Bay of Bengal region and beyond.



Post-Harvest Fisheries

The BOBP's Post-Harvest Fisheries (PHF) project is separately funded by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the United Kingdom (U.K.) and managed through the Natural Resources Institute (NRI), U.K.

The project commenced in August 1987. Its second phase was from September 1989 until April 1992. The next phase of this PHF project commenced in April 1993 and will be implemented over a five-year period.

Project activities are being undertaken in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka.



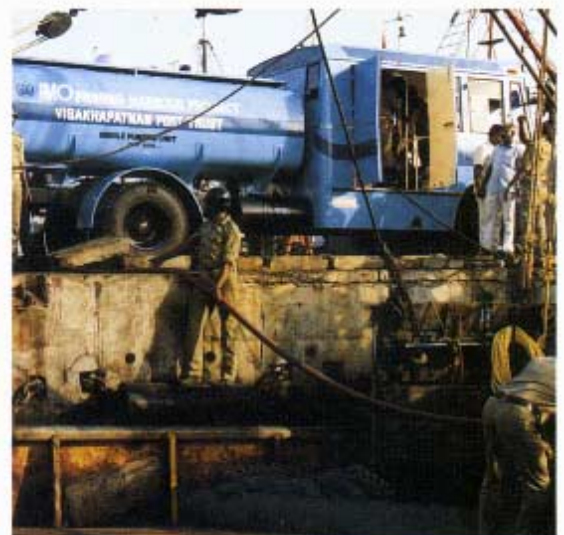
The principal objectives of the Post-Harvest Fisheries project are:

- Enhancement of the incomes of artisanal fishing communities and petty fish traders.
- Identification and development of available potentials to increase the diversity of fish products marketed by these communities.
- Strengthening the ability of NGO's and fisherfolk associations to replicate and secure sustainable benefits from project activities.



Cleaner Fishery Harbours

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has supported three pilot projects in the region to promote cleaner fishery harbours. A fourth project is being considered in Indonesia. The projects have been designed to promote a participatory approach towards pollution mitigation through the creation of awareness among stakeholders of the needs, benefits and methods for a clean harbour environment and sanitary handling of fish landed in the harbours in anticipation of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) enforcement.



The Third Phase

On the threshold of its Third Phase, BOBP is faced with a situation in fisheries that, at first glance, holds two mutually conflicting demands. On the one hand, there is a definite need to increase the availability of fish as a source of protein to an ever-increasing population and export demand. On the other hand, there is a crucial need to protect and conserve the fast dwindling fish resources of our member countries. BOBP's vision is to resolve these seemingly conflicting demands by assisting countries identify policies, actions and solutions that call for a long-term perspective and promote resource sustainability, ensuring livelihood security for the fisherfolk, thus



satisfying both demands. This vision is reflected in BOBP's Programme goals:

- Sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources through increased management awareness and development of management solutions in collaboration with the fisherfolk.
- Equitable access to and use of aquatic resources for livelihood security.
- Promotion of integrated coastal area management to ensure sustainable use of coastal resources for future generations.

The Third Phase will build on the achievements and lessons of the earlier phases. The earlier phases have prepared communities of fisherfolk for the responsibilities of participatory management expected and required by the Third Phase. Early activities

of the Third Phase have found a fisherfolk population that is more aware of its fisheries problems and with ideas to help solve them.

BOBP will assist member countries introduce innovative approaches to institutionalize the participation of fisherfolk and other stakeholders to develop and implement workable measures to improve fisheries management. In sum, the Third Phase will help turn local interests and concerns into action. The components of this Phase are:

- Building awareness and public opinion among fisheries stakeholders on the needs, benefits and options for fisheries management.
- Building the capacities of local fishing communities and national fisheries agencies to plan and carry out integrated fisheries management.
- Human resources planning and development.
- Providing technical assistance and other identified needs of member countries for implementation.

BOBP achieves this by:

- Working together with countries to identify coastal resources problems.
- Getting those involved in the problems to the discussion table.
- Making the fisherfolk's voice matter in fisheries management under the principle of "resource users as resource managers".
- Integrating women and youth in fisheries management.
- Acting as a catalytic and facilitating agent to help stakeholders come up with informed and comprehensive solution options to problems.
- Providing innovative ways to generate the financial means to implement solutions on a self-financing basis.

Programme Strategy

The Third Phase of BOBP is centred on the following general strategic principles and activities:

- Reduction of excess or surplus fishing capacity to a level which can sustain the fisheries resources, including development of alternative income-generating activities for fisherfolk to distance them from dependence on the sea, by attracting them out of the fisheries.
- Creating awareness to instill in resource users a pride of ownership of the ideas and concepts of management.
- Re-examination of fishing technologies to determine whether those in use deplete living resources and impair resource habitat.
- Promotion of action-oriented projects which produce measurable positive effects.
- Implementation of Programme activities which reflect the opinions of the public involved in fisheries and coastal communities.
- Assumption of greater responsibility and leadership by BOBP's national counterparts in project implementation.
- Encouraging governments to allocate necessary financial resources for fisheries management.
- Coordination of national and regional information systems and exchanges.
- Integration of the environmental impacts of fishing practices and vice-versa into fisheries management decisions.
- Coordination and consultation in fisheries management decisions among national agencies with jurisdiction in the coastal zone.
- Establishment of a regional forum or mechanism to reduce fishing conflicts between member countries and minimize arrests of fisherfolk caught illegally fishing in the national waters of BOBP member and non-member countries.



Funding

The Third Phase of BOBP is funded by the governments of Denmark and Japan. In addition, member countries contribute funds for specialized project activities, like information services, and make in-kind and cash contributions for project implementation.

BOBP is unique. While other organizations are pursuing new interests in the light of new trends in environmental management and resource sustainability, BOBP remains committed to its founding role of food production and poverty alleviation. Not only is it the only regional cooperative effort in the Bay of Bengal that facilitates coordination between countries on common smallscale fisheries issues and problems, but foremost for BOBP is its larger role in continuing to highlight the strategic importance of food production for the region's poor whose livelihood heavily relies on the region's coastal and marine resources. While BOBP has continuously learned from and applied the latest trends and findings in fisheries, environmental and marine resources sciences, as well as policy analysis to its Programme and activities, it has steadfastly maintained its role and obligations to the coastal fishing communities.

Effective cost-cutting strategies and measures are built into BOBP's objectives and management strategy. For instance, the Programme emphasizes the application of solutions founded on a broad base of knowledge, from a cross-section of stakeholders. By gleaning the experience and expertise of all stakeholders and disciplines, solutions are not only holistic and efficient in design, but the 'buy in' or acceptance for implementation is achieved through the consultative and consensus process. In addition, by encouraging participatory co-management, costs incurred in fisheries enforcement can be transferred to the fishing communities themselves, saving the government scarce financial resources



which can be utilized in protecting and rehabilitating resource habitat, fisheries recolonization, and other action-oriented solutions.

Major funding is required for implementation of the Third Phase, largely as seed money to initiate projects which will become self-financing over the long-term. The governments of member countries and donor agencies are co-funding the BOBP on individual projects which directly reach their ultimate beneficiaries, the smallscale fisherfolk. In fact, the BOBP Third Phase projects will have strong support for implementation from the fishing communities that were involved from the beginning in the problem-solving process, thus ensuring a high likelihood of success.

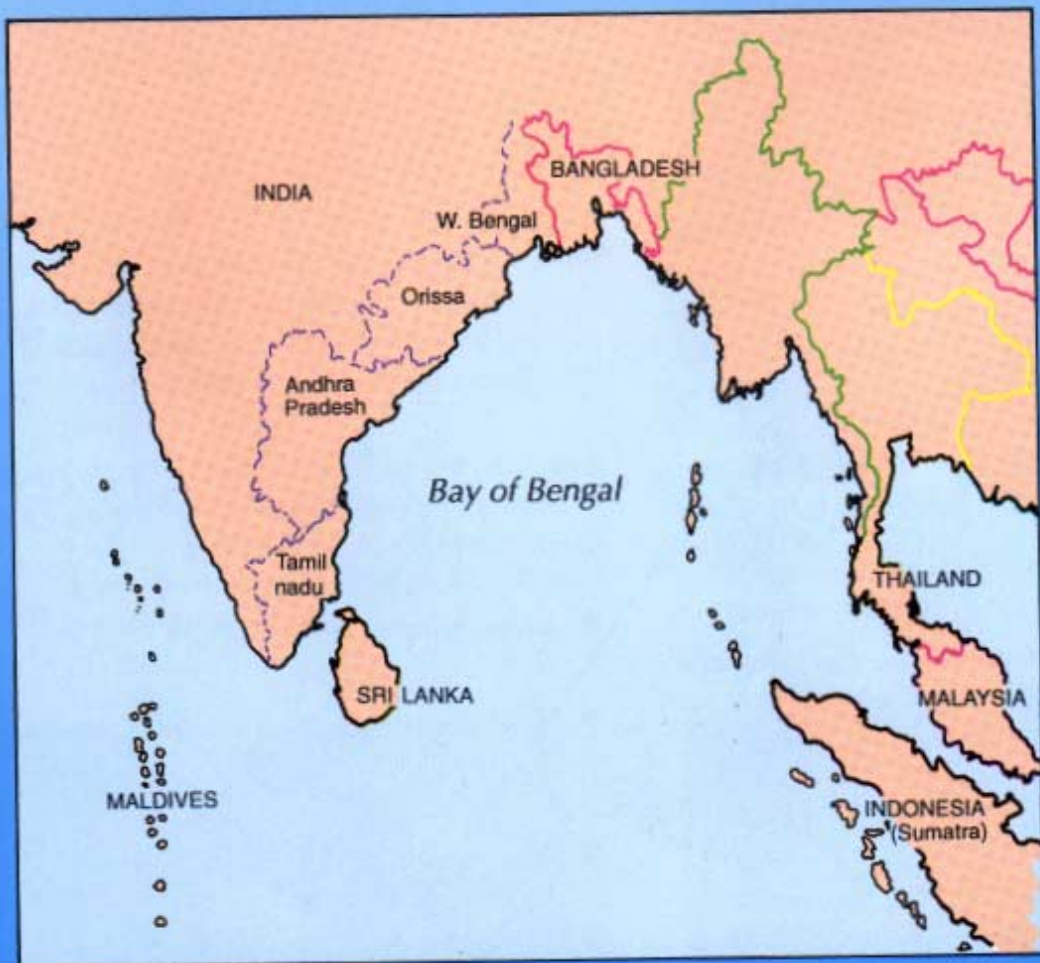
Governments of each member country are prioritizing projects in coastal fisheries management for execution with:

- Advisory inputs from BOBP
- BOBP assistance in developing greater local capacity.
- Effective utilization of local capacity.

BOBP has incrementally advanced through successive programme generations, incorporating achievements and lessons learned into solid building blocks for its current Phase. To kickstart its Third Phase, the importance of co-funding by the governments of member countries and donor agencies, to make national execution possible, cannot be over-emphasized.



Unless a determined and concerted effort is made by fisherfolk and other resource-users to manage fisheries and fishing effort, empty or near-empty nets with less and less preferred species will become common and more widespread.



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