

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

Lok Sabha

UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 4055
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17TH MARCH, 2026

Marine Stewardship Council Certification

4055. Shri Ve Vaithilingam:

Will the **Minister of FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has examined the potential benefits of Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for Indian marine and saline fish and shrimp varieties, including shrimp, squid, cuttlefish and octopus;
- (b) if so, the details of Government measures to address technical gaps such as stock assessments, ensure compliance with the Food and Agriculture Organisation's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing and facilitate certification through third-party auditors subsidised under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY); and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to expand access to affluent global markets such as Europe and Japan, increase fisheries sector revenue by 30 per cent and ensure that certification strengthens sustainability, improves incomes and enhances India's seafood export competitiveness?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)**

(a) and (b) Ecolabelling and certification schemes for fisheries are guided by the principles contained in the FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, which set out internationally recognised principles and criteria for assessing sustainable fisheries management. The Fishery Survey of India and ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute conduct periodic stock assessments and monitor marine finfish and shellfish resources along the Indian coast. By generating and disseminating scientific information on stock status, population dynamics, and life-history parameters, these institutions support evidence-based management decisions and provide the scientific foundation necessary for credible ecolabelling and certification initiatives.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, is advancing several strategic initiatives on stock assessment and sustainable fisheries management. These include the yellowfin tuna stock assessment undertaken by CMFRI and the marine mammal stock assessment and monitoring programmes implemented by the Fishery Survey of India. The Department of Fisheries has also endorsed the proposal for Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification of the pole-and-line skipjack tuna fishery of Lakshadweep by the Department of Fisheries, Lakshadweep. Alongside MSC certification, other internationally recognised schemes such as the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) are increasingly being adopted in India, with several aquaculture farms, hatcheries, feed mills, and processing units already certified.

(c) The Department of Fisheries, Government of India, has undertaken a series of stakeholder consultations and strategic engagements, including Investors' Meets in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands, the Coastal States Fisheries Meet, the Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Meet, the Seafood Exporters Meet, and the World Fisheries Day celebration on the theme "*India's Blue Transformation: Strengthening Value Addition in Seafood Exports.*" A Round Table Conference with Ambassadors and High Commissioners from 39 countries was also convened to enhance diplomatic engagement, promote collaboration in sustainable fisheries, strengthen trade relations, and advance technologies and emerging sectors in fisheries and aquaculture. The Government additionally holds bilateral meetings with major importing countries to boost seafood exports.

As part of its sustainability initiatives, the Department is promoting the installation of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in trawl nets, supporting the national marine mammals programme, and strengthening antibiotic residue control measures. The Department has released the *National Framework on Traceability in Fisheries and Aquaculture 2025*, which aims to establish a national digital traceability system across fisheries and aquaculture value chains, ensure compliance with domestic and international regulatory requirements, enhance food safety and quality assurance, improve transparency and accountability, and facilitate market access for small-scale fishers and farmers in both domestic and international trade.

Further, the *Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Rules, 2025*, have been notified to promote high-value, export-oriented fisheries in India's EEZ, with a focus on the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.

The Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, has established the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) as the nodal agency to facilitate and promote seafood exports. MPEDA undertakes brand promotion, enrolls exporters, liaises with importers, and issues key Export Facilitation Certificates, including Catch Certificates, Japan Catch Documentation Scheme (JCDS) certificates, International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) documentation, DS-2031, Certificates of Legal Origin for Chile, and Non-Radioactivity Certificates for exports to high-value markets. It also strengthens industry capacity through training programmes, awareness campaigns, workshops, and *chintan shivirs*.

To expand market access, MPEDA participates in international trade fairs, organises Buyer–Seller Meets (BSMs) and Reverse Buyer–Seller Meets (RBSMs), and works closely with Indian Missions abroad. To ensure compliance with international quality and safety standards, the Export Inspection Council (EIC) of the Department of Commerce conducts periodic awareness and training programmes for stakeholders across the seafood value chain.
