

Draft Blue Economy policy for India

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In news: Recently, the Ministry of Earth Sciences invited suggestions on blue economy policy

A brief note on Draft Blue Economy policy for India

- The draft blue economy policy document outlines the vision and strategy that can be adopted by the Government of India to utilize the plethora of oceanic resources available in the country
- **The policy document aims to enhance contribution of the blue economy to India's GDP**, improve lives of coastal communities, preserve marine biodiversity, and maintain the national security of marine areas and resources.
- The Ministry of Earth Sciences prepared the draft blue economy policy framework in line with the Government of India's Vision of New India by 2030.
- It highlighted the blue economy as one of the ten core dimensions for national growth.
- The draft policy framework **emphasizes policies across several key sectors to achieve holistic growth of India's economy.**

Seven thematic areas:

The document recognizes the following seven thematic areas.

1. National accounting framework for the blue economy and ocean governance.
2. Coastal marine spatial planning and tourism.
3. Marine fisheries, aquaculture, and fish processing.
4. Manufacturing, emerging industries, trade, technology, services, and skill development.
5. Logistics, infrastructure and shipping, including trans-

- shipments.
6. Coastal and deep-sea mining and offshore energy.
 7. Security, strategic dimensions, and international engagement.

Why is the draft Blue economy policy of India important?

India's Blue Economy:

- India's blue economy is understood as a subset of the national economy comprising an entire ocean resources system and human-made economic infrastructure in marine, maritime, and onshore coastal zones within the country's legal jurisdiction.
- It aids the production of goods and services that have clear linkages with economic growth, environmental sustainability, and national security.
- The blue economy is a vast socio-economic opportunity for coastal nations like India to utilize ocean resources for societal benefit responsibly.

India's Maritime position & its significance with respect Blue Economy:

- With a coastline of nearly 7.5 thousand kilometers, India has a unique maritime position. Nine of its 29 states are coastal, and the nation's geography includes 1,382 islands.
- There are nearly 199 ports, including 12 major ports that handle approximately 1,400 million tons of cargo each year.
- Moreover, India's Exclusive Economic Zone of over 2 million square kilometers has a bounty of living and non-living resources with significant recoverable resources such as crude oil and natural gas.
- Also, the coastal economy sustains over 4 million fisherfolk and coastal communities. With these vast maritime interests, the blue economy occupies a vital

potential position in India's economic growth.

- **It could well be the next multiplier of GDP and well-being,** provided sustainability and socio-economic welfare are kept center-stage.
- Therefore, India's draft blue economy policy is envisaged as **a crucial framework towards unlocking the country's potential for economic growth and welfare.**

History of the concept of Blue Economy

- **The economic philosophy of the Blue Economy was first introduced in 1994 by Professor Gunter Pauli at the United Nations University (UNU)** to reflect the needs of future growth and prosperity, along with the threats posed by global warming.
- The concept was based on developing more sustainable models of development including concepts of engineering based on **"no waste and no emissions"**.
- The Blue Economy assumed greater importance after the Third Earth Summit Conference – Rio+20 in 2012.
- The conference focused inter alia on expanding the concept of Green Economy to include the Blue Economy.
- The concept received a fillip when the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 14 sought to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" as a guiding principle for global governance and use of ocean resources.