

Draft National Fisheries Policy

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Source: PRS

Recently the Department of Fisheries released the draft National Fisheries Policy. **The policy aims to integrate the various policies relating to different aspects of fisheries** (such as inland fisheries, marine plants and animals, processing, and marketing) for its comprehensive development.

Key features of the draft policy:

Objectives:

- Enhancing fish production and productivity in a responsible and sustainable manner
- Providing a robust regulatory framework for effective fisheries resource management
- Modernizing and diversifying fishing practices in oceans and seas through the use of science and technology
- Strengthening and modernizing the value chain, and
- Generating gainful **employment and entrepreneurship opportunities** leading to the higher income of fishers and fish farmers and improvement of their living standards

Legal framework:

- The policy mentions that fisheries governance will be improved to facilitate coordination among states, national agencies, and other stakeholders.
- **Comprehensive management and regulation of fisheries resources** in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) will be ensured through national law. (Exclusive Economic Zone

is the **area of the sea outside territorial water** to which India has the exclusive rights for economic activities, and extends to 200 nautical miles from the coast of India)

- The central government will empower coastal state governments by delegating the powers to grant marine fishing licences for the EEZ and high seas (the area beyond EEZ).

Sustainability:

- The central government would encourage and empower traditional and small fisher and fisher groups to undertake resource-specific deep-sea fishing to harness untapped high-value resources sustainably.
- **Usage of expertise of scientific institutions and fishers:** The expertise of scientific institutions and fishers will be utilized to optimize fishing efforts and implement measures to check resource depletion and ensure sustainability.
- **Comprehensive fisheries management:** Comprehensive fisheries management plans will be made to conserve and sustainably manage natural fisheries resources.

Inter-sector coordination:

- **Representation in committees:** The central and state governments will take up with nodal departments such as water, irrigation, and rural development to ensure that the Department of Fisheries is fittingly represented in all the committees entrusted with the management and usages of water resources.
- **Incentives:** The fisheries sector requires greater attention of the government in the form of incentives such as the ones given to the agriculture sector.
- **Inclusion of fisheries & aquaculture in agriculture:** The scope of land use categories at the state level needs to be increased to specifically include fisheries and

aquaculture as integral components of agriculture.