

BLUE ECONOMY IN THE BAY OF BENGAL

Bangladesh, India & Sri Lanka

WORKSHOP 3

TOWARDS A REGIONAL BLUE ECONOMY: WHICH CONTRIBUTION OF THE FRENCH KNOW-HOW?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Workshop 3: Towards a regional blue economy: which French know-how contribution?

The spirit of these three workshops is devoted to understanding, mapping the initiatives and gaps in action on blue economy in the Bay of Bengal, more particularly in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. Our first workshop was held on November 26th, dedicated to understanding the challenges with the participation of several entities. Our second workshop, organized in January 21st aimed to continue this understanding by gathering experts who participated in the first edition and new experts and to start a strategic conversation with the AFD. And the third and final workshop, which was held on March 16th, was devoted to solutions and identifying ways of cooperation in the regional with the support of French know how.

Introductory session

Dr. Joël Ruet, President, The Bridge Tank explained that this work has allowed us to understand the multiple definitions of the blue economy, mainly focusing on fisheries and coastal ecosystem preservation in **two respects**: It has gained a **strategic momentum** as the strategic issues around the region have developed and the conversations have shown a **treasure of knowhow and tools**.

Dr. (Mrs) Hélène Djoufelkit, Research Director of the AFD highlighted **6 main takeaways** from the first two workshops: **The role of blue economy in the region; The role of data; Improving coordination; Strengthening private and public cooperation; Promoting institutional capacity building in front of data collection and coordination and Developing pilot projects.**

Session 1 – Institutional cooperation and ambitions at regional level with the support of French know-how

Mrs. Runa Khan, Founder & Executive Director of the Friendship NGO insists on reality and actual implementation of projects and on what should be done by an organization, such as the AFD, to success in developing projects in countries like the Bay of Bengal. Organizations were motivated by the pilot mode. **AFD should focus on helping these local organizations or those already on the ground to scale up.** It is an understanding of the way how fishermen, the economy and the society work. The reason why many organizations do go, in this long term mode and understanding why the pilot phase did not worked, is because they do not have time. Organizations have the responsibility to go in the field and to see what it exists because you deal with human being. **Mrs. Runa Khan particularly insists on the support of AFD, which needs to be a lot more realistic and it is possible because the AFD has the resources of ability, not money.**

Mr. Daniel Fernando, Chairperson, Blue Resources Trust, Sri Lanka began his presentation saying **needs to be proactive. But unfortunately action is more reactionary to nature.** We see this across sustainability fisheries, climate change. We are only reacting to what happen and not developing proactive measures to prevent what is going on. He mainly focused on **the lack of data, the need of adopting precautionary measures, the need of long term projects and the need to look at national opportunities rather than larger terms.** He finally concluded **saying that the region and between other countries, there is a huge potential in cooperation and exchange knowledge. But at the same, recognizing and understanding the expertise and the knowledge existing within the countries of the region is critical.**

Dr. Arnab Das, Executive Director & Founder, Maritime Research Centre, India started his intervention saying that **it is necessary to recognize the uniqueness of the region, looking at local specificities is important, in terms of research and study to make sure that we understand the underwater domain awareness.** He explained that **the technology and knowhow exist in the region. But capacity building at multiple levels of actions and for our next generation is necessary.** The framework developed by the MRC raise to work in this sense. Knowing the problems, the MRC proposes **outreach, engage and sustain framework.** **Dr. Das explained that the UDA framework proposed by MRC can significantly contribute towards the enhanced maritime governance.** Also, a Centre of Excellence could be

set up jointly to ensure a **focused approach and scale up the capacity & capability building requirement at a regional level.**

Mr. Matthieu Piron, Policy officer for international affairs, Directorate for Sea Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry for the Sea has mainly focused his intervention **on fisheries governance in the high seas**, in particular in regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and in southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA).

Mr. Benoît Gauthier, Head of the Regional Economic Service, Embassy of France in India has focused his presentation on **two directions: A short presentation on the common road map on blue economy and ocean governance which has been set up with India** in February 2022, which is built with the sustainability aspect as the main objective. The roadmap is ranked into 4 pillars: institutional, economic, infrastructures and scientific and academic. This roadmap should accelerate bilateral cooperation between the two countries and the implementation of projects. But the real issue is how to further operationalize this roadmap in concrete actions and tools? **And a presentation of what are the financial tools to implement the Indo-Pacific strategy?** The regional economic department can mobilize **grants and loans** in projects where there is sustainability aspect. These tools can be mobilized for **monitoring and preserving the fishery resource, sustainable fishing, weather forecasts and preservation of marine and coastal biodiversity**

Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan, Director-General, National Maritime Foundation, India focused in presentation saying: **Be careful about the usage of blue economy. The focus should be on 'blue'; One should not conflate ocean economy with blue economy; and Fisheries are important, but there are also other areas that should be talked about.**

Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, Bay of Bengal Inter-Governmental Organization (BOBP-IGO), explained that actual country to country cooperation is limited. The main sector of cooperation in the region is **fishery**. There is a data gap in this sector as economic value of the contribution of fisheries to food and nutritional security, employment etc is not available. He suggested a **need for marine spatial planning at national/regional scale; to re-imagining fisheries management** with participatory approaches for near-real-time stock assessment by: **Develop a methodological framework**, in partnership with government bodies and expert institutions for collecting fisheries data and analyzing them; **Pilot test** the framework in different geographies and develop a roadmap to scale up the approach; The framework will aid in capturing the Hidden Harvest from Small-Scale Multi-Species Fishery **in addressing IUU fishing**. What would be the possible contributions of the French know-how: **assists the Bay of Bengal countries in strengthening fisheries management data and stock assessment; provides technological assistance/collaboration in marine spatial planning, satellite-based stock and effort estimation, specific for tropical waters, fisheries block-chain to strengthen traceability and eco-labelling and capacity development programmes in fisheries management.**

Session 2 – Developing nationally and regionally viable projects to enhance the value chains of blue economy

Mr. Manish Singhal, Deputy Secretary General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, India explained that India has a huge opportunity to enhance its economic role through blue economy. But **this depends on how finance can be innovated, built on technological capabilities. He also added capacity building.** Manish Singhal discussed potential solutions to boost the economic activity of blue economy in the region in **three areas: Need to look at the financial instruments available to enhance sustainable blue economy development; Need for a framework measurement of the blue economy ecosystem; Need to learn from France's experiences and practices of how blue economy can be a driver of progress without harming marine biology or coastal biology.** Manish Singhal finally highlighted the need to **work bilaterally between the three countries to achieve these solutions.**

Mr. Martin Lemenager, Senior Program Manager for Infrastructure, AFD Office in Indonesia presented the **Indonesian's blue context; the AFD activities in Indonesia and main projects**, such as space oceanography, marine meteorology, oceanographic research vessels and eco-fishing ports, sea transport and logistics sectors, plastic marine debris, post-tsunami fishery restart, blue action fund and marine plastic debris study and modeling.

Mr. Loïc Monod, Bioeconomy research officer, France AgriMer developed his presentation into 5 parts: **What is blue bioeconomy**: all the economic activities linked to production, collection, processing and reuse of aquatic biomass (sea and fresh water); **Study context and objectives**: this study aimed at building a knowledge base on blue bioeconomy and identifying the threats and opportunities for reuse of aquatic biomass; **Study perimeter**: focused on 21 sea and freshwater species or group of species, focusing on by-products generated by production and processing (distribution and end-use excluded); **Main results**: about 210 000 tons of by-products were generated and out of 210 000 tons, about 160 000 tons were reuse; **Obstacles** to the development of blue bioeconomy and foot for thought such as **logistical obstacles** and **reinforce the knowledge base of French blue bioeconomy**.

Mr. Nicolas Vuillaume, Indian Ocean Representative, Collecte Localisation Satellites (CLS)

Mr. Vuillaume started saying that CLS has a strong expertise in sustainable fisheries management and presented the company CLS, which has 30 years' experience making use of satellite technology to provide data collection and earth observation. With this data, CLS develops systems, application and value-added services. CLS works on 5 strategic sectors: environmental monitoring and climate, sustainable fisheries management, energy and mining, maritime safety and fleet monitoring. CLS developed different solutions and Mr. Vuillaume explained their uses through examples, such as **VMS** (Vessel Monitoring Systems), **ERS** (Electronic Reporting Systems), **FMC** (Fisheries Monitoring Centers) and **OCEANAO** (stock assessment model).

Dr. Mostafa A. R. Hossain, Professor, Aquatic Biodiversity & Climate Change, Department of Fish. Biology & Genetics, Bangladesh Agricultural University, consultant with AFD Bangladesh was assigned by AFD to conduct a consultancy on the value chains of the blue economy in Bangladesh. The study was undertaken to review the needs of the sector and priorities of Bangladesh, to identify potential subsectors and to prioritize the intervention areas. He drafted three concept notes about: **Transformation of ship breaking yards of Bangladesh to environmentally friendly green shipyards**; **Strengthening research capacity of the Bangladesh oceanographic research institute (BORI)**; **Strengthening the capacity of the Bangladesh meteorological department (BMD) to provide more reliable marine weather forecasting services and to improve accessibility to such services by the end-users**.

Dr. Arnab Das, Executive Director & Founder, Maritime Research Centre, India said this last workshop can be considered a ground session. From both side, from France and from the Bay of Bengal, he noted that **there is far clarity of thought and direction**. It is now about us putting things together. As a last comment, Dr. Das insisted on **the formulation of the user, academia and industrial partnership that the entire human flow of resources can be optimized in a sustainable manner. The financing mechanism needs to be developed in a self-sufficient manner**. The concept of blue financing is very important for any kind of stakeholders. Also the participation of local actors has to be in a manner that we are able to define what we want and what we want to steer. Dr. Das insisted on **the equal partnership from local and external, French side for instance, participation, as the Bay of Bengal has uniqueness that need to be taken account**. This series of workshop has been very thoughtful and constitutes a first step of cooperation.

Mr. Aruna Maheepala, Senior Research Officer of National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency of Sri Lanka gave a pithy snapshot of local blue expertise and projects in Sri Lanka. He started his presentation detailing key figures of blue economy in Sri Lanka in 2019, major commercial harbors in Colombo, Galle, Hambanthota and Trincomalee. He then presented major projects developed in Sri Lanka, with the support of the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency

Mr. Shri Aditya Dash, Vice Chairman, Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), India explained that MPEDA's sub organizations can be partner or implement with the AFD a lot of projects that these workshops were talking about, such as Rajiv Gandhi Center for Aquaculture (aquaculture R & D), NetFish (sustainable artisanal fisheries) and NaCSA (sustainable aquaculture). They can take the lead and promote a vibrant and sustainable seafood sector in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. He also highlighted that France is innovative in the field of **alternative of food**. He insisted then that **we have to focus on climate change**. He suggested that a **creation of network of micro weather stations at the regional level**, with the support of AFD experiences in Indonesia. He finally developed **the necessity of French know how to the development of coastal infrastructures**: more ports, containers, LNG terminals, ship building and breaking etc.

Mr. Bruno Bosle, Country director of the AFD Office in India started his intervention underlining the potential of a blue economy portfolio for the AFD, in particular in India. He explained that the AFD could focus on marine fisheries and is currently investing on gaps to be filled. So far, there are 2 types of possible actions: **state levels** (coastal states to the support and the improvement) and **central level** (regulatory framework, funding and information systems)

Mr. Reda Souirgi, AFD Sri Lanka represented by Panchali Ellepola, Project Officer. Collaborating with the Ministry of Fisheries in Sri Lanka, Mrs. Panchali Ellepola reminded us briefly the project's aim developed by the AFD. It is a project with four identified priority ports to improve the quality of fish taken, export and sustainable fishing resources, while maintaining and developing employment, modernizing and improving port management. The AFD hoped to replicate this project across the country. The AFD office hopes that this project will be replicable in other harbors at larger scale, with eventually the support of other agencies such as the World Bank. The AFD interest working with the Sri Lankan's government is not limited to fisheries and harbors development or modernization, but also to work on marine pollution.

Mr. Benoît Chassatte, Country director of the AFD Office in Bangladesh

Mr. Chassatte started his intervention thanking Dr. Hossain for the presentation about the 3 concept notes the AFD mandated to him. As directing the AFD Office in Bangladesh, **Mr. Chassatte said that so far there is no operational project on blue economy. But there is hope, as the blue economy is a priority for the government of Bangladesh,** which is pushing development agencies, such as the AFD to invest in blue economy. **It's time for the AFD to move forward.** The AFD office in Bangladesh is looking forward to collaborate with the Ministry of Fisheries or the BIRMAD.

Session 3 – Enhancing shared resources through a regional network

Mrs. Afifat Khanam Ritika, Research Officer Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development shared some ideas of collaboration: **a formal fishery policy at regional level and a regional platform.** We should work step by step: i) share our knowledge; ii) share our capacity (human resources through national and/or regional scope); iii) share our technology and we should work bilaterally and regionally.

Mr. Pattabhi Rama Rao, Group Director, Ocean Observations, Modelling and Data Assimilation Group, Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) highlighted the fact there is no regional platform, which is necessary to progress, as we do have individual capacity but we need to bring them together. It is important to prioritize the capacity rather than the nation because we do have different policies. He suggested **to assess the readiness and availability of such data on information.** We do have multi-stakeholders in the blue economy and the fishery sectors and they may have different policies to share such information. **A platform can be useful to gather these policies and define different guidelines based on data policies on regional basis.** As other speakers mentioned, **starting with bilateral cooperation is key to participate in the data and knowledge sharing.**

Dr. (Mrs) Hélène Djoufkit, Research Director of the AFD highlighted three main takeaways, thanks to this serie of workshops: We were able to address the (1) **development aspect** of the Indo-Pacific, and not the diplomatic aspect, which is regularly the case in France, and to put the development agenda up. All the speakers and the organizers (AFD and The Bridge Tank) know each other better. (2) **For being able to tackle cooperation, knowing better the partners from research, policy making and private sector is key.** There is a lot of research existing at national level. What would be key? (3) **It would be interesting in digging further research, being able to empower and push policy dialogue at national, regional and even at local levels.** The research should not be disconnected from projects.

Dr. Joël Ruet, President, The Bridge Tank concluded by saying that our conversations have converged to **a desire from some institutes to have the conversation going,** by the policy makers, the economic and bilateral organizations in a practical manner. With some institutes, we have emerged to the idea of a sort of platform, a network will be there. Dr. Arnab Das from the **Maritime Research Center** is encouraging and is willing to offer an organization, which means a sustainable work. We produced a first draft of an **issue brief,** on how should be the contours of this platform or group of discussion. This third workshop have given us foot for thought, this is why we will revised the issue brief based on the third workshop's outcomes and we will share it with all the participants.

Mr. Jacky Amprou, Regional Director for South-Asia, AFD concluded **the serie of three workshops has demonstrated AFD partnerships**, between regional and headquarter offices at the AFD, between team France from embassies and private sectors, and between research institutes, think tanks and local partners. As it has been highlighted several times, **the development aspect of blue economy is a priority for AFD in the region**, as part of the French Indo-Pacific strategy. It is in the AFD mandate to contribute to biodiversity protection and to support sustainable economic sectors. **The economic and social aspects** have been mentioned quite often during this serie of workshops and **need to be part of the solutions the AFD's design and implement**. These three workshops able us to **understand better the different stakes in the region**. Not only the AFD, but also the French team can added value in the region and play an important role in the blue economy sector. It was crucial for the AFD to need and meet local actors and we hope it will be interested for them to meet us and what the French know how can offer. **It is a demonstration of how actors from different parts of the world can get inspired by each other**. The AFD is looking forward where this initiative goes and we will build from knowledge we learned from this exercise.