

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON ENHANCING POLICIES AND COUNTERMEASURES AGAINST IUU FISHING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Current policy actions and implementation activities to combat IUU fishing

Bangkok, Thailand

14-16 October 2026

Registration, licensing and fishing restrictions



Vessel registration

Maritime and Port Authority Brunei Darussalam (MPABD) registers fishing vessels under the 2011 regulations, mandated by the Merchant Shipping Order, 2002.

Fishing-gear licensing

The Department of Fisheries (DOF) issues and authorises fishing-gear licences under the Fisheries Act (Chapter 61). All fishing gear is licensed in support of sustainable fishing.

Fishing restrictions

2000

Moratorium on new commercial bottom trawler licences in Zone 1.

2002

Mesh-size regulations enforced for existing commercial trawlers.

2009

Explosives and poison prohibited.

2015

Shark ban imposed.

2026

Lobster and crab catch-size restrictions, including the egg-bearers.

Fishing zones and habitat protection



200 nm

Exclusive Economic Zone

5 zones

Fishing zones redelineated in 2024

20%

National fisheries management area covered by MPAs

Resource management

Zonation manage overfishing, resource distribution and safety at sea. Marine protected areas (MPAs) protect habitats and nursery grounds.

Artificial reefs in Zone 1 (0-7 nm)

1,700

Units deployed in 2025

>200

Units planned for 2026

Reefs help deter illegal trawling while providing habitat for marine species.

Existing fisheries legislation



Fisheries Act (Chapter 61)

Principal domestic fisheries law covering licensing, offences, penalties, enforcement powers and presumptions.

Fishery Limits Act (Chapter 130)

Establishes Brunei Darussalam's Exclusive Economic Zone of 200 nautical miles.

Subsidiary regulations

Regulations for fish culture farms, fish processing establishments and fish landing complexes.

Fisheries Act review



01

IUU fishing threat

DOF is reviewing the Fisheries Act (Chapter 61) to recognise IUU fishing as a threat to the local fisheries economy and sustainability.

02

NPOA and PSMA

Expecting amendments would facilitate review of the 2011 National Plan of Action (NPOA) and execution of obligations under the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) which Brunei intends to accede.

03

Roles and authority

To confirm agency roles and designated powers.

Institutional coordination



Joint EEZ patrols

Regular sea patrols involve eight agencies and units:

Department of Fisheries (DoF)

Maritime and Port Authority Brunei Darussalam (MPABD)

Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF)

Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF)

Royal Customs and Excise Department (RCED)

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

Department of Immigration

Weights and Measures Unit (WMU)

National legal framework review

Involves DOF, AGC mainly and other relevant agencies, depending on the subject provisions.

International Agreement

Working groups assess the articles. The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement ratification process involved DOF, AGC, the Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation (DEPR), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

MCS and PSMA implementation progress



AIS

All commercial fishing vessels equipped with Automatic Identification System transponders in 2026.

PSMA preparation

DOF is the national focal point. Brunei intends to accede and is reviewing the legal framework and engaging MPABD on institutional arrangements.

Training

Delegates sent to training courses, workshops and conferences offered by organisations such as SEAFDEC, ASEAN-JICA and FAO.

FAO support

Early discussions on short-term advisory support aim to identify priority actions and lay the groundwork for long-term capacity development.

Traceability and labour



Catch certificate

DOF manually issues catch certificates for documentation and traceability.

Digital transition

A web-based data-entry platform and business intelligence dashboards are under development to monitor fish catch in Brunei.

Fishing-vessel workers

Policies for workers on fishing vessels are under review.

Challenges and operational gaps

01

Manpower and capacity

Few patrol vessels and high EEZ monitoring costs limit coverage. Patrols cannot cover every area, making violations difficult to encounter. Skilled port and fishing-vessel inspectors are limited.

02

Data and technology

Monitoring depends on AIS. Hence, no real-time vessel data and location monitoring.

03

Artisanal fisheries

High no. of boats, dispersed fishing areas and multiple landing sites complicate monitoring. Tracking devices are costly. Resources for regular checks of fishing activities and catches are limited.

National priorities and way forward



National priorities

Review the national fisheries legal framework.

Review the 2011 NPOA-IUU and policies for fishing vessels and their workers.

Support needs

Build capacity to produce more skilled officers in fisheries law, port and fishing-vessel inspection, and monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS).

WAY FORWARD

Brunei intends to expedite the national fisheries legal framework review in order to establish a solid groundwork for enhancing its current policies.

Thank you



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