Policy Actions and Implementation Activities to Combat IUU Fishing in Thailand

Thailand's Experience, Achievements and Lessons Learned

Department of Fisheries
Thailand

Presentation Outline

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES FOR A HEALTHY OCEAN
AND A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

1 **Introduction: Thailand' Fisheries and IUU Fishing Context**

Overview of Thailand's fisheries sector, key issues, and IUU fishing context

2 **National Policy and Legal Framework**

Key policies, laws, and institutional arrangements

3 **MCS (Monitoring Control and Surveillance)**

Systems and tools for effective monitoring, control, and surveillance

4 **Fleets and Fisheries Resources Management**

Fleet structure, management measures, and sustainable use of resources

5 **Traceability and catch certification**

From boat to market: ensuring legal and traceable seafood

6 **Law enforcement**

Inspections, compliance, and legal actions

7 **Major Implementation Challenges and Operational Gaps**

Key constraints and areas for improvement

8 **National Priorities, Support Needs, and Proposed Way Forward**

Strategic priorities, needed support, and next steps

CLEAN OCEAN
LEGAL FISHERIES
THRIVING COMMUNITIES

1. Introduction: Thailand' Fisheries and IUU Fishing Context

Total marine capture fisheries

(2025, latest available)

1.21 million tons

(Source: Department of Fisheries)

Exports (2025)

Volume of **1,670.68 thousand tons**

Valued at **223.12 billion baht**

(Source: Department of Fisheries)

Registered fishing vessels (2026, 13 July)

8,693 commercial fishing vessels

43,149 artisanal fishing vessels

(Source: Marine Department)

Key Fishery Export Products

1. Canned tuna

2. Canned Dog and Cat Food

3. Live, Fresh, Chilled and Frozen Shrimp

Fishing Licenses (2026, 30 June)

8,104 commercial fishing vessels

887 artisanal fishing vessels

(Source: Department of Fisheries)

2. National Policy and Legal Framework

A comprehensive framework for sustainable fisheries and the prevention of IUU fishing

1 Key national instrument

1. Legal Framework

Reyal Ordinance on Fisheries
B.E. 2558 (2025) and amendment

Labour Protection in Fishery Work Act (2019)

Ministerial Regulation Concerning Labour Protection in Sea Fishery Work, (2022)

3 International commitment

PSMA
(Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing)

RFMOs (IOTC, SIOFA)
Active participation and compliance with regional fisheries management organizations

2 National planning

2.1 National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (NPOA-IUU)

2.2 National Fisheries Management Policy and Plan (2023–2027)

Inland Fisheries Development Policy

Marine Fisheries Development Policy in Thai Waters

Policy on the Promotion, Development and Resolution of Issues Related to Fisheries Outside Thai Waters

Aquaculture Development Policy

Fisheries-Related Industry Development Policy

Thailand's Fisheries Policy and Management Plan 2023 – 2027

Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security, Economic Growth and Ocean Health

"Healthy aquatic resources • Sustainable use • Prosperous coastal communities"

Department of Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
Thailand

5 Key Policy Areas

1 Inland Fisheries Development Policy

- Conserve and restore inland aquatic resources
- Improve management and monitoring systems
- Support community-based fisheries and local livelihoods
- Promote sustainable inland aquaculture

2 Marine Fisheries Development Policy in Thai Waters

- Ensure sustainable use of marine living resources
- Strengthen monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS)
- Improve the livelyhood coastal and fishing communities
- Protect marine ecosystems and biodiversity

3 Policy on the Promotion, Development and Resolution of Issues Related to Fisheries Outside Thai Waters

- Expand international cooperation and partnerships
- Support Thai fishing vessel
- Address IUU fishing and related issues
- Enhance participation in RFMOs and global forums

4 Aquaculture Development Policy

- Increase productivity and efficiency
- Promote green and climate-resilient aquaculture
- Ensure food safety and quality
- Support farmers and value chain development

5 Fisheries-Related Industry Development Policy

- Add value to fisheries products
- Develop processing, logistics and cold chain
- Promote innovation and technology
- Strengthen competitiveness and access to global markets

Together for Sustainable Fisheries and a Resilient Future

International Instruments relevant to prevention, deterrence and elimination of IUU fishing in Thailand

1 UNCLOS

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

2 Compliance Agreement

The Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement)

3 UNFSA

Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA)

4 PSMA

Port State Measure Agreement (PSMA)

5 CCRF

Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)

6 IPOA – IUU

International Plan of Action on Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA – IUU)

7 RPOA – IUU

Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Region (RPOA – IUU)

8 IPOA – SHARKS

International Plan of Action on Conservation of Shark (IPOA – SHARKS)

9 IPOA – CAPACITY

International Plan of Action on Management of Fishing Capacity (IPOA – CAPACITY)

10 IPOA – SEABIRDS

International Plan of Action on Conservation of Seabird in Long-line Fishing (IPOA – SEABIRDS)

11 IOTC

Conservation and Management Measures for the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

12 SIOFA

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

13 CBD

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

14 CITES

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Sustainable Fisheries • Healthy Oceans • Prosperous Thailand

3. Monitoring Control and Surveillance: MCS

Strengthening sustainable fisheries through effective Monitoring Control and Surveillance

1 Monitoring

Collect and analyze fishing information for informed decision-making

- No of Vessels
- Fishing effort
- Area of Fishing Operation
- Catch
- Species Composition
- MSY/TAC

Agencies

- Department of Fisheries
- Marine Department (MD)
- Department of Marine and Coastal Resources

2 Control

Establish and implement rules and measures to manage fisheries

Law and Regulations

Registrations/ License

Spatial Control

- Fishing Area
- Seasonal Closed Area

Technical Control

- Fishing Gear
- Mesh size

Agencies

- Department of Fisheries
- Marine Department (MD)
- Department of Marine and Coastal Resources

3 Surveillance

Monitor and enforce compliance at sea and onshore

Electronic Tracking

- VMS/AIS
- ERS/EM

Port inspection

- PIPO Center
- Landing Inspect
- FIT

Sea inspection

- Joint Patrols and interdiction

Agencies

- Department of Fisheries (DOF)
- Royal Thai Navy (RTN)
- Department of Marine and Coastal Resources
- Marine Police (MP)
- THAI - MECC
- Royal Thai Police (RTP)

Surveillance activities and control tools of Thai fishing vessels in Thai waters

	Port out	At sea	Port in
Authority	**Port inspection** ▸ **PIPO Center**[1] • Inspect base on Risk Assessment • Cooperation with related agencies **Electronic surveillance** ▸ **FMC:** Monitoring by VMS and identify target	**Sea inspection** ▸ **DOF Fishery Patrol:** Inspection area: Coastal area < 30 nm ▸ **THAI-MECC:** Inspection area > 30 nm from coastal area – EEZ ▸ **Marine Police:** Inspection area: Coastal area < 30 nm **Electronic surveillance** ▸ **FMC:** Monitoring by VMS and identify target	**Port inspection** ▸ **PIPO Center**[1] • Inspect base on Risk Assessment • Cooperation with related agencies **Electronic surveillance** ▸ **FMC:** Monitoring by VMS and identify target
Tools	Vessel Monitoring System (VMIS) / VMS Tracking Software	Sea Patrol Air surveillance	Fishing logbook
Vessels information and behavior analysis tools	Commom Risk Assessment Behavior Analysis Software Fishing Info System		

1) PIPO Center : Department of Fishery, Marine Department, Royal Thai Navy, Department of Labour Protection and Welfare and Department of Employment

Surveillance activities and control tools of Thai overseas fishing vessel and transshipment

	Port out	While fishing / transshipment	Port in
Authority	**DOF overseas fishing license** • Transshipment plan • Request for observer **RFMOs List** • Coastal State fishing license **Document checking** • Physical checking: vessel, fishing gears & fishing equipment, surveillance equipment • PIPO co-team inspectors • DOF • Immigration Office • Department of Labour Protection and Welfare • Marine Department • Department of Employment • FMC	**VMS, AIS (if applicable) EM, ERS, IOTC e-PSM (if relevant)** **Human observer** • FMC (Overseas division) 	 **Fish inspection** **Port inspection** • PIPO co-team inspectors • DOF • Immigration Office • Department of Labour Protection and Welfare • Marine Department • Customs (if relevant) • FMC
Tools		**VMS / AIS (Tracking Software)** **ERS** **EM (Snapshot, Polling photo)**	
Vessels information and behavior analysis tools		**Fishing Info System** **Observer onboard**	**Video recorder**

ERS/EM

Electronic Reporting System / Electronic Monitoring

1 VMS/AIS

Track vessel route and position of vessels

2 CCTV

Record activities related to fishing and transshipment at all time

3 Drum-rotation sensors

Monitor fishing gear usage to indicate fishing activity

4 Hatch sensors

Monitoring usage hatch and fish hold

5 ERS

- E-Logbook
- Request and report transshipment

6 Observer report application

(In development)

- VMS tracking software
- EM analysis software
  - Server storage for CCTV
- Pre-common risk assessment
- Fishing Info
- E-PSM

4. Fleets and Fisheries Resources Management

MD: Strengthening Fishing Vessel Registration and Control

Previous limitation

MD did not have the legal authority to reject fishing vessel registration applications under the previous legal framework.

Key reforms

1 Vessel registration control

Authority to control fishing vessel registrations.

2 Change of vessel purpose

Authority to control changes in a vessel's registered purpose.

3 Registration revocation

Authority to revoke vessel registrations.

4 Unique Vessel Identification (UVI)

Authority to identify vessels through unique identification.

5 Interagency coordination

Closer coordination between MD and DOF.

Marine Department (MD)

Department of Fisheries (DOF)

4. Fleets and Fisheries Resources Management

DOF: From Open Access to Limited Access

Royal Ordinance on Fisheries B.E. 2558 (2025) and amendment

Open Access (Previous)

- No limit on the number of vessels and fishing effort.
- No specific control on fishing gears and catch limit.
- Risk of overfishing and depletion of fishery resources.

Limited Access (Under the new legal framework)

- Fisheries management under a limited-access system.
- Fishing licenses with specific conditions.
- Aligned with fishing capacity and the natural productivity of aquatic resources.

Key reforms

1 Established a limited-access fisheries management system

Control the number of fishing vessels and fishing effort to ensure sustainable use of fisheries resources.

2 Introduced fishing licenses specifying:

- Authorized number and types of fishing gear.

- Maximum allowable catch or permitted fishing period.

3 Required fishing authorizations to be aligned with fishing capacity and the natural productivity of aquatic resources.

5. Traceability and catch certification

The 2015 Traceability System – Key Deficiencies

The traceability system in place in 2015 had the following deficiencies:

1. No comprehensive laws and regulations
2. No information system or electronic tracking infrastructure was in place.
3. Lack of sufficient inter agency and international coordination
4. Insufficient control of Thai-Flagged vessels
5. No clear regulations and schemes guiding control of foreign-flagged vessels, no comprehensive inspections.

Thailand's Current Fisheries Traceability System

Established in 2015 and fully operational in 2017

Fishing vessel → Landing → Processing → Export → Catch Certification

Key Features

1 Legal Framework

- Established under the Royal Ordinance on Fisheries B.E. 2558 (2015).
- Accession to the PSMA.

2 Electronic Traceability Systems

- PSMI-linked and Processing Statement System (PPS) for imported fish.
- Thai Flagged Catch Certification System (TF) for Thai-flagged fishing vessels.

3 Coordinated efforts

- Among the DOF, MD and Thai Customs Department (TCD).
- Supported by fully electronic databases and management systems.

Department of Fisheries (DOF) → Marine Department (MD) → Thai Customs Department (TCD)

6. Law enforcement

Strengthening the Legal Framework for Fisheries Law Enforcement

Before 2015 | Challenges and Limitations

1. **Incomplete legal framework**
   Did not cover all fishery-related misconducts under international agreements.

2. **Low penalties**
   Not strong enough to deter wrongdoing (the laws were updated).

3. **Slow legal processes**
   No administrative sanctions.

4. **Reluctance to enforce**
   Officials lacked experience and there were no measures to expedite legal processes.

Since 2015 | Reforms and Improvements

1. **Comprehensive legal framework**
   Covers a wider range of fishery misconducts and enables higher penalties. Administrative sanctions complement the criminal process. The Royal Ordinance on Fisheries is now one of the most comprehensive fishery laws in the world.

2. **Administrative sanctions**
   Introduce administrative sanctions to complement criminal processes, enabling faster and more effective enforcement.

3. **Improved inter-agency cooperation**
   Guidelines and awareness raising have strengthened coordination and significantly sped up the time for cases to reach courts and verdicts.

Department of Fisheries (DOF)
Marine Department (MD)
Royal Thai Navy
Thai Customs Department (TCD)

4. **Training and political support**
   Helped officers do their jobs properly and gain more confidence in enforcing the laws.

7. Major Implementation Challenges and Operational Gaps

NATIONAL LEVEL

Electronic Monitoring for Commercial Fishing Vessels (10–29.99 GT)

1 IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

- The DOF, in collaboration with SEAFDEC, is studying suitable vessel monitoring technologies for commercial fishing vessels of less than 30 GT.
- Introduce VMS for commercial fishing vessels of 10–29.99 GT to strengthen monitoring and surveillance.

2 KEY CHALLENGES

- Budget constraints and the need for reliable, cost-effective, and technically appropriate monitoring technology.

3 WAY FORWARD

- Identify suitable technologies and develop a cost-effective, practical, and sustainable implementation approach.

7. Major Implementation Challenges and Operational Gaps

At the regional level: Regional Cooperation and Information Sharing

1 LEGAL AND REGULATORY INFORMATION

- Exchange information on fisheries laws and regulations.
- Share enforcement measures to support regional understanding and cooperation.

2 FISHING VESSEL INFORMATION AND RISK INDICATORS

- Share fishing vessel information.
- Exchange information on suspicious activities and risk indicators associated with potential IUU fishing.

3 INFORMATION-SHARING TOOL: AN-IUU INTERACTIVE PLATFORM

- Facilitate information exchange among participating countries.
- Support access to and sharing of relevant information on vessels and suspected IUU fishing activities.
- Strengthen regional coordination and cooperation to combat IUU fishing.

8. National Priorities, Support Needs, and Proposed Way Forward

1 Appropriate Technology

Explore suitable vessel monitoring technologies for commercial fishing vessels below 30 GT that are practical for operational use and compatible with budget constraints, building on ongoing collaboration with SEAFDEC.

2 Technical and Financial Support

Promote cooperation in technical expertise, capacity building, and cost-reduction approaches to support the implementation of vessel monitoring systems.

3 Regional Information Sharing

Enhance the exchange of fishing vessel information, fisheries laws and regulations, and risk indicators through regional cooperation mechanisms and the AN-IUU Interactive Platform.

Sustainable Fisheries for Brighter Tomorrow