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# Brunei Darussalam



Regional Workshop on Information Exchange on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia, 24 – 26 February 2026 Bangkok, Thailand



## Current Situation, issues and challenges in the implementation of MCS in your country

### Introduction

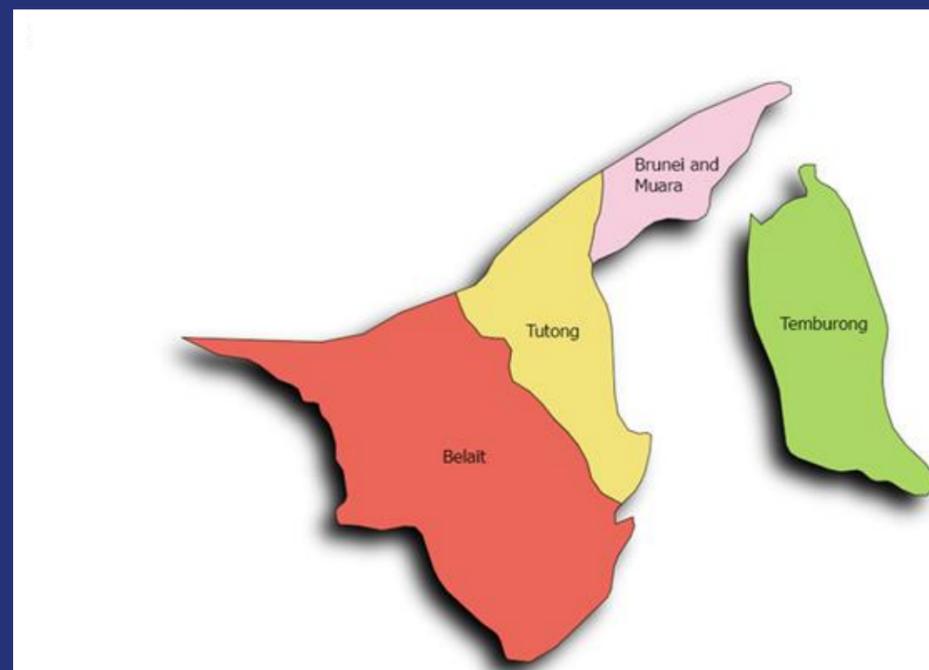
Brunei has integrated MCS as a core component of its fisheries management framework under the **NPOA-IUU**, aligned with the Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) against IUU fishing. Key elements include:

- a) Licensing and registration of fishing vessels and gear, including small-scale fishers;
- b) **MCS operations** through coordinated patrols by the Marine Police, Royal Brunei Navy, and aerial surveillance;
- c) Enforcement of fishing zones and gear restrictions;
- d) Steps toward electronic tracking and catch documentation systems (like AIS and e-catch systems) to strengthen traceability;
- e) Joint enforcement and cooperation among agencies — Customs, Ports, Police, and Fisheries — to improve surveillance reach.



## Current Situation, issues and challenges in the implementation of MCS in your country

### 1. Limited Surveillance Coverage and Assets



- Brunei's naval and enforcement assets (patrol boats, aircraft, technology) are adequate only for **moderate coverage** of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), with offshore waters remaining **vulnerable to encroachments** by foreign vessels.
- The **ability to monitor high-seas operations or distant relative waters is limited**, as small number of Brunei's flagged fleet operate beyond territorial waters, and advanced surveillance infrastructure is still developing.



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## 2. Human and Technical Capacity Constraints



- Formal **capacity building and specialized training remain key gaps** as effective MCS requires specialized skills in data collection, interpretation, enforcement coordination, and legal follow-through.
- There are **insufficient observer personnel**, especially for domestic fishing vessels.



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### 3. Regional Coordination and Data Sharing



- At the regional level, coordination with neighbors depends on voluntary information sharing and diplomatic frameworks, which may not always be timely or comprehensive.
- Sharing detailed maritime domain awareness data can be sensitive — especially if it relates to defense or national security — which may limit openness.



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## 4. Insufficient Technology Adoption



- Although there are efforts to adopt **AIS tracking and electronic catch documentation systems nationally**, full implementation and integration with enforcement operations are still in progress.
- Advanced technologies (satellite remote sensing, automated detection systems, electronic monitoring) are **not yet deployed widely** due to cost, training needs, and infrastructure gaps.

### Current Situation, issues and challenges in the implementation of PSM in your country

Brunei Darussalam is not yet a signatory to the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), but would always aligns with PSMA procedures and protocols where necessary, particularly in efforts to combat IUU fishing.

At present, there have been **no requests** from foreign fishing vessels to land or transship their catch at Brunei's fishing ports.





## Law and regulations to support the implementation of MCS activities

The **Fisheries Act, Chapter 61** is the principal legislative instrument governing fisheries in Brunei and provides the backbone for MCS activities in the sector:

### Key provisions relevant to MCS

1. **Administration and powers** — establishes the Director of Fisheries and authorised officers to enforce the Fisheries Act.
2. **Licensing and regulation** — sets requirements for registrations of fishing vessels and licensing of fishing gears, marine culture systems, and other fisheries activities, which underpin effort control and monitoring.
3. **Conservation and management measures** — allows the regulation of fishing methods, designation of fishing zones, and prohibited areas — tools central to controlling fishing effort and patterns.
4. **Inspection, boarding and search powers** — authorised officers, naval officers and police can **stop, board, search and examine fishing vessels** and related gear or documentation to enforce compliance with fisheries laws.
5. **Offences and penalties** — the Fisheries Act defines offences (e.g., unlicensed fishing, use of prohibited gears, encroachment into a restricted fishing zone not permitted under the fishing licence.) and enables enforcement action that supports deterrence and compliance which is the core elements of “Control” and “Surveillance.”

### Fisheries (Subsidiary) Regulations

Under the Fisheries Act, several **regulations** help operationalize MCS-related controls:

1. **Fisheries Regulations** — specify restrictions on fishing methods, licensing requirements (e.g., who must be licensed, conditions), reporting and documentation duties, and enforcement processes at fishing landing sites and on vessels.
2. Other **sector-specific regulations** under the Act (e.g., for fish culture farms, fish landing complexes, processing establishments) help manage and monitor activities relevant to surveillance and resource sustainability.

### Brunei Darussalam Fishery Limits Act (Cap. 130)

The **Fishery Limits Act** defines Brunei’s jurisdictional boundaries for fishing activities — essentially the legal basis for where MCS can be conducted:

**Defines territorial/exclusive fishing jurisdiction up to 200 nautical miles (EEZ) from the baselines**, where Brunei has rights to conserve and manage fishery resources.

- **Controls over foreign fishing vessels** — foreign fishing vessels must comply with Brunei’s licensing and conditions to fish within limits, and those that do not can be subject to enforcement action.

The Department of Fisheries works with other agencies such as:

- **Marine Police**
- **Royal Brunei Navy**
- **Royal Brunei Air Force**
- **National Maritime Coordinating Centre**

These inter-agency arrangements are grounded in law and policy to support patrols, aerial surveillance, and joint operations aimed at monitoring foreign and domestic fishing activities.



**Suggested recommendation and support needed at national and regional level**

**A. National-Level Recommendations**

Focus Area	Recommended Actions	Support Needed
<b>Legal &amp; Regulatory Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and amend Fisheries Act and subsidiary regulations</li> <li>• Strengthen penalties and recognise electronic evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal drafting expertise</li> <li>• Technical assistance from FAO/SEAFDEC, etc</li> <li>• Alignment with international instruments (UNCLOS, PSMA, etc)</li> </ul>
<b>Surveillance &amp; Enforcement Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase sea and aerial patrols in EEZ</li> <li>• Apply risk-based surveillance approaches</li> <li>• Enhance satellite-based monitoring tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased national budget allocation</li> <li>• Access to satellite and surveillance technologies</li> <li>• Technical partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resource Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular training for MCS officers on inspection, boarding and evidence handling</li> <li>• Develop certified MCS inspectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAO / SEAFDEC / etc training programmes</li> <li>• Exchange programmes with regional enforcement agencies</li> </ul>
<b>Technology &amp; Data Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate AIS with enforcement operations</li> <li>• Implement electronic catch documentation</li> <li>• Develop digital vessel and licensing databases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT infrastructure investment</li> <li>• System development and cybersecurity support</li> <li>• Technical training</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholder Engagement &amp; Compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness programmes for fishers on MCS rules</li> <li>• Promote co-management and compliance culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach funding</li> <li>• Educational materials and community engagement support</li> </ul>



## Suggested recommendation and support needed at national and regional level

### B. Regional-Level Recommendations

Focus Area	Recommended Actions	Support Needed
<b>Regional Cooperation on IUU Fishing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active participation in ASEAN and RPOA-IUU initiatives</li><li>• Conduct joint patrols and coordinated enforcement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional coordination mechanisms</li><li>• Political and diplomatic support</li></ul>
<b>Information Sharing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actively updating data on suspect vessels in the existing platform.</li><li>• Link national MCS systems with regional databases</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data-sharing agreements</li><li>• Access to regional information exchange platforms.</li></ul>
<b>Regional Capacity Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participate in regional MCS training and exercises</li><li>• Conduct joint inspection simulations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FAO / SEAFDEC / ASEAN funding</li><li>• Regional training centres</li></ul>
<b>Financial &amp; Technical Assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access finance-funded on regional projects</li><li>• Pilot advanced monitoring technologies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International finance support</li><li>• Regional project coordination</li></ul>



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