



Strategic Action Plan for Building International Capacity to Strengthen Fisheries Management and Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

*Implementing Recommendation 6 of the Presidential Task Force on
Combating IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud*

June 2016

Recommendation 6 Working Group: Department of State, Department of Commerce (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security (Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Coast Guard), Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services (Food and Drug Administration), Department of Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.



Introduction

In consultation with relevant government, donor, technical, industry, and non-governmental organizations, and with appropriate public outreach...develop a strategic, coordinated action plan for building capacity to strengthen fisheries management and eliminate IUU fishing.

- Recommendation 6, Presidential Task Force on Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Seafood Fraud: Action Plan for Implementing Task Force Recommendations, 2015¹

This Strategic Action Plan presents a framework for building international capacities to strengthen fisheries management and counter IUU fishing. It was developed by the U.S. Government (USG) to implement Recommendation 6 of the U.S. Presidential Task Force to Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Seafood Fraud (Task Force).² The Task Force was established by Executive Memorandum in 2014 with the recognition that IUU fishing continues to undermine the economic and environmental sustainability of fisheries and fish stocks.

In creating the Task Force, the President directed the USG to develop recommendations for integrated programs that emphasizes areas of greatest need. In March 2015, the Task Force issued 15 recommendations, directing the USG to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud at the international level, strengthen enforcement, expand partnerships with non-federal entities, and increase information available to appropriate government officials on seafood products through additional traceability requirements. Recommendation 6 directs key federal agencies to “coordinate with donors, multilateral institutions, and foreign governments and prioritize building capacity to sustainably manage fisheries and combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud.”

This Plan recognizes that capacity building must focus on systems, organizations, and individuals in order to foster the institutions, technologies, human resources, and political will required to address these complex issues. It takes its structure from an analysis of the drivers behind IUU fishing, which was developed through iterative consultations with stakeholders from government, donor, technical, industry, and non-governmental organizations. It focuses on building international capacity through six broad strategies:

- 1. Enhancing industry and market incentives for self-regulation**
- 2. Fostering greater transparency in fisheries management and supply chains**
- 3. Strengthening fisheries governance and management**
- 4. Building enforcement capabilities and effectiveness**
- 5. Leveraging political will and fostering genuine constituencies**
- 6. Promoting stronger coordination in capacity building**

¹ http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/Portals/33/noaa_taskforce_report_final.pdf

² <http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/RecommendationsandActions/RECOMMENDATION6.aspx>



To implement this Plan, USG agencies have identified specific interventions under each strategy (Annex A). These interventions are based on agency mandates³ and an intention to leverage the efforts of the broader community working on these issues. Recognizing the importance of a coordinated effort by many organizations to achieve the goals of these capacity building strategies, the USG also developed a web-based, interactive inventory of capacity building projects.⁴ We encourage any organization working to strengthen fisheries management and counter IUU fishing to engage in this on-line community as a way of sharing information and strengthening coordination.

Through the implementation of this Strategic Action Plan, the USG aims to play a catalytic role in building international capacities to strengthen fisheries management and eliminate IUU fishing globally, for the benefit of fishers, marine ecosystems, and global food security. In many cases, building these capacities is closely linked to being able to successfully work with other nations in implementing other Task Force recommendations,⁵ as well as enabling the work of other governments and partners around that world who share these aims.

³ Note that some agency mandates address issues that go beyond the focus of the Task Force Action Plan, but may still complement efforts to combat IUU fishing and strengthen fisheries management.

⁴ www.fisheries-capacity-building-inventory.net

⁵ Examples include Recommendation 1 (promote the entry into force and implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement), Recommendation 2 (develop best practices for multilateral monitoring and enforcement tools and promote their adoption in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations), and Recommendations 14 and 15 (develop a risk-based seafood traceability program).



Capacity Building Scope and Priorities

This Plan approaches capacity building comprehensively by considering actions to enhance the institutions needed to strengthen fisheries management and combat IUU fishing. To develop the Plan, a USG Working Group⁶ (Recommendation 6 WG) identified thematic, species-based, and geographic priorities for capacity building efforts, as described below.

Selecting Thematic Priorities

The Recommendation 6 WG analyzed the underlying drivers of IUU fishing to identify thematic priorities for capacity building. Through consultations with stakeholders from government, donor, technical, industry, and non-governmental organizations, the WG developed a conceptual model, which depicts an understanding of the relationships between factors that influence these fishing practices (Figure 1). The model also identifies leverage points for effecting change, which are the basis for the strategies articulated in this Action Plan.

The conceptual model illustrates that the potential for economic gain coupled with a minimal risk of consequences from engaging in illegal behavior are key motivations for actors who engage in IUU fishing. These motivations are further fueled and enabled by high global demand for seafood and ineffective fisheries management arrangements in many areas. Where management arrangements fail to prevent IUU fishing, it is often because they have not created incentives for industry self-regulation or implemented sufficient enforcement and sanctioning actions to deter unlawful behavior.

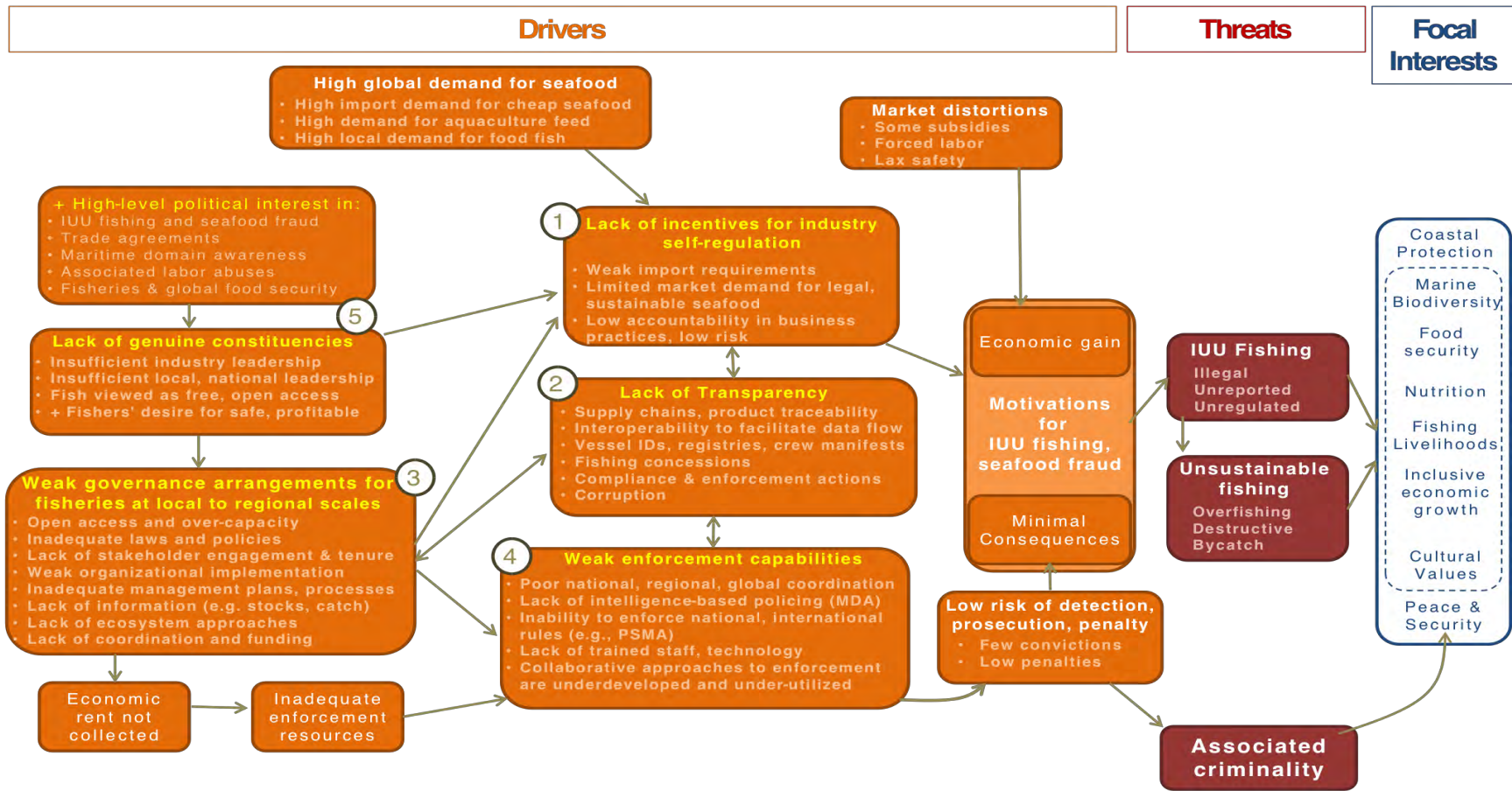
A key barrier to effecting change through either incentives or stronger enforcement is a pervasive lack of transparency throughout the fisheries sector—around harvesting practices, supply chains, legal and management structures, and enforcement activities—that undermines accountability and compliance. The model also highlights the importance of high-level political will and genuine constituencies as key enabling conditions for building capacities to strengthen fisheries management, combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud, and address associated issues, such as labor abuse in fisheries, food security, and maritime domain awareness.

The following sections describe each of these strategies in more detail, emphasizing immediate priorities for USG capacity building efforts, and describing the more comprehensive suite of actions that will ultimately be needed to achieve legal, sustainable fisheries. The Recommendation 6 WG recognizes natural synergies and connections exist between the strategies and that the USG may be uniquely placed to implement some types of interventions compared to other entities.

⁶ Co-led by the Department of State, NOAA, and USAID, the WG includes representation from the U.S. Coast Guard, the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, the Department of Interior, the Food and Drug Administration, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and Customs and Border Protection.



Figure 1. Simplified conceptual model of IUU fishing and its contribution to unsustainable resource exploitation, with leverage points for effecting change.



Leverage points for affecting change

- 1. Industry & market incentives:** Promote greater industry self-regulation of seafood legality and sustainability
- 2. Transparency:** Foster a transparent flow of fisheries-related information to improve management, enforcement, and business operations
- 3. Governance and management:** Strengthen fisheries governance to enable sustainable management and address IUU fishing
- 4. Enforcement:** Strengthen monitoring, control, and surveillance and legal frameworks to enhance detection and sanctioning of IUU fishing
- 5. Political Will and constituencies:** Build and leverage support for fisheries management and actions to combat IUU fishing



Selecting Priority Species

In 2015, a USG Working Group convened to implement the Task Force recommendations on traceability (Recommendations 14/15)⁷ developed a list of species and species groups that will be part of the first phase of a seafood traceability program:

- Abalone
- Atlantic cod
- Blue crab
- Dolphinfish
- Grouper
- King crab (red)
- Pacific cod
- Red snapper
- Sea cucumber
- Sharks
- Shrimp
- Swordfish
- Albacore tuna
- Bigeye tuna
- Skipjack tuna
- Yellowfin tuna

As appropriate, this Action Plan draws on the Recommendation 14 list to prioritize capacity building efforts.

Selecting Priority Geographies

The pervasive nature of IUU fishing and the ability for operators to shift location are a challenge to setting static geographic priorities for capacity building. Recognizing this limitation, the Recommendation 6 WG identified geographic priorities linked as appropriate to the six strategies that structure this Plan based on the following policy considerations:

- *Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA)*: The PSMA is an important global agreement for combating IUU fishing and the USG is particularly interested in capacity building efforts that support countries that have joined or would like to join the Agreement.
- *Contribution to the U.S. Market*: The United States is a large global market for seafood and imports over 90% of its domestic consumption.⁸ Recognizing the Task Force goal of preventing illegal seafood from entering U.S. commerce, regions that supply the U.S. market are key geographies for work to strengthen transparency and management.
- *Biodiversity and local food security*: Areas where poor fishing practices threaten significant marine biodiversity or the food security and livelihoods of vulnerable, local populations are key geographic priorities for capacity building.
- *Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Partners*: The Trans-Pacific Partnership and other existing FTAs contain commitments for parties to effectively enforce environmental and labor laws, including laws related to sustainable fisheries management and combating IUU fishing, and forced labor conditions.

⁷ <http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/RecommendationsandActions/RECOMMENDATION1415.aspx>

⁸ A significant portion of this product consists of fish harvested by U.S.-flagged vessels in U.S. waters, exported for processing, and reimported into the U.S. market.



As our partners in these agreements have beneficial access to the U.S. market and have agreed to take certain actions to support the sustainable management of fisheries, we will prioritize capacity building to assist our trading partners in meeting their environmental commitments—both existing and future—including through the environmental cooperation mechanisms associated with the FTAs themselves.

- *Shared Management through Regional Fisheries Management Organizations/ Arrangements (RFMO/As)*: The USG cooperates with other countries in the international conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks through membership in RFMO/As. As appropriate, we will prioritize assistance to these partners to help ensure the sustainability of shared transboundary resources.
- *Political Will*: An overarching consideration in prioritizing capacity building efforts is whether high-level support to address fisheries issues already exists, or whether it can be developed using diplomacy or other approaches.



Strategy 1. Industry and Market Incentives: Promote greater industry self-regulation of seafood legality and sustainability

Building capacities to combat IUU fishing and strengthen fisheries management requires a collaborative effort between industry, government, and the broader community of non-governmental and research partners. Some industry leaders already verify or enhance the legality and sustainability of their products with traceability systems, audited certification programs, use of risk-based analyses, or fishery improvement projects. However, this type of pro-active self-regulation is not the norm, and relies on collaboration with government and other groups to be effective. More commonly, global seafood trade involves complex, opaque supply chains, which limits reliable information about the legality and sustainability of seafood products, and the working conditions of fishers.

Developing incentives for greater industry engagement in fisheries management and enforcement complements and strengthens the other strategies identified by this Action Plan. There are a variety of potential regulatory, economic, social, and technological incentives that can facilitate greater initiative across various sectors of the industry in promoting legality, ecological sustainability, and decent working conditions. These may include: government policies and regulations, demonstrations of reduced business costs or reputational risks, certification programs or protocols aimed at influencing purchasing decisions, use of technological innovations that reduce the cost of electronic traceability, and investment arrangements that enable or reward sustainable practices.

Some of these initiatives may be best suited for private sector or non-governmental entities. In other areas, the USG may play a facilitative role. The USG sees particular opportunities for building capacities to enhance the incentives for self-regulation in addressing IUU fishing and promoting sustainable fisheries management in the following ways:

1.1 Support capacities needed to meet international trade requirements. Seafood is the world's most traded commodity, valued at over \$130 billion annually. To access lucrative international markets, businesses must comply with requirements designed to detect and eliminate illegal and fraudulent products from trade. The USG will collaborate with industry and other governments to build capacities to effectively detect illegal products and remove them from international commerce, while incentivizing traceable, verified legal trade. The USG will work with countries that are significant seafood exporters to strengthen capacities for identifying the legality of exported products (Strategy 3), and with countries that are significant seafood importers to help prevent illegal products from being diverted between markets (Strategy 5). The USG will engage industry partners in capacity building activities to:



- 1. Build the capacities of producers, particularly small-scale fishers, to meet traceability requirements.** Under Task Force Recommendations 14/15,⁹ the USG is developing a seafood traceability program that requires industry to provide information tracking seafood products from harvest or production to entry into U.S. commerce. The USG will work with industry partners to develop the capacities needed to comply with these new requirements. A particular focus will be given to small-scale producers, who may have reduced resources and technical capacities for meeting the new requirements.
- 2. Pilot seafood supply chain verification technologies and systems.** Action Plan Recommendation 14/15 calls for the development of a “Trusted Trader” program,¹⁰ which would potentially facilitate seafood trade flows as a valuable outcome of the new traceability program. Establishing and securing a verifiable seafood supply chain while maintaining efficient flow of trade is a primary goal of the Trusted Trader program and a good industry practice. The USG will explore opportunities to collaborate in piloting technologies and systems to secure a seafood supply chain and enable auditing and verification procedures.

1.2 Collaborate on investment strategies that transform fishing practices to enhance sustainability and livelihoods. The World Bank estimates that over US\$50 billion are lost annually to poor fisheries management.¹¹ This economic potential has piqued the interest of socially-minded investors and conservation groups who are looking to invest in innovative approaches to improving the sustainability and profitability of fisheries, as well as leveraging investments that can scale established approaches across broader geographic areas. The USG will encourage technically sound investments by helping to support promising approaches, connecting private capital to viable investment activities, and mitigating investment risks by providing technical advice and credit guarantees.

⁹ <http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/RecommendationsandActions/RECOMMENDATION1415.aspx>

¹⁰ <http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/RecommendationsandActions/RECOMMENDATION1415/CommerceTrustedTraderProgram.aspx>

¹¹ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/environment/brief/the-sunken-billions-revisited-progress-and-challenges-in-global-marine-fisheries>



Strategy 2. Transparency: Foster a transparent flow of fisheries-related information to improve management, enforcement, and business operations

Efforts to combat IUU fishing and strengthen fisheries governance have been inhibited by a lack of transparency around fishing activities. Accessible and reliable information on fishing vessels, labor conditions, catch, management arrangements, enforcement actions, and supply chains are critical for informed business decisions, sustainable management, and effective enforcement (also see Strategies 1, 3, and 4).

Recognizing transparency as an essential component of most approaches to combating IUU fishing and achieving sustainable fisheries, the USG sees particular opportunities for engagement in the following areas:

2.1 Promote systems for identifying vessels and their fishing authorizations. Accurate, accessible information about fishing vessels is foundational for combating IUU fishing, strengthening fisheries management, and countering transnational criminal activities. Fishing vessels often lack a unique vessel identifier, such as an IMO number, because they are not subject to the same requirements as vessels engaged in commercial shipping. Without unique identifiers, it is difficult to track fishing vessels through changes in name, ownership, and flag. Those engaged in IUU fishing and transnational criminal activities can exploit this lack of information. Unique vessel identifiers strengthen efforts to register vessels and to collect information about vessel ownership, history, and fishing authorizations, which specify where and how the vessel can engage in fishing activities. Systems that include these types of information strengthen enforcement, particularly by facilitating information exchange between jurisdictions. The USG will continue working in multiple forums to promote the use of unique vessel identifiers, national vessel registration systems, and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization’s (FAO) Global Record of Fishing, Refrigerated Transport, and Supply Vessels.

2.2 Promote the use of electronic, inter-operable catch documentation and traceability systems¹² for business operations and fisheries management. Where systems exist for tracing seafood from harvest through the supply chain, they are often proprietary, paper-based, or both. As a result, some information that could improve fish stock assessments, inform business purchasing decisions, or verify the legality of harvest is unavailable in a timely and reliable manner. The traceability infrastructure developing to meet trade and seafood safety requirements provides opportunities to simultaneously improve the information available for business decisions, fisheries management, and, where there are requirements for labor-related information, preventing labor abuses at sea. Systems are needed that create inter-operability between different types of catch documentation and traceability (CDT) data, including a standardized format for sharing information, so that it can be collected and disseminated efficiently and appropriately for a variety of purposes at different geographic scales.

¹² In this context, “system” is not meant to refer to formal catch documentation schemes (CDS), but rather more generally to technologies and independent systems for monitoring and documenting catch and tracing the movement of seafood into the market that can provide information for multiple purposes.



Recognizing the need to better develop the tools, capacities, and networks to bring traceability information and analysis to bear in decision-making, the USG will partner to promote the development of electronic, inter-operable CDT systems and to demonstrate their application in strengthening fisheries management, business operations, and efforts to combat labor abuse on fishing vessels.

2.3 Facilitate public access to fisheries information to promote stewardship and accountability. When stakeholders can access, use, and strengthen relevant information about fisheries management and enforcement, it builds accountability and promotes shared stewardship. Accurate information about actual and proposed management rules and final enforcement actions should be readily available to the public. This information promotes compliance with management arrangements and creates transparency around how those arrangements are applied and enforced, for example, through the issuance of concessions and access agreements. This enhanced transparency increases public-sector accountability and counters fraud and corruption. The USG will partner to expand access to fisheries information, preferably electronically; support the development of effective mechanisms for reporting fishing violations and related issues, including labor abuses, corruption, or fraud; and build the institutional capacities of stakeholder groups to use this information.



Strategy 3. Governance and Management: Strengthen fisheries governance to enable sustainable management and address IUU fishing

High demand for seafood in the absence of adequate governance and management is driving fishery resource depletion and IUU fishing. Good governance arrangements engage fishers in establishing resource use rules that are consistent with ecosystem productivity and enable on-going sustainable use. They promote compliance with fisheries rules, by establishing incentives for compliance and meaningful sanctions to deter rule-breaking. These governance arrangements are underpinned by good science and information on fisheries resources; laws and policies that provide clear access rules and management authorities; effective engagement by government, non-governmental, industry, and community stakeholders; and adequate legal authorities and sustained funding for fisheries management and enforcement activities.

With these considerations in mind, the United States sees particular opportunities for engagement and collaboration with external partners on issues relating to broader fisheries governance at the local, national and regional levels, as well as the more technical aspects of management.

3.1 Support and strengthen local, national, and regional governance arrangements to enable sustainable fisheries management.

- 1. Continue to play a key role in advancing strong fisheries management measures at Regional Fisheries Management Organizations/Arrangements (RFMO/As):** There is active U.S. engagement in RFMO/As to promote science-based management measures and strong Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) regimes for the joint management of shared fisheries resources with other States. This engagement is a constructive means of strengthening national fishery management frameworks, including advancing requirements for data reporting and establishing and reinforcing fisheries laws and regulations.
- 2. Support the incorporation of contextually-appropriate resource access arrangements into fisheries management:** Approaches such as securing marine tenure¹³ have emerged as important components of strategies for achieving sustainability in fisheries. Appropriate government commitments to incorporating and supporting these approaches—including where fishers have harvesting rights, assigned individually or to a group or community—can be a critical element of building stewardship and incentivizing sustainable utilization of fishery resources. The USG will partner with other governments and organizations to support the development of contextually-appropriate resource use access arrangements, which facilitate equitable and sustainable utilization of fishery resources.

¹³ In this context, tenure refers to how people gain access to fisheries and other natural resources. See FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests and the Technical Guide to Support Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines.



3. **Promote ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management:** Engaging stakeholders in a process of identifying the habitats and other key ecosystem components that underpin fisheries reproduction, and developing conservation and management measures has been demonstrated to strengthen fisheries management and sustainability. The USG will partner with other organizations to provide support, training, and technical assistance to establish the policies and frameworks needed to implement ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management.
4. **Strengthen systems to collect key fisheries data for management and traceability.** The USG will partner to provide technical and other support to promote the use of fisheries data in management frameworks, giving particular priority to:
 - *Fishing vessel registries* – National and/or local registries that enable better estimates of fishing capacity and support traceability of fisheries products by aiding in the identification of seafood harvesters.
 - *Fishing authorizations* – National or local systems for issuing fishing authorizations (e.g., licenses, permits, etc.) linked to relevant vessel registries, enable management of fishing capacity, and help indicate whether harvests were authorized.
 - *Catch reporting requirements* – Requirements for fishers to report their catch, which enables fishery managers to track what fish products are being landed and supports resource assessments and management decisions.

3.2 Strengthen financial resources and structures for fisheries management and enforcement:

Under-investment in fisheries management is a key barrier to effectively achieving sustainable fisheries management and combating IUU fishing. There is strong evidence that investments in fisheries management produce financial benefits in excess of management costs. Recognizing the importance of establishing on-going government budgets for fisheries management and enforcement, the USG will provide technical assistance to enhance public financing arrangements; these efforts will complement other approaches to sustainable financing (see Strategy 1.2).

3.3 Strengthen capacities for the collection and analysis of fisheries data. Robust and reliable fisheries science and data collection are critical to effective fisheries management, including joint management of regionally shared resources. The USG will partner to facilitate exchange between fisheries scientists and support capacities to collect and analyze fisheries-independent and fisheries-dependent data to develop information on stock status and management effectiveness.

3.4 Enhance the capacities of stakeholders engaged in fisheries management: Strong networks, social capital, and leadership among stakeholders involved in fisheries are known to influence the success and durability of management arrangements that achieve sustainability and deter IUU fishing. Recognizing the importance of capable, engaged stakeholders in designing and implementing effective fisheries management, the USG will partner to strengthen stakeholder capacities and networks.



Strategy 4. Enforcement: Strengthen Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance and legal frameworks to enhance detection and sanctioning

Effective monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) of fishing activities that results in detection and sanctioning of IUU fishing activities and its products, is an essential component for deterring IUU fishing and promoting legal, sustainable harvests. MCS at sea and dockside, and the successful prosecution of fishery cases requires a range of capabilities related to intelligence-gathering, maritime domain awareness, coordinating across government agencies and national borders, and adequate resources, including trained enforcement personnel and prosecutors. It also requires a legal framework that establishes meaningful sanctions for those who have engaged in IUU fishing and deters those who would engage in such activities.

The USG sees particular opportunities to build and strengthen global enforcement capacities in the following ways:

4.1 Enable effective implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA). With the PSMA's entrance into force on June 5, 2016, it is critical that parties to the Agreement, as well as parties wishing to join, have the capabilities to implement PSMA requirements. This includes having operational capabilities and a legal framework that authorizes enforcement personnel to implement PSMA provisions. The USG will collaborate with FAO and other organizations to support countries in developing operational capabilities to implement PSMA requirements in their designated ports, in particular through training inspection personnel.

4.2 Support the development and strengthening of legal frameworks for fisheries enforcement. The establishment, development, and maintenance of effective and accountable legal and enforcement mechanisms within a robust legal framework are central to fisheries governance and fully implementing measures to combat IUU fishing. These mechanisms include fisheries laws and regulations, investigative and prosecutorial capabilities, and adjudicatory processes. The USG will help build and strengthen such legal frameworks in the following areas:

- 1. Train fisheries enforcement personnel.** The USG will partner to train fisheries enforcement personnel on the foundation and understanding of the legal tools available to monitor and enforce national fisheries regulations.
- 2. Assist in the development of legislation.** The USG will assist in the development of contextually-appropriate model legislation, which countries can utilize when developing effective fisheries enforcement systems.
- 3. Build the capacities of prosecutors and judges.** The USG will work to build the capacities of prosecutors and judges to understand and address fisheries issues, including by: (1) enhancing training of prosecutors to build general legal capacities; (2) involving judges in fisheries enforcement and IUU fishing workshops, as appropriate, to raise their awareness of IUU fishing and fisheries management issues; and (3) continuing to develop and lead training on fisheries enforcement and prosecution.



4.3 Leverage maritime domain awareness (MDA) capabilities to combat IUU fishing. MDA is “the effective understanding of anything associated with the maritime domain that could affect the security, safety, economy or environment...”¹⁴ MDA provides a comprehensive approach to the development of information networks based on shared goals to fight common problems. The USG will leverage MDA efforts to combat IUU fishing, in line with the Implementation Plan developed by Task Force Recommendation 3 to Enhance IUU Fishing Threat Analysis and Monitoring.¹⁵ This Plan aims to assist the international fisheries enforcement community in combating IUU fishing more effectively by raising awareness of existing enterprise-level tools¹⁶ and services, identifying new information sharing mechanisms, and determining related information sharing needs and gaps.

4.4 Strengthen local, national, and regional enforcement efforts. Effective enforcement and MCS is a critical component of fisheries management.¹⁷ Many countries need capacity building assistance to accomplish effective enforcement and MCS. Coordinated capacity building efforts should support the optimal deployment of personnel, operational assets (e.g. vehicles, ships, and planes), funding, and training to help overcome resource limitations. The USG will help strengthen law enforcement efforts by:

1. **Leverage the Safe Ocean Network initiative.** The Safe Ocean Network initiative seeks to build a global community to strengthen all aspects of the fight against illegal fishing including detection, enforcement, and prosecution. In implementing the Safe Ocean Network, the focus is to increase collaboration between countries and organizations combatting illegal fishing around the world, enhance information sharing, and promote coordinated action at sea and in port.
2. **Partner to build the capacities of local, national, and regional fisheries enforcement entities.** Fisheries enforcement entities must have the capacity to respond to allegations, detect violations, gather evidence, and support effective prosecutions in order to successfully address IUU fishing. The USG will work with enforcement entities to build individual and institutional capacities that will help strengthen local, national, and regional enforcement efforts.

4.5 Coordinate with international fisheries enforcement organizations. It is important that the United States remains aware of, and coordinated at a global level on, international fisheries enforcement efforts, including through information sharing. To maintain such awareness and coordination, the USG will leverage U.S. membership and engagement in the International Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (IMCS) Network as well as INTERPOL and its Fisheries Crime Working Group (FCWG).

¹⁴This definition comes from the National Maritime Domain Awareness Plan, page 2.

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/national_maritime_domain_awareness_plan.pdf.

¹⁵ <http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/RecommendationsandActions/RECOMMENDATION3.aspx>

¹⁶ Enterprise is defined here as organization or mission.

¹⁷ Management arrangements involve communities, industry, and other nongovernmental groups, as appropriate.



Strategy 5. Political Will: Build and leverage support for strong fisheries governance and actions to combat IUU fishing.

Strong interest and engagement in addressing IUU fishing and strengthening fisheries governance among multiple stakeholders – including civil society stakeholders, industry, and government – is an important enabler of the other strategies in this Action Plan. Political will at high levels of government is critical if capacity building interventions are to be successful at improving a country’s fisheries governance and enforcement capacities. The presence of genuine constituencies that are aware of, and maintain a stake in, addressing IUU fishing and sustainable fisheries management are necessary for collaborative approaches to addressing these issues and help to foster the necessary political will for government actions.

The USG is uniquely placed to build and enhance high-level political interest in fisheries through its diplomatic and development initiatives. This work benefits and reinforces USG priorities related to trade, maritime security, and food security.¹⁸ The USG will work to build political will and foster constituencies for strong fisheries governance, particularly in the following ways:

5.1 Raise IUU fishing and sustainable fisheries as critical issues at various high-level venues and stakeholder forums. Building upon current high-level global engagement on IUU fishing helps ensure the issue remains at the forefront of global discussions and can be leveraged to support and finance sustainable fisheries. The USG, through diplomatic and development engagement, will continue to regularly advance counter-IUU fishing measures, such as the PSMA, at various global venues such as the FAO and RFMO/As meetings, as well as maintain it as a priority in diplomatic and trade relations with other countries. The USG will also continue to engage at stakeholder forums as appropriate to keep the issue in the public eye and enhance relationships with nongovernmental entities.

5.2 Enhance and support public-private partnerships. Building capacities to address IUU fishing and achieve sustainable fisheries management requires action and collaboration by a wide variety of entities outside of the USG. The USG will explore options for engaging in public-private partnerships with private sector and non-governmental organizations working on these issues to share knowledge and experience toward creating more stable seafood markets for mutual benefit.

¹⁸ See, for example, Recommendations 3, 4, and 7.
<http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/RecommendationsandActions.aspx>



5.3 Leverage trade agreements and collective economic power to combat IUU fishing. Seafood is the most widely traded global food commodity, and the U.S. has Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with a number of top fishing and seafood importing and exporting nations. Trade policy and FTAs can be important tools in the fight against IUU fishing and forced labor conditions within the seafood supply chain by including enforceable commitments requiring parties to effectively enforce their labor and environmental laws, including fisheries laws.¹⁹ More recent FTAs and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) include even more specific fisheries obligations, including obligations to combat IUU fishing and prohibit certain harmful fisheries subsidies, and discourage importation of goods produced by forced labor. The USG will continue to use trade policy and FTAs to include strong and enforceable commitments on fisheries issues, including IUU fishing, and support implementation of those commitments through the environmental and labor cooperation mechanisms associated with FTAs. More broadly, the United States will engage trading partners that are key seafood importers and exporters on issues such as seafood traceability and detection of illegal seafood products to help ensure IUU products are eliminated from international trade, and to promote legal seafood trade.

5.4 Promote good fisheries governance as it relates to maritime security and socioeconomic stability. IUU fishing and unsustainable exploitation of fisheries resources can impact a nation's economy, food security, and socioeconomic stability, and affect a nation's maritime security. Recognizing these important overlapping issues, the USG will emphasize these synergies in its diplomatic relations and continue to support and engage in government initiatives that work at the cross-section of these issues such as: the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership program, the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative, and the work of the Security Governance Initiative in Ghana.

¹⁹ For more details on FTAs, please see Task Force Recommendation 4.
<http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/RecommendationsandActions/RECOMMENDATION4.aspx>.



Strategy 6. Coordination: Promote information exchange and coordination among capacity building efforts

Building the capacities needed to counter IUU fishing and strengthen fisheries management will require the unique contributions of many groups, including governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academia, and other donors. Enhanced information sharing and coordination among groups working on these issues strengthens awareness and better leverages the unique expertise and capacities of different organizations. With these considerations in mind, the USG sees particular opportunities for enhancing coordination among USG agencies and other partners as follows:

6.1 Host an interactive online inventory of capacity building projects. The Recommendation 6 WG has developed an interactive, online web inventory²⁰ for sharing information about capacity building projects. Any organization can register to input information about its activities or search the online database by geography or theme to find out about projects building capacities to counter IUU fishing or strengthen fisheries management. Project information can be set to different sharing levels, varying from full public access to restricted sharing within the community of registered organizations. We encourage all groups working in this space to share information about their work and to use the portal to learn more about other work in their areas of interest.

6.2 Enhance coordination at the regional and country-level. Most capacity building work to combat IUU fishing and strengthen fisheries management happens within the regions and countries where fish is harvested. The USG aims to strengthen coordination “on the ground” by:

1. **Establish ongoing processes to enhance coordination among USG agencies:** Such coordination will improve interagency awareness of and collaboration on relevant capacity building activities. The Department of State will facilitate these processes through their regional environmental hubs²¹ and embassy posts in countries with significant USG presence working on fisheries issues²² by designating an IUU/fisheries Point of Contact (POC) for each relevant region and country. This POC will:
 - Maintain awareness of capacity building-related activities by USG staff in the relevant region or country.

²⁰ www.fisheries-capacity-building-inventory.net. This URL redirects to the USAID portal that hosts the inventory.

²¹ The Department of State’s regional environmental hubs address transboundary environmental issues through regional cooperation and are located in: Western Africa (Ghana), Eastern Africa (Ethiopia), Southern Africa (Botswana), South East Asia (Thailand), Pacific (Fiji), Baltic & Nordic (Denmark), Central & Eastern Europe, the Balkans & the Caucasus (Hungary), Middle East (Jordan), Central Asia (Kazakhstan), South Asia (Nepal), Central America and the Caribbean (Costa Rica), South America (Peru).

²² These additional countries and regions have USAID missions with relevant portfolios and merit country or regional-level POCs due to stronger USG activity on fisheries issues: Indonesia, Philippines, Ghana, Senegal, Asia Regional, Caribbean Regional, and Central American Regional.



- USG personnel conducting capacity building efforts with a partner nation should make every effort to coordinate with the appropriate points of contact to ensure maximum visibility by in-country staff.
 - Facilitate regular discussions among relevant USG agencies working in-country or region about fisheries-related developments and activities that are being implemented or planned.
 - As appropriate to the country or region, the POC may facilitate such discussion through the identification or convening of a working group.²³ The working group may be specific to fisheries issues, or they may be broader groups focused on maritime security, wildlife crime, or environmental issues, which periodically give an explicit focus to fisheries.
 - Keep the online inventory (Strategy 6.1) updated for USG activities occurring within the country or region.
2. **Enhancing coordination among other groups:** To the extent possible, State POCs will also facilitate information exchange between other major groups working on activities to combat IUU fishing and strengthen fisheries management within the country or region and relevant USG agencies.

6.3 Enhance information exchange on capacity building strategies at a global scale.

1. **Host a quarterly call of USG staff working on counter-IUU fishing and fisheries management issues globally:** The Recommendation 6 co-lead agencies—State, NOAA, and USAID—will alternate hosting a quarterly conference call among USG staff globally to share information on capacity building efforts to combat IUU fishing and strengthening fisheries management.
2. **Identify a mechanism for enhancing coordination among the NOC Committee and the related Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking and the President’s Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Counter Human Trafficking:** NOC Committee staff will consider objectives and mechanisms to facilitate coordination with other Presidential initiatives working on related issues.
3. **Host periodic learning exchanges with other groups working on relevant capacity building issues:** The Recommendation 6 co-leads, in collaboration with the Recommendation 13 WG and other partners, will host periodic learning exchanges in conjunction with an appropriate conference or event.

²³ Working groups should include, as engaged in activities in the country or region, staff from: USAID missions/country offices, NOAA, Navy liaisons and DOD Combatant Commands, the DOJ Resident Legal Advisor or program (Office of Prosecutorial Development Assistance or International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program) staff, USFWS-Office of Law Enforcement, and the DOI International Training and Assistance Program.



Next Steps

Capacity building efforts will require an adaptive approach to reflect the changing nature of global fisheries issues. To that end, the Recommendation 6 WG agencies will review progress in implementing the Plan and update the activities detailed in Annex A every two years.

Recognizing that the capacity building strategies highlighted in this Plan amplify implementation of other Task Force recommendations, the WG will also report emergent capacity building issues and needs to the NOC Committee as warranted by events.