

M/s Omega Fishmeal & Oil Pvt. Ltd Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, India started the “Fishery Improvement Project” (FIP) for Indian oil sardine along the coastal waters of Maharashtra, & Goa in 2017 and are the project coordinator of this FIP. The project’s main focus is to improve the living conditions and efficiency of fishermen, better fisheries management and governance together with environmental responsibility and transparent traceability of fishery products throughout the supply chain.

This is the first FIP in India that applies to the latest version of MarinTrust Standard, which is an internationally accepted standard designed specifically for marine ingredient producers sourcing from responsible fisheries according to UN FAO requirements. This FIP will ensure the effective management of sardine & mackerel resources for the development of fisheries for maximum sustainability.

The Fishery Improvement Program (FIP) is a joint effort of the Government agencies and the private parties involved in the fisheries sector. The private fishermen’s associations include Ratnadurga Macchimar Society, Ratnagiri, Adarsh Macchimar Society, Ratnagiri, ,Vasco Fishing Boat Owners Marketing Co-operative Society Ltd, Goa and Zuari Marketing Fisheries Co-operative Society Ltd, Goa, The Govt, agencies involved in the FIP are Directorate of Fisheries, Goa, Department of Fisheries, Ratnagiri, College of Fisheries, Ratnagiri, Central Marine Fisheries research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi, Central Institute of fisheries Technology (CIFT) Kochi, & The Marine Products Export Development Authority, (MPEDA)

The main goals of FIP are:

1. Fishery products must come from responsible fisheries sources and can be traceable throughout the supply chain.
2. Supply chain must be transparent. Related information shall be clearly communicated among international buyers and all stakeholders.
3. The implementation of effective fisheries management that prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing and overfishing as well as the protection of the wider marine ecosystem.
4. The development of a credible monitoring and traceability system that reduces IUU fishing and protects those that respect the rules.

We had six thematic workshops with members of the FIP stakeholder committee members in Panaji on 18th February 2018 on the topics such as Stock Assessment, Harvest Strategy, Monitoring Control and Surveillance, Ecosystem Impacts, FAP, Endangered, Threatened and Protected Species (ETP) etc. The workshop witnessed active deliberations on each topic. Later on, the Action Plan

got approved by the stakeholders and sent to the Marin Trust for their approval along with Form 3A and other documents.

In order to comply with the approved Action Plan, the third workshop was organized at Ratnagiri on 3rd July 2019, on Stock Assessment of Indian oil sardine with the support of College of Fisheries Ratnagiri. Based on the outcome of that workshop, we entered into a MOU with Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli, Maharashtra for undertaking a research project on Stock Assessment of Indian Oil Sardine & Indian Mackerel in 2020. Dr. M M Shirdhankar, Professor & Principal, Diploma in Fisheries Engineering is the chief investigator of the project. The two year project will be over by July 2022.

On 19th May 2022, we organized the fourth workshop (International Workshop) on “Reference Points and Harvest Strategy for the sardine stocks” in online & offline mode at Ratnagiri. The workshop was well attended by the stakeholders and active deliberations took place on the topic. A detailed report on the workshop with photographs will be available on our website soon.

Action is in full swing to complete the rest of the work in the approved Action Plan within the stipulated time frame.