

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

This one-pager is part of a broader project¹ examining how gender considerations are reflected in fisheries governance. A systematic content analysis of fisheries governance documents from 20 countries assessed how gender is addressed across policy language, institutional arrangements, objectives, and strategies. Project findings are intended to strengthen recognition of women's contributions across the sector and support equitable access to marine resources, share of benefits, and participation in decision-making.

Each one-pager summarizes key findings for a focal country, analysing fisheries governance documents as a collective policy bundle to identify system-level patterns. The analysis draws on documents collected up to July 2025, and the findings inform both this one-pager and the governance section of the corresponding country fact sheet.²

Taken individually or collectively across the 20 countries, these one-pagers aim to inform decision-makers, civil society actors, funders, and researchers by providing insights on gender considerations in fisheries governance.

Area of Analysis	Country Findings
Total number of documents analysed	63
Number of documents with women/gender terms only	4
Number of documents with she/her pronouns only	1
Number of documents with both terms and pronouns	0
<i>Qualitative assessments are based only on documents with women/gender terms (4), she/her pronouns (1), or both (0).</i>	
Structural integration <i>Low / Medium / High</i>	High: Gender considerations are embedded within fisheries governance through statutory requirements and related provisions supporting women's participation in advisory and management structures.
Objective of gender integration <i>Ecological / Economic / Social</i>	Economic and Social (primary): Policies promote employment opportunities in the sector and support the strengthening of women's groups and roles within fishing communities. Ecological (secondary): Women's participation in advisory councils and fisheries management areas contributes to co-management and fisheries governance.
Approach to gender integration <i>Reach / Benefit / Empower / Transform</i>	Benefit and Empower: Gender integration is operationalized through support for women's groups, improved access to resources, and representation in fisheries governance bodies.

Methodology Snapshot

Qualitative Assessment Framework

Qualitative assessments reflect how gender considerations are articulated within the reviewed documents. They are derived from content analysis of texts referencing women, gender, or feminine pronouns. The categories below outline the criteria guiding this framework.

Structural integration (extent of institutional embedding)

- *Low* – Gender considerations appear in governance texts without shaping policy goals or structures.
- *Medium* – Gender considerations inform policy goals or institutional commitments without binding mandates.
- *High* – Gender considerations are embedded in binding mandates, quantified targets, or formal representation.

Objective of gender integration (intended aim)

- *Ecological* – Linked to sustainability or natural resources management effectiveness.
- *Economic* – Linked to livelihoods, income generation, or value chains.
- *Social* – Linked to equity, participation, or women’s rights.

Approach to gender integration (mode of operationalization)

- *Reach* – Women are recognized, referenced, or included in consultation or governance processes.
- *Benefit* – Targeted resources improve women’s access or material outcomes.
- *Empower* – Women hold decision-making representation or influence within governance processes.
- *Transform* – Institutional or structural reforms address underlying norms, power imbalances, or inequalities.

Governance Document Selection Criteria and Content Search

Document selection criteria were established to identify fisheries-specific governance instruments addressing:

- fisheries management and regulations;
- fisheries production systems and value chains, including pre-harvest, harvest, processing, and trade activities;
- broader development and economic strategies explicitly linked to fisheries-sector activities.

Key gender-related terms – including “gender,” “women,” “girls,” “mothers,” “she,” and “her” – were systematically searched across the selected documents and analysed in context. For full methodology, see the accompanying metadata³ document.

Selected Fisheries Governance Documents for Analysis

Documents and key attributes are compiled in a project database⁴, with hyperlinks to original text where available.

Amendment to Issuance of Certificates of Competence for Skippers (Local Fishing Board) Regulations 2019.

Mud Crab Fishery Management Regulations, 2024.

Amendment to the Fishing Operations Regulations of 1996.

Departure and Arrival of Mechanized Fishing Boats Regulations, No. 1 of 2023.

Recreational Fishing Management Regulations, 2023.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Amendment) Act, No. 27 of 2023.

Amendment to Implementation of Satellite based Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for Fishing Boats Operating in High Seas Regulations 2015.

Regulations amending The Fish and Fishery Products, Export, Import and Re-export Management Regulations, 2017.

Sri Lanka National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

Amendment of the Fishing Operations Regulations of 1996.

Issuance of Certificates of Competence for Skippers (Local Fishing Board) Regulations, 2019.

Regulations on the Minimum Standards for the Citizens of Sri Lanka engaged in Fishing Operations in Foreign Flagged Fishing Vessels.

National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy.

Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) (Amendment) Act, No. 1 of 2018.

National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Amendment) Act, No. 11 of 2017.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Statute of Western Province.

Prohibition of Catching Fish Species Thambuwa (cephalopholis sonnerati) Regulations 2017.

Prohibition of Use of Spears in Fishing Operations Regulations No. 1 of 2017.

Fish and Fishery Products, Export, Import and Re-export Management Regulations, 2017.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Amendment) Act, No. 2 of 2016.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Amendment) Act, No. 2 of 2015.

Fishing Gear Marking Regulations No. 1 of 2015.

Implementation of Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Regulations 2015.

National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (SLNPOA-IUU).

Regulations made to amend the High Seas Fishing Operations Regulations No. 1 of 2014.

Shark Fisheries Management (High seas) Regulations, 2015.

Shark Fisheries Management Regulations, 2015.

Implementation of Satellite based Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for Fishing Boats Operating in High Seas Regulations 2015.

Minimum Standards for the Citizens of Sri Lanka engaged in Fishing Operations in Foreign Flagged Fishing Vessels Regulations of 2015.

Fish Catch Data Collection Regulations, 2014.

High Seas Fishing Operations Regulations No. 1 of 2014.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Amendment) Act, No. 35 of 2013.

Fishing (Import and Export) Regulations 2010 (Amendment), 2013.

Fish Catch Data Collection Regulations, 2012.

Fisheries Management (Collection of dead shells) Regulations, 2012.

Fishing Operations Regulations of catching Chank or Lobster in the South Coast (Hambantota District) Fisheries Management Area, 2012.

Fishing Operations Regulations of Catching Live Ornamental Fish or Lobster in the South Coast (Matara and Galle District) Fisheries Management Area, 2012.

Prohibition of Catching Thresher Shark Regulations 2012.

Regulations amending Landing of Fish Regulations, 1997.

Fisheries Sector Development Strategy 2010-2013

Fishing (Import and Export) Regulations, 2010.

Declaration of Prohibited Time for Lobster Fishing Operation.

National Policy and Strategy on Cleaner Production for Fisheries Sector.

Ten Year Development Policy Framework of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Sector 2007-2016.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Amendment) Act, No. 22 of 2006.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Amendment) Act, No. 4 of 2004.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Amendment) Act, No. 4 of 2000.

Lobster Fisheries Management Regulations, 2000.

National Institute of Fisheries and Nautical Engineering Act, No. 36 of 1999.

Export and Import of Live Fish Regulations, 1998.

Fish Processing Establishments Regulations, 1998.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act 1996, No. 2 of 1996.

Fishing Operations Regulations of 1996.

Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) (Amendment) Act, No. 37 of 1982.

Foreign Fishing Boat Regulations, 1981.

Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) Act, No. 59 of 1979.

Spiny Lobster and Prawn (Shrimp) Regulations, 1973.

Fisheries Ordinance (Cap. 212).

Chank Fishery Act.

Fisheries Ordinance (Cap. 240) to amend and consolidate the Law Relating to Fisheries.

Fisheries Regulations, 1941.

Pearl Fisheries Ordinance.

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The opinions, findings, and conclusions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the organisations listed above.



¹ Project website – <https://oceanrisk.earth/fact-sheets/>

² Country fact sheet – <https://oceanrisk.earth/fact-sheets/#the-democratic-socialist-republic-of-sri-lanka>

³ Metadata document – <https://oceanrisk.earth/fact-sheets/#supplementary-material-for-country-fact-sheets>

⁴ Zenodo database – Cutting, A., Wabnitz, C.C.C., Woodhead, A.J., & Norström, A. (2025). Database of Fisheries Governance Documents for Gender Equity Analysis [Data set]. Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15098509>