Research Article

Blue Economy Governance: Coordination, Collaboration, and Integration

SIMEC Bulletin
2024, Vol. 1(2): 4-6

ISSN: 3006-211X (online); 3006-2101 (print)
DOI: 10.71391/sbv1i2_0002
https://simecinstitute.edu.bd/simec-bulletin

Ratan Kumar Roy, PhD*

SIMEC Institute of Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh

How to cite: Roy, R.K. (2024). Blue Economy Governance: Coordination, Collaboration, and Integration. SIMEC Bulletin, 1(2), 4-6. doi: 10.71391/sbv1i2_0002

The World Bank (2017) defines blue economy as "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem". The notion of blue economy gained traction following the 2012 RIO+20 United Nations (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development (Bir et al., 2020). During that same period of time, Bangladesh had settled its maritime boundary with Myanmar (2012) and India (2014), which prompted its government to pay more focused attention to the country's blue economy sector (Hussain et al., 2018; Bari, 2017). Since then, the Government of Bangladesh has taken on several initiatives to advance Bangladesh's Blue Economy, including the establishment of the Blue Economy Cell (BEC) in 2017, but it has not been able to adopt a comprehensive ocean governance approach. The blue economy field appears disorganized and non-cohesive due to inefficient management measures, lack of resource persons, lack of planning, inadequate technology, insufficient knowledge, climate change, pollution, and many more issues (Bir et al., 2020).

Bangladesh's 200 nautical miles of Exclusive Economic Zone in the Bay of Bengal and a coastline of 580 km indicate a huge potential for the blue economy sector. About 30 million people in Bangladesh depend on the ocean or ocean-related work for their livelihoods (Bhuiyan et al., 2022), so sustainable utilization and management of marine resources will not only boost the economy but also socially and environmentally protect coastal communities.

However, the blue economy sector is so vast that its management and development present numerous challenges. Hussain et al., (2018) emphasized that coordination is crucial for the development of marine resources in Bangladesh, as it helps bridge gaps between public and private partners in sectors like trade, shipping, tourism, oil and gas exploration, fish preservation, ecosystem services, and social welfare. They also argued that inter-ministerial coordination is vital for addressing developmental issues related to the blue economy. Unfortunately, in Bangladesh, various ministries are responsible for various blue economy sectors. There is a

* Director, SIMEC Institute of Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Email: royratan.sanjib@gmail.com

lack of collaboration, coordination, and integration among government, industry, private sectors, and relevant stakeholders, which is perpetuating Bangladesh's inadequate ocean governance.

According to Sarkar et al. (2018), ocean governance is "managing and using the ocean and resources in a way that keeps the ocean healthy, productive, safe, secure, and resilient". In terms of private sector engagement, Bangladesh is still lagging behind while the need to create a positive atmosphere across sectors, institutes, and communities is crucial.

There are several examples of good ocean governance and successful blue economies. The island continent of Australia is one such example.

In 2019, the Government of Australia facilitated the initiation of the Blue Economy CRC, which has collaborated with 45 industries, government, academia, and research partners from 10 countries with expertise in aquaculture, marine renewable energy, maritime engineering, environmental assessments, and policy and regulation. Its 2021 Strategic Plan Report emphasized heavily on seeking new partnerships and collaboration opportunities. The Blue Economy CRC's collaborative approach and industry-focused research and training have facilitated innovation, commercial viability, and sustainability in offshore developments. It has successfully increased offshore aquaculture production, offshore renewable energy generation, sustainability, and community trust in Blue Economy industries, regional economic growth, and workforce for the future. The activities of the Blue Economy CRC have paved the path for holistic ocean governance in Australia.

Bangladesh Planning Commission's report titled Promoting Sustainable Blue Economy in Bangladesh Through Sustainable Blue Bond (2021), ocean-related income contributed US$6.2 billion in GVA (Gross Value Added) to the Bangladesh economy in 2015, which was approximately 3% of GDP. During the same period, the Australian blue economy had a GVA of $71.4 billion, contributing 4.3% of GDP, and by 2025, it is projected to contribute $100 billion to Australia's economy (Brewster, 2019). Following Blue Economy CRC's example, Bangladesh should prioritize coordination and collaboration.

Taking the current scenario into consideration, firstly, it is imperative to suggest that Bangladesh establish a Blue Economy Authority (BEA) that will not be under the jurisdiction of any particular ministry. This authority should oversee and manage all Blue Economy activities across ministries, industries, and coastal communities. The authority should consist of relevant stakeholders, government officials, academic professionals, researchers, and industry professionals. The authority should produce and update knowledge, ensure smooth coordination across relevant ministries and organizations, and implement adequate policies. Second, it should pave the way for stronger and more sustainable public-private partnerships and facilitate international collaboration. Forming strategic partnerships with overseas organizations for blue economy will allow BEA to learn from successful approaches and formulate strategies to address challenges and sustain blue growth.

References

Bir, J., Golder, M. R., Al Zobayer, M. F., Das, K. K., Zaman, S., Chowdhury,

L. M. D., & Paul, P. C. (2020). A review on blue economy in Bangladesh: prospects and challenges. *Int. J. Nat. Soc. Sci, 7, 21-29.*

Brewster, D. (2019). The Blue Economy: Australia' Opportunities in the Indian Ocean Maritime Realm. In Australia's second sea: Facing our multipolar future in the Indian Ocean (pp. 44–47). Australian Strategic Policy Institute. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep23065.9

Bhuyan, M. S., Islam, M. N., Ali, M. M., Rashed-Un Nabi, M., Alam, M. W., Das, M., ... & Mustary, S. (2022). Blue Economy Prospects, Opportunities, Challenges, Risks, and Sustainable Development Pathways in Bangladesh. *Global Blue Economy, 147-194.*

Hussain, M. G., Failler, P., Karim, A. A., & Alam, M. K. (2018). Major opportunities of blue economy development in Bangladesh. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region, 14(1), 88-99.*

Sarker, S., Bhuyan, M. A. H., Rahman, M. M., Islam, M. A., Hossain, M. S., Basak, S. C., & Islam, M. M. (2018). From science to action: Exploring the potentials of Blue Economy for enhancing economic sustainability in Bangladesh. *Ocean & Coastal Management, 157, 180-192.*

World Bank, & United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2017). The potential of the blue economy: increasing long-term benefits of the sustainable use of marine resources for small island developing states and coastal least developed countries.