



USAID Fish Right Program Newsletter

1 message

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**USAID Fish Right
Month of the Ocean Recap**
MAY 2022

Every May in the Philippines, we observe Month of the Ocean and Farmer's and Fisherfolk's Month to celebrate our life-giving oceans and highlight the importance of conserving and protecting them. This year's observance was anchored in the United Nations #OceanDecade message "**The Science We Need for the Ocean We Want,**" which amplifies science-based solutions for sustainable fisheries and ocean management and conservation. This issue features how Fish Right celebrated the month.

USAID joins DA-BFAR, BDO and BSP to kick off national rollout of financial learning module for fishers



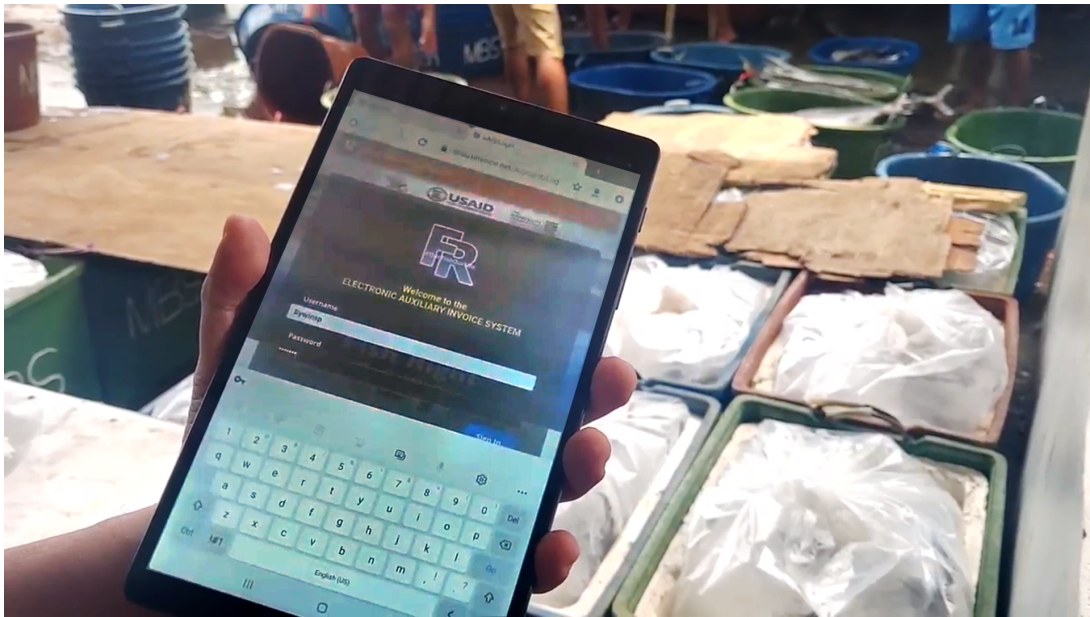
Fish N' Learn, a financial education module for fishers, has started rolling out nationwide. The rollout was formally launched on May 23, in time for Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month and Month of the Ocean. The USAID Fish Right Program joined module development partners DA-BFAR, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), and BDO Foundation as they celebrated the launch with a ceremonial turnover of over 100 copies of the module to DA-BFAR's regional and provincial offices.

Fish N' LEarn consists of materials and guides for a tabletop game that simulates the life events and financial decisions of fishers. It is being deployed nationwide through DA-BFAR's technical and regular training programs, which benefit approximately 25,000 fishers a year.

Fish Right facilitated DA-BFAR's partnership with BSP and BDO, and assisted in the design of Fish N' LEarn. The Program has so far used this learning module in financial literacy trainings conducted by its partner NGOs and microfinance institutions for fishers in its sites in the Calamianes, South Negros, and Visayan Sea.

So what? Small-scale fishers, who make up more than 25 percent of the poor in the Philippines, are highly vulnerable to climate impacts and other environmental, economic and social disruptions. Driven by negative life events and debts, many fishers sell their catch to trader-lenders at low prices, and some even risk illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in order to meet their basic needs and other expenses. Fish N' LEarn is designed to assist fishers with improving their household financial practices, which – along with community savings groups, livelihood supplementation, and access to financial services and markets – can help them break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and natural resource depletion.

Fish Right begins field testing digital system to improve fisheries monitoring



Fish Right, in collaboration with local partners in South Negros, has started field testing an electronic auxiliary invoicing (eAI) system for fish and other fisheries products. Developed by Fish Right through its partner Silliman University, the eAI system relies on an extensive fisheries database to help confirm fisheries registrations and identify regulated fisheries products. The field testing found that the system is more effective than manual data entry in terms of both speed and accuracy.

Philippine law requires every local government to issue an auxiliary invoice for fish and other fisheries products to be transported from their area of jurisdiction. The invoice contains data that are useful for monitoring and traceability, such as the species or kind of fisheries product invoiced, its quantity, and the name of the fishing boat that caught or carried it. Fish Right hopes that the eAI system can help fisheries enforcers with market and landing denial operations, and that commercial and municipal fishers will support and participate in its utilization as part of a collaborative effort to address IUU fishing.

So what? Reducing IUU fishing is a challenge that calls for innovative solutions like eAI, which streamlines the management of general fisheries data and data on harvests of regulated species and other products specifically tagged for monitoring.

BFAR, Fish Right celebrate NegOc fishers on Fisherfolk's Day



Long-time partners DA-BFAR and USAID, through the Fish Right Program, co-produced an early celebration of

Fisherfolk's Day on May 25 in EB Magalona, Negros Occidental. The event served as an opportunity to recognize the fisherfolk of Region 6, and an occasion to disseminate information on the fisheries programs and activities of DA-BFAR6 and USAID.

Activities included orientations to DA-BFAR's projects, such as its Fisheries Scholarship Program for high school and college age children of fishers. Fish Right, meanwhile, hosted games that taught participants the basic principles of ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM), sustainable blue swimming crab fisheries, and mangrove ecosystem conservation. Through the participation of the Department of Health and the local government of EB Magalona, more than 100 fishers also received free medical and dental treatment, and wellness services such as haircuts and massages.

The Philippines celebrates Fisherfolk's Day every year on May 31 in conjunction with its annual observance of Month of the Ocean and Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month, both held in May to put a spotlight on the importance of our oceans and the role that farmers and fishers play as key partners to the government in promoting food self-sufficiency and sustainability.

So what? Compliance with agreed rules on sustainable fisheries is seen to increase in communities where fishers understand and are empowered to advocate for environmental solutions. Events like Fisherfolk's Day, Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month, and Month of the Ocean are important not only to raise awareness about the need for sustainable fisheries production and consumption, but more importantly, to build channels of support and information on sustainable fishing that will encourage collective action and participation in EAFM actions.

Fish Right's registration caravan rolls through Linapacan



An efficient licensing and registration system for fisherfolk is necessary in developing appropriate fisheries management measures. However, expensive registration fees and inaccessible venues prevent many fishers from participating in the government's call to file their license and register.

On May 18-19, Fish Right deployed registration caravans in Linapacan and Busuanga to make the registration process easier and more accessible to local communities. With support from the local government, the caravans also provided the newly registered fishers with incentives and additional livelihood support to help build appreciation on the importance of licensing and registration. At the end of the two-day long registration caravan, 275 fishers were licensed and registered. **So what?** Maintaining local fishers' data is significant in determining fisheries management measures that should be developed and implemented in a locality to ensure the sustainability and conservation of the finite marine resources.

USAID, BFAR nearly completes preparations for FMA planning



Fisheries Management Areas or FMAs are spatial delineations of Philippine waters to manage fisheries at an appropriate scale. Since 2019 upon the issuance of Fisheries Administrative Order No. 263, USAID through the Fish Right Program has supported Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI Philippines) in the development and implementation of 12 fisheries management areas nationwide to address overfishing, and other concerns in managing fisheries and coastal resources.

In April 28-29 and May 26-27, Fish Right trained fisheries managers from region 7 that form part of FMA 10; and regions 9, 12, and BARMM that comprises FMA 3 on the process of putting together their FMA plan. The workshop included identifying fisheries issues and developing goals and objectives to manage their shared fisheries resources. In the coming months, these trainers will facilitate the putting together key elements for the plan with the FMA management board that includes local government, protected area management boards, and other government agencies. This plan will be the basis for developing fisheries management actions including reference points and harvest control measures of commercially important species in the area. [Read more](#)

So what? Capacitating fisheries managers to plan at an ecosystem scale is critical for a more significant impact on the ecological and human well-being needs of the area. Establishing management measures around ecosystems, instead of local jurisdictions, ensure that marine habitats thrive and are protected from overexploitation and safety nets for people dependent on these resources are put in place.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Major seafood buyers commit to source locally, responsibly





Twelve Philippine seafood companies and brands have demonstrated their commitment to responsible seafood sourcing by adopting and utilizing the Better Seafood Philippine Program's principles of sustainability, legal compliance, traceability, transparency, and social responsibility. This was announced on May 31 at an industry gathering facilitated by DA-BFAR and USAID through their Fish Right Program. As part of their commitment, the companies will also lead and champion the promotion of sustainable seafood in the Philippines.

Speaking at the event, DA Undersecretary Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero urged industry partners to continue developing market-based solutions that will help stakeholders up and down the supply chain improve their bottom line while making sustainable choices for our fisheries, oceans, and planet. Also present at the event were representatives from seafood distributors SeaTrace International and Fishta Seafood, who stressed the importance of responsible, legal and traceable sourcing in protecting the oceans. The lack of transparency in seafood supply chains masks the grim reality that nearly half of the fisheries products sold in the Philippines come from IUU fishing. It is estimated that IUU fishing accounts for about 68.5 billion pesos of fish taken from Philippine waters annually, and unsustainable trade and consumption make the problem even worse by encouraging overfishing and bad fishing practices.


Fish Right provides fishers in its sites with various trainings, including post-harvest, fish processing and financial management, to enable them to maintain product handling, consolidation and processing practices that meet the standards of the seafood market. An implementing partner, the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP), complements this effort by engaging seafood buyers in responsible seafood sourcing to prevent the entry of IUU products into the supply chain.


So what? The Better Seafood Philippines initiative pools resources and investments from different sectors to build up local fisheries and help drive the sustainable seafood agenda in the Philippines. Engaging the private sector towards a transparent and sustainable supply chain is critical to eliminating IUU fishing threats to our fisheries.


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The USAID Fish Right Program is a partnership between the governments of the United States and the Philippines to promote fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation. Fish Right enables sustainable fisheries by reducing threats to biodiversity and improving marine ecosystem governance.

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