

PROJECT PROFILE

Fish Right: Strategic Partnerships to Combat Illegal Fishing and Advance Sustainable Fisheries Management



PROJECT NAME

Fish Right

CLIENT

USAID/Philippines

PRIME CONTRACTOR

University of Rhode Island (URI) Coastal Resources Center

PARTNER ORGANIZATION

Resonance, Path Foundation Philippines Inc., Siliman University, Marine Environment and Resources Foundation, NGOs for Fisheries Reform, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership

COUNTRY

Timor-Leste

TIME PERIOD

Jun. 2015 – Aug. 2020

Challenge

The Philippines is recognized as a global center of marine biodiversity. It is ranked as one of the top fishing countries in the world, with an average of 4 million metric tons of fish caught every year. Fish and fish products provide food and livelihood for millions of Filipinos living in coastal communities.

However, marine biodiversity in the Philippines has come under threat due to destructive and illegal fishing practices. The effects are exacerbated by climate change and the degradation of coral reefs and mangrove ecosystems. The decline of key fish stocks has a significant impact on food security and livelihoods.

Solution

The USAID/Philippines Fish Right program aims to address biodiversity threats, improve marine ecosystem governance, advance sustainable fisheries management, and increase fish biomass in key marine areas in the Philippines. As a partner on Fish Right, Resonance builds strategic partnerships with public and private sector actors to combat illegal fishing and advance sustainable fisheries management.

Our activities include:

- **Mapping Partnership Opportunities and Seafood Value Chains.** Resonance is exploring and designing a range of public-private partnerships to advance sustainable fisheries management in the Philippines. In parallel, we have also conducted in-depth value chain analyses for critical fisheries across three regions of the Philippines to understand how these partnerships might fit within and affect the nation's seafood value chains.
- **Developing Partnerships That Support Fisheries Management Measures.** We are building partnerships that help fishers maintain or grow their incomes even as new measures are put in place to limit pressure on fisheries resources. We are launching partnerships that deploy financial literacy support, conservation enterprise, and microfinance to create new financial safety nets for vulnerable fishers.
- **Collaboration Across the Fisheries Supply Chain.** We are pursuing opportunities to reduce post-harvest loss in key sites to improve the productivity of seafood supply chains, and we are engaging processors and buyers in multi-sectoral collaboration to drive improvement of processing and handling conditions on the ground.
- **Harnessing Technology for Enforcement and Management.** Resonance is exploring a range of innovative technology solutions for sustainable fisheries, including communications platforms to improve coordination for fisheries enforcement and electronic catch documentation and traceability (eCDT) technologies that digitally track fish from point of catch to sale.
- **Deploying Innovative Financing and Business Models.** Resonance is exploring market- and donor-driven financing opportunities to help build resilience by expanding Marine Protected Area (MPA) networks and other marine conservation efforts, as well as to apply value chain financing for sustainable fisheries.
- **Strategy Development.** Resonance is helping Fish Right to craft and implement a proactive communications strategy that promotes and strengthens public-private collaboration for sustainable fisheries management in the Philippines. Resonance is also helping to design and implement a strategy to help Fish Right engage commercial fishers in improved fisheries management.

Key Results

- We identified, refined, and prioritized **eight strategic partnership opportunities** for Fish Right. We have created implementation strategies and are progressing discussions with potential partners to launch each of these partnerships.
- The Visayan Sea blue swimming crab (BSC) fishery yields one of the Philippines' most important seafood exports. The fishery directly employs 8,000 fishermen and accounts for approximately 40 percent of BSC catch in the Philippines, valued at \$30 million per year. Resonance co-designed and launched the BSC partnership between the Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Philippine Association of Crab Processors, Inc., Saravia Blue Crab Inc., Thai Union Group, and Fish Right to improve the management of BSC in the Visayan Sea. The partners – representing government, a major multinational buyer, crab processors, and civil society – aim to upgrade the sustainability of the BSC fishery to meet a minimum of a Seafood Watch “Good Alternative” rating by 2022. Through this commitment, the partners will reduce overfishing, protect juvenile crabs, improve data collection, address bycatch, and implement new science-based management measures. The reforms represent one of the most comprehensive and aggressive fishery improvement projects ever undertaken, and lessons learned will inform global efforts to accelerate improvements in small-scale fisheries.
- **We conducted value chain analyses** in the Calamian Islands, South Negros, and Visayan Sea for the mackerel, tuna, grouper, snapper, and squid fisheries. We led qualitative focus group discussions and key informant interviews with traders, business sector representatives, and fishermen, and we received survey responses from over 900 fishing sector actors. These value chain analyses yield an in-depth look at fishing operations from point of catch through trade, processing, and sale. Fish Right is using these analyses to inform activity design and partnership strategy.
- We **co-organized an electronic catch documentation and traceability (eCDT)** showcase in Iloilo, Philippines, in February 2020 with over 60 public and private sector participants, with the overarching goal of increasing adoption of eCDT by local government and within seafood supply chains.
- We have progressed the joint development on a **financial literacy module customized for fishers** with BFAR, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (Central Bank of the Philippines), and BDO Foundation that will become part of BFAR's fisheries training programs nationwide. Resonance has facilitated meetings and consultations to secure buy-in of top officials and gather crucial inputs on the development of the module.