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OF OCEANOGRAPHY



Ist Responsible Seafood Summit

PAVING THE WAY FOR A
BETTER SEAFOOD PHILIPPINES

HIGHLIGHTS



NOVOTEL
MANILA ADANETA CITY





1st Responsible Seafood Summit

TOWARDS A NEW ERA OF
BETTER SEAFOOD PHILIPPINES



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USAID and Partners Host the IST Responsible Seafood Summit in the Philippines

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) hosted the 1st Responsible Seafood Summit, gathering over 200 participants from the seafood industry, civil society organizations, and government agencies at the Novotel Manila Araneta City last September 14, 2023.

Kickstarting the official celebration of the 60th Fish Conservation Week, the event served as a platform for industry players and other stakeholders to discuss responsible seafood sourcing (RSS) principles and practices, focusing on community development, market development, seafood traceability, and innovative technology solutions.

Through the USAID Fish Right Program, the RSS Standard has been developed for the Philippine context by the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP), a US-registered nonprofit. RSS sets environmentally and socially responsible seafood standards, supporting actions that reduce overfishing and illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The summit also launched the Better Seafood Philippines program, organized by the USAID Fish Right Program, that will further help businesses adopt the RSS standards. One highlight of the event is the celebration of milestones and industry partnerships under the BSP program since it was established in 2022.

Seafood industry partners that have adopted RSS standards include Mayani, Fishta Seafood, Meliomar, SeaTrace International, Bogtong Fish Processors Association, among others.

USAID is advancing a responsible seafood industry that will help reduce IUU fishing and boost food security at the same time. As businesses prioritize responsibly caught seafood, fishers are incentivized to adopt fishing practices that promote the balance of marine ecosystems and ensure the sustainability of marine resources. This in turn influences consumer's choices, encouraging everyone to demand and support responsibly sourced seafood products and ensuring sustainable seafood for Filipinos as well as the export market.





“

Our ability to increase the amount of seafood that we harvest from the ocean is limited, so we need to find innovative and sustainable business models such as responsible seafood sourcing. Your work will be the industry's pathway to legal, safe, and responsibly caught seafood”

Mr. Thomas Kaluzny
Deputy Director
USAID Philippines



“

As someone who has worked in the fisheries sector for decades, I recognize the importance of this initiative, not only its contribution to the development, protection and conservation of our marine and fisheries resources but to the upliftment of the lives of the people who are most dependent on these resources,”

Drusila Bayate
Undersecretary for Fisheries
Department of Agriculture



About the USAID Fish Right Program:

The USAID Fish Right program is a seven-year program that advances resilient and sustainable fisheries management in the Calamianes Island Group in Palawan, Southern Negros, and the Visayan Sea. The program is being implemented by the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resource Center in partnership with a consortium of partners that include PATH Foundation Philippines, Inc. (PFPI), and Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP). The program is now replicating and putting to scale best practices from the original sites as well as its collaboration with the (DA-BFAR) in the Fisheries Management Areas (FMAs) 5 and 6 of the West Philippine Seascape in the South China Sea.



“**The First Philippine Responsible Seafood Summit seeks to revolutionize the Philippine seafood market. It stands as an example of legal compliance with fisheries laws and empowers local seafood producers to meet the growing demand for responsibly sourced seafood,”**

Atty. Demosthenes Escoto
Director
National Department of Agriculture -
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR)

PHOTO GALLERY

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In the photos:

(1-2) BFAR Chief Information Officer Nazer Briguera presided over the press conference together with a cohort of RSS prime movers in the country.

(3) Pedro Ferreiro, Fisheries Market Director of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, shares insights on RSS.

(4) Nygiel Armada, Chief of Party for USAID Fish Right, discussed the results of Fish Right's RSS work so far.

(5) Responsibly sourced seafood crabs were among the dishes featured during the banquet.

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HIGHLIGHTS

RESPONSIBLE SEAFOOD SOURCING

Responsible Seafood Sourcing (RSS) is a strategic approach adopted by seafood businesses to mitigate the environmental repercussions of fishing and fish farming. This methodology entails establishing stringent criteria and indicators to delineate responsibly sourced seafood and scrutinizing practices across fishing, sourcing, and trading. The overarching goal is to shift the demand to RSS to improve fishing practices overtime.

RSS AS A MARKET SOLUTION TO ILLEGAL UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING

- Intensified campaign against illegal, unreported, and unregulated IUU fishing and ocean crimes
- Compliance to regulatory requirements
- Mainstreaming of Environmental, Social, and (corporate) Governance or ESG
- Growing market for sustainable and responsibly sourced seafood
- Increasing consumer awareness on responsible consumption



BREAKOUT SESSIONS

At the summit, participants engaged in focused discussions within smaller groups, aligning with the four primary priorities of RSS and its technical working groups. These priorities are:

Community Development: Aiming to ensure compliance with RSS standards and market requirements for catchers and traders, with the subsequent objective of connecting them to RSS markets.

Market Development: Focused on fostering understanding and support among market players to facilitate access to products adhering to RSS standards.

Traceability, Integrity, and Compliance: Dedicated to bolstering trust within RSS-compliant supply chains by introducing transparency in source details (who, where, when, how, what), quality assurance, pricing/costing of transactions, and implementing a comprehensive documentation system across the entire supply chain.

Innovative Technology Solutions: Geared towards enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of RSS processes and the quality of RSS products through the integration of innovative technologies. Examples include cold chain management, storage solutions, electronic transactions, processing methods, energy access, transponders, water quality management, and electronic auxiliary invoicing.

Each group identified challenges within their respective priorities, explored potential applications of RSS in their sectors, and proposed actionable steps moving forward. The following sections summarize identified issues and strategic pathways for advancement.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LOOKING BACK (ISSUES)

- ◆ Limited to zero awareness;
- ◆ No existing/ limited financial capacity in the community;
- ◆ Difficulties in organizing People's Organizations (POs)/ Participation of POs';
- ◆ Low income among Fisherfolks/Farmers;

APPLYING RSS

- ◆ Provide training and awareness raising to community towards active participation;
- ◆ Fully organize, support, strengthen and empower POs;
- ◆ To establish satellite offices for the registration of POs;
- ◆ Updated registry of associations/POs;
- ◆ Develop a module that would harmonize relevant process/policy;
- ◆ Encourage RSS to stabilize costing, sizing and sorting;
- ◆ Market support and access to linkages, finance and resources

MOVING FORWARD;

- ◆ Market linkage and support from social enterprises;
- ◆ Collaborative effort to provide enabling environment;
- ◆ Support in Implementation, infrastructure, and access to resources from the Local Government Units (LGUs)
- ◆ Access to market, technology, capital and resources



MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Hotels, Restaurants, Catering, and Retailers

LOOKING BACK (ISSUES)

- ◆ More collaboration between suppliers and retailers;
- ◆ Provide insights to consumers how their choices impact fishers / ocean;
- ◆ Bridge the gap - small-scale > retailers > aggregators (assist with logistics arrangements, payment terms and collection);
- ◆ Stability of supply ensured;
- ◆ Scaling up both a responsibility of the demand and supply side;
- ◆ On the ground community building;
- ◆ Availability of demand data for RSS;
- ◆ Need to understand further why fish farmers are more susceptible to doing IUU fishing practices, instead of merely policing them



APPLYING RSS

- ◆ Establish clear and unified definition of RSS - common understanding among all stakeholders;
- ◆ Determine incentives for fish farmers and fishers - encourage their compliance with RSS standards, ensuring they reap the benefits;
- ◆ Categorize RSS compliance; basis: varying levels of adoption among seafood suppliers, including small holders and commercial enterprises;
- ◆ Education is critical - ensure compliance on the supply side;
- ◆ Concretely define the market need for RSS-compliant seafood in the retail sector (demand side)

MOVING FORWARD

- ◆ Make RSS implementation frictionless from supply to demand side;
- ◆ Adapt the circular thinking framework of addressing issues on seafood sustainability. In this manner, the different actors in the seafood value chain will need to be involved or have an influence in ensuring RSS is effectively implemented;
- ◆ Incentive programs for small hold seafood fishers and farmers to empower them to fully participate in RSS;
- ◆ Create Short Value Chains > Build trust, relationships and integrity;
- ◆ Pilot trading arrangements with key buyers to uphold fair pricing and proper market matching;



INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

LOOKING BACK (ISSUES)

- ◆ Food deterioration and spoilage;
- ◆ Insufficient value-adding technologies;
- ◆ Post harvest losses/cold chain;
- ◆ Need for utilization of by-products;
- ◆ Material scarcity: ice/ice plants, solar panels, other power supply, potable water;
- ◆ Landing site/fish port congestion;
- ◆ Need for market access;
- ◆ Transport distribution from fish landing sites to the consumers in far-flung areas;
- ◆ Limited space in the boats/bancas of municipal fishers

APPLYING RSS

- ◆ Available cold chain facilities/innovations/solutions;
- ◆ Online application that connects supplier to consumers;
- ◆ Traceability/supply chain apps, QR codes, geotagged packaging/labelling; online license application/ certification cold-chain;
- ◆ Ice plantation/ice plant;
- ◆ Mobile app with information about seafood they purchase including the source, sustainability and any relevant certifications;
- ◆ Vessel catch monitoring



MOVING FORWARD

- ◆ Active partnership/collaboration with Private Sector (PS), NGOs & potential partners;
- ◆ Intro innovative technologies to stakeholders;
- ◆ Awareness campaigns/educate;
- ◆ Collab with institutions practicing innovative technologies;
- ◆ Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) (export marketing bureau): connect and collab with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), BFAR, etc. for info sessions to Philippine exporters; network & linkage to strengthen supply chains;
- ◆ Bridge resource gaps public-private-partnership (PPP)
- ◆ Replicating/sustaining Fish Right (FR) innovations;
- ◆ Academe:social prep; impact assessment; new technologies NGAs: institutionalize incentive schemes for local adapters of new technologies; facilitate public-private-community partnership (PPCPs);
- ◆ DOST: provide tech solutions via grants-in-aid for communities - post-harvest & semi-processing

Traceability, Integrity, and Compliance

LOOKING BACK (ISSUES)

- Weak policy implementation and support (municipal fisheries registration and licensing, municipal catch documentation guidelines);
- Poor/lack of infrastructure (designated landing areas);
- Budget for implementation is a challenge;
- Lack of appreciation on the purpose and importance of traceability;
- Incentive system is not existing

APPLYING RSS

- Institutionalize natural capital accounting;
- Strengthen the FMAs to use traceability for better fisheries management;
- Support people on the ground who are essential drivers (for traceability, integrity, and compliance);
- Certification and recognition of IUU fishing-free landing sites and the big markets

MOVING FORWARD

- Set in place an incentive system for LGUs and private sectors who are implementing/looking into traceability AND make sure that incentives reach fishers for data collection;
- Centralized system and coordination between national government, LGUs, and private sector (e.g. improve data collection and reconciliation across the sector);
- Integration and harmonization of policies (national and local)

“

SFP will always be there to support Better Seafood Philippines through the locally established non-profit organization, Bluer Seas Philippines, as a sustainability mechanism. I am optimistic that our Philippine colleagues and partners can share their lessons learned and motivate other partners in different countries to work together towards a sustainable seafood movement.

I believe Better Seafood Philippines is on the right path to do this and I invite everybody to join this movement.”

Purbasari Surjadi

Chief of Staff,

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership



EXHIBIT OF COMMUNITY STORIES

The exhibit showcased compelling stories from various community partners, illustrating the adaptation of the RSS Standard and best practices within these communities. Each narrative depicted effective strategies for adapting RSS to help combat IUU fishing, and improve support to local fishers. These stories also highlighted successful efforts in expanding market reach and support to local fishers. The exhibit illustrated was a powerful testament to the positive impact of RSS practices on communities and the broader fishing industry.



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In the photos:

(1) (left to right) Mark Armand Sazon, CEO of Tindagat, Purbasari Surjadi, Chief of Staff of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, Atty. Demosthenes Escoto, National Director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and Nygiel Armada, Chief of Party for the USAID Fish Right Program, inaugurated the exhibit.

(2) The exhibit showcased sustainable practices and innovations in the seafood industry.

(3) The exhibit was displayed in the hallway outside the summit, and was visited by participants and hotel guests.

To read and know more
about these stories you
may scan this QR Code:



In this collection:

BLUE SWIMMING CRAB PARTNERSHIP:

Applying a Whole-of-Government Approach to Sustainable Fishing

CONCEPCION-SAGRADA-BOGTONG MARINE RESERVE:

Building Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

FISH FOR EVERY FILIPINO:

Making Local Responsibly Sourced Seafood Accessible

LINAPACAN:

Turning the Tides on Illegal Fishing

OCTOPUS FISHERY OF CALAWIT ISLAND:

Preserving a Long Tradition of Responsible Fishing

MELIOMAR:

Empowering Responsible Fishing with the Sea Change Program

PHILIPPINE SLIPPER OYSTERS:

Replicating Best Practices in Sustainable Farming Methods

SEATRACE INTERNATIONAL:

Distributing Responsible Seafood Locally and Internationally

TINDAGAT:

Connecting Consumers to Local Fishers





RECOGNITION

Better Seafood Philippines was established in 2022 through the USAID Fish Right Program, initially as a buyer engagement program. Since then, the Responsible Seafood Sourcing (RSS) Standard has been developed for the Philippine context. RSS establishes criteria to assess current supply chain practices in the capture, sourcing, and trading of wild-caught seafood. Through recognition of partnerships, we are celebrated during the summit the partnerships that we have established, ranging from the early adopters to advocates of RSS, who all helped RSS gain momentum in the Philippines.

ADVOCATE

This recognition is for organizations who are our latest recruits to the Better Seafood Philippines family, and have, in their own ways, started to support our advocacy-- and who continue to demonstrate that there is indeed a growing interest for Responsible Seafood, and our time is now!

City of Dreams Manila

Supply Chain Lead, Bernie Matubis

Robinsons Supermarket Corporation

Sustainability Manager, Paul Bayan

Crystal Bay Oysters

Director, Colin Buckley

Municipality of Linapacan

Mayor, Hon. Emil Neri

Novotel Manila Araneta City

Director of Sustainability and
ALL Safe Officer,
Therese Galindo

Calamianes Association of Tourism Establishment

Owner, Jacqueline Alleje

ENABLER

This recognition is for those companies who are not supply chain stakeholders, but have, nevertheless, had invaluable contributions in supporting supply chain development efforts for Responsible Seafood Sourcing, contributing to the success of linking markets to communities practicing responsible fishing practices.

Arkos Technologies

CEO, Justin Francisco

Palamigan Company

Founder, Rodmark Barriga

GRF – Hublag Microfinance Foundation

Managing Director, Helen "Kim" Reyes



PARTNER

This recognition is for the **first supply chain partners** of Better Seafood Philippines, who have helped pilot the Responsible Seafood Sourcing Standard and have begun supporting the commodities coming from these value chains.

Mayani

Chief Farmer & Co-Founder,
Ochie San Juan

Sea Trace International

COO and Managing Partner,
Christian Schmidradner

Nurunutan yang Calamian

Tagbanua yang Calawit

may Quezon (NTCQ)

President and former NCIP Commissioner,
Roy Dabuit

Meliomar Incorporated

General Manager,
Sandra Peñalba

Follow Your Taste by

Rizal Dairy Farms

Owner,
Jacqueline Alleje

Wildcrafted Incorporated

Owner,
Joji Andrea Tiu

Tindagat

CEO and Co-Founder,
Mark Armand Sazon



CHAMPIONS

This recognition is for those partners who have not only adopted our advocacy, but have played a crucial role in the pilot demonstration of the impact of Better Seafood Philippines multi-sectoral, whole-of-supply-chain-approach, and who continue to show their commitment to scale and advance Responsible Seafood Sourcing in the Philippines.



Bogtong Fish Processors Association

Nanette Cadutdt
President



Fishta Seafood Incorporated

Carina Ong-Tan
General Manager



Municipality of Busuanga

Hon. Elizabeth Cervantes
Municipal Mayor



Department of Trade and Industry MIMAROPA

Rodolfo Mariposque
Regional Director





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 **fishtha**
SEAFOOD
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 **GFR**
HUBLAG
FOUNDATION

 **PALAMIGAN CO.**

 **ROBINSONS**
RETAIL
HOLDINGS, INC.