



# Partnership Programme Towards Sustainable Tuna

## PPTST Project Report (2011-2015)



Photos by Joann P. Binondo

*For Improved Fisheries,  
Let's Support Tuna Sustainability!*

August 2015

This report was prepared by WWF-Philippines.  
And has been reviewed by WWF-Germany.

❖ LIST OF ACRONYMS

AT	Agricultural Technician
BFAR	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
BAC	BFAR Administrative Circulars
BU	Bicol University
CMMs	Conservation Management Measures
DA	Department of Agriculture
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DOLE	Department of Labour and Employment
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
EC	European Commission
EO	Executive Order
ETP	Endangered, Threatened and Protected
EU	European Union
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
FAO	Fisheries Administrative Order
FIP	Fishery Improvement Program
FLET	Fishery Law Enforcement Team
GOL	Gulf of Lagonoy
HCR	Harvest Control Rules
HS	Harvest Strategies
IFARMC	Integrated Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
LCE	Local Chief Executive (mayor)
MAO	Municipal Agriculture Officer
MARINA	Maritime Industry Authority
MCS	Monitoring, Control & Surveillance
MFARMC	Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council
MFO	Municipal Fisheries Ordinances
MLGU	Municipal Local Government Unit
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NAPC	National Anti-Poverty Commission
NFARMC	National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council
NFRDI	National Fisheries Research and Development Institute
NGA	National Government Agencies
NGO	Non- Government Organizations
NSAP	National Stock Assessment Program
OCM	Occidental Mindoro
PAS	Provincial Agricultural Services
PCAF- CFA	Philippine Council on Agriculture and Fisheries- Committee on Fisheries & Aquaculture
PCG	Philippine Coast Guard
PDA	Partido Development Administration
PD	Presidential Decree
PFO	Provincial Fisheries Officer

<b>PLGU</b>	<b>Provincial Local Government Unit</b>
<b>PNP</b>	<b>Philippine National Police</b>
<b>PNP-MARIG</b>	<b>PNP – Maritime Group</b>
<b>PPTST</b>	<b>Partnership Program Towards Sustainable Tuna</b>
<b>PSU</b>	<b>Partido State Universities</b>
<b>R&amp;L</b>	<b>Registration and Licensing</b>
<b>RA</b>	<b>Republic Act</b>
<b>RP</b>	<b>Reference Point</b>
<b>SB</b>	<b>Sangguniang Bayan (a local legislative council)</b>
<b>SC</b>	<b>Scientific Committee</b>
<b>SCM</b>	<b>Supply Chain Management/ Mapping</b>
<b>SEC</b>	<b>Securities and Exchange Commission</b>
<b>SFI</b>	<b>Smart Fishing Initiative</b>
<b>TFA</b>	<b>Tuna Fisher’s Association</b>
<b>TWG</b>	<b>Technical Working Group</b>
<b>UPV</b>	<b>University of the Philippines - Visayas</b>
<b>WCPFC</b>	<b>Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission</b>
<b>WPU</b>	<b>Western Philippines University</b>

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❖ **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

<b>Project Name:</b>	Partnership Programme Towards Sustainable Tuna
<b>Project Starting Date (FY):</b>	October 2010
<b>Project Ending Date (FY) :</b>	April 2015
<b>Project Reporting Period :</b>	April 30, 2015
<b>Project Sites:</b>	Project Coordinating Office: WWF-Germany, Hamburg; Project Implementing Office: WWF-Philippines, Manila; Project field sites: Mindoro Occidental and Lagonoy Gulf
<b>Report Completed By:</b>	Joann P. Binondo (reviewed by Catherine Zucco)

This is the Project Report of the Partnership Programme Towards Sustainable Tuna (PPTST) for the first phase of the project covering the period from February 2011 - April 2015 as required by WWF-Germany and agreed upon by the European Project Partners.

This report summarizes the four (4) year project performance and its accomplishments on community development, fisheries management, and supply chain management in meeting the requirements of Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certification based on its performance indicators. It also highlights implementation issues and proposed resolutions, achievements, as well as the performance objectives for the next project phase (May 2015 until December 2017). It also provides information on additional initiatives, highlights lessons learned and offers insights on future challenges.

From 2011 to 2015, WWF offices in Germany and the Philippines implemented the first phase of the Partnership Programme Towards Sustainable Tuna (PPTST), focusing on the yellowfin tuna handline fisheries. This Programme guided the artisanal tuna fishing communities in two separate project sites: (1) the Lagonoy Gulf in the Bicol Region and (2) Mindoro Strait of Occidental Mindoro. The objective was to improve fishing practices through better management to achieve a sustainable yellowfin tuna fishery with minimal impacts on the ecosystem, while generating equitable sharing of market benefits in the process. Furthermore, this public-private partnership Programme also aimed to increase market opportunities, through improving quality and traceability in the supply chain, and to connect small-scale fishers with companies and markets that are looking for sustainable sources.

The project addressed and facilitated improvement of fisheries governance by providing technical assistance to the relevant local, regional and national government agencies. The major achievements in this respect are: (1) the establishment of local tuna fisheries management plan in collaboration with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the Local Government Units (LGUs); (2)

strengthening the Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (MFARMC), these stakeholder organizations enable small-scale fishers to actively participate in the management of their fisheries; (3) training the local authorities and fishermen to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and (4) facilitating the effective implementation of the fishers and vessels registration and licensing. The project also took many additional measures to prepare the two (2) project sites toward meeting the MSC requirements for certification, which are outlined in this report.

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

### **1.1 Purpose and Contents**

This report presents the accomplishments and progress the Public-Private Partnership Program Towards Sustainable Tuna (PPTST) has made towards the project objectives and the status towards achieving the sustainable yellowfin tuna fisheries during the first phase of the project for the period covering February 2011 until April 2015. It also provides insights on implementation concerns of the two project sites it covered and highlights a series of lessons learned.

This report is divided into several sections. The Executive Summary highlights the main points in the report while the introduction provides an overview and contents of the report. The first part of this report provides the project description which includes the project goals and objectives, project sites and its fisheries. Succeeding sections summarize the project performance, highlighting the key accomplishments during Phase I of the project. It also presents the progress towards meeting the MSC Performance Indicators and a financial summary. The final sections discuss implementation challenges, lessons learned and the future direction of the follow-on project

The Annexes of the report contain the following: (A) Selected Photo Documentation (B) Consolidated Fishery Profiling and Supply Chain Mapping (C) List of Trainings, Workshops and Conferences conducted (D) Final report to the DEG (2010-2014), (E) Supply Chain Improvement Report, (F) MSC Pre-Assessment, (G) FIP Action Plan 2013, (H) Revised FIP Action Plan 2015 and (I) Financial report and (J) Directory of Project Stakeholders.

## **2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

### **2.2 Project Summary**

The Public Private Partnership Program Towards Sustainable Tuna (PPTST) is a fishery improvement project focusing on hand-line caught yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) which is facilitated by WWF-Germany, implemented by WWF-Philippines and funded during Phase I by Bell and Coop, Sea Fresh and the DEG for the 15 municipalities bordering Lagonoy Gulf and the 6 municipalities along Mindoro Strait. This project is based in the WWF-Philippines headquarters in Manila with two field offices in Tabaco City, Lagonoy Gulf, and Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro.

- ***Project Goals and Purpose***

The project's objective is to strengthen the position of small-scale fisheries and secure their livelihoods by establishing long-term market access, promoting responsible fisheries management, and providing of a more selectively caught and more sustainable tuna product to progressive markets and environmentally aware consumers in Europe. The ultimate aim is the certification of these fisheries following the eco-labelling initiative of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). As a public-private partnership endeavour, the project liaises with exporters from Manila to strengthen the supply chains and ensure full traceability of yellowfin tuna from the two project sites. Moreover, the project provided technical assistance and a series of training on proper tuna handling and processing to tuna fishers and traders as part of supply chain management. It also encourages the supply chain stakeholders to practice quality buying and fair pricing.

- **Project Sites and its Fisheries**



Fig.1. Map: Philippines with WWF Project sites indicated

- **The Yellowfin Tuna Handline Fishery:**

The fisheries the PPTST assisted are predominantly artisanal with boats that are approximately 8 meters in length. Tuna is caught traditionally using a highly selective method called 'handline' fishing which has very little by-catch of other species or juvenile tuna. Every fisherman works with a single hook which is deployed at depths of between 50-150 meters. Only a single, mature tuna is targeted with each line with four or five fishermen on each vessel. Only a few tuna are caught during each fishing trip. For this reason the tuna from this fishery is more expensive than from longliners. Due to the fact that the handline fishery has very little by-catch of other species and juvenile tuna, handline can be considered the more environmentally sound of the fishing methods. However, at the project beginning data on tuna catches was lacking and little was known about the overall impact of the fishery on the stock of yellowfin tuna.

*There are two fishing areas within the scope of the project:*

1. **Lagonoy Gulf** is one of the most productive fishing areas on the east coast of the Philippines. The Gulf is considered an important spawning ground for yellowfin tuna. Lagonoy Gulf covers an area of around 3,700 km<sup>2</sup> and is up to 1,200 meters deep. WWF is working in 112 fishing villages in the 15 municipalities surrounding the Gulf.
2. **Mindoro Strait** is a corridor linking the West Philippine Sea, Verde Island Passage and Sulu Sea. This corridor, which connects three productive seas, is a natural pathway for many tuna species. Mindoro covers an area of about 9,735 km<sup>2</sup> and is the seventh biggest island in the Philippines. In Occidental Mindoro, WWF is working in 28 fishing villages along the west coast which are spread across 6 municipalities.



Fig 2: The tuna fishing vessels and gears



WWF-Philippines Project Team

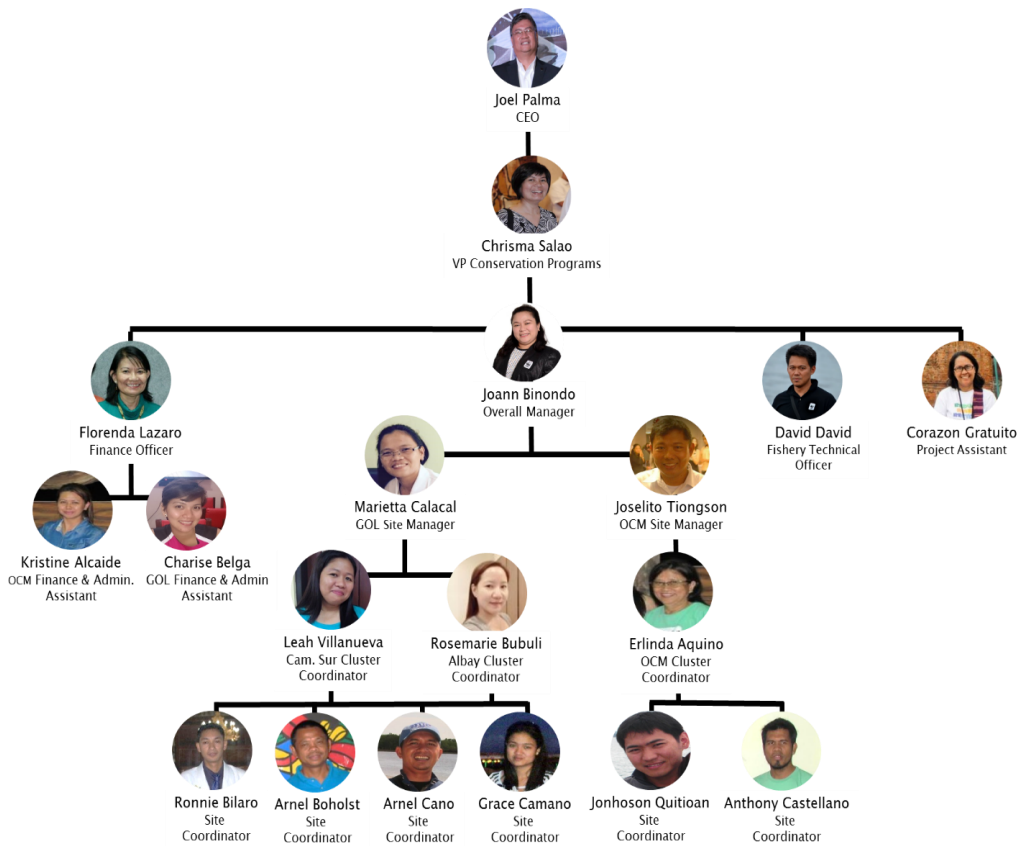


Figure 3. PPTST Organizational Structure

### 3. PROJECT PERFORMANCE:

For the effective and efficient implementation of the project, the PPTST Phase I was encapsulated into four major components, each of which was carried out by the project team, its integral partners and key stakeholders who are responsible and accountable in delivering the project outputs and outcomes:

#### 3.1 Component 1: Community and Institutional Development

This component aims to strengthen the position of tuna fishers in the tuna fishing industry and empower them to be actively involved in the process of planning and decision-making on fisheries management and governance. The key focus of this component is the organization of the tuna fishers' federations in both project sites which were composed of legally registered and accredited municipal tuna fishers associations. The tuna fishers' leaders became active representatives of their respective Municipal FARMCs and other local specialized bodies that gave them more leverage in accessing technical and financial assistance from various government institutions. Representation to the MFARMCs<sup>1</sup> is strategically very important to influence the decision making process in terms of planning and budgeting on fisheries program. The tuna fisher's leaders were able to move forward their agenda by ensuring that budget allocation were secured for their activities and enterprises. These activities were geared towards developing the capacities of the tuna fishers to lead and manage their respective associations, actively engage as a stakeholder with the local authorities in the management of fisheries resources and establishing more linkages to other institutions.

#### ***Major Outputs:***

Outputs of first component were classified into three areas: (1) Networking and Alliance Building (2) Strengthening of tuna fishers associations and (3) Community Organizing.

***(1) Networking and Alliance Building:*** The close collaboration with partner institutions, like Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the provincial, municipal and barangay Local Government Units (LGUs) see figure below, were instrumental in the formation of tuna fishers' associations in all 15 municipalities of Lagonoy Gulf and 6 municipalities in Mindoro Strait. These associations are part of the tuna fisheries management framework required at the grassroots level to ensure proper implementation of tuna fisheries conservation and management measures. Only through continued support of these associations will the newly established fisheries management framework become fully operational. In 2011, it was common among the LGUs to give the fisheries sector less attention and importance, thus fisheries received less priority in their local development plans. With this scenario, the project employed an outreach strategy sensitive to the socio-political dynamics in order to gain the support of key personnel of the local authorities. The approach was not linear in all LGUs, mainly because each has its peculiarities depending on the capacity, level of awareness, priority and socio-political climate. In general, the LGU officers were made to understand that project interventions are designed to improve governance and secure the livelihood of their constituents via meaningful and active participation of stakeholders in the tuna fisheries management process. Addressing critical issues in fisheries management, a consistent and clear message about the benefits and objectives of the project to the local authorities was vital to secure the LGUs' support. As the project progressed, the strong linkages with

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<sup>1</sup> MFARMC as a policy recommendatory body has the mandate to proposed local policy, part of their operation requires a budget from the government. It is important that the fishers strengthen their position in local governance so they can access funding as provided by the law having the preferential rights to government services.

various stakeholders and institutions were scaled up to the national level government agencies, private institutions, academe and civil society organizations working with fishery sectors.

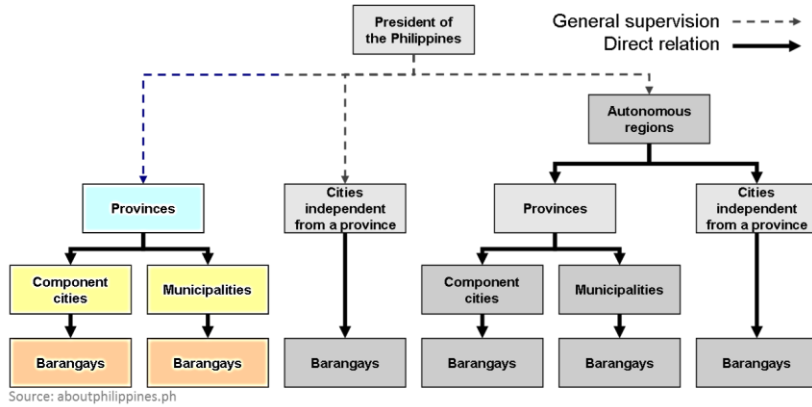
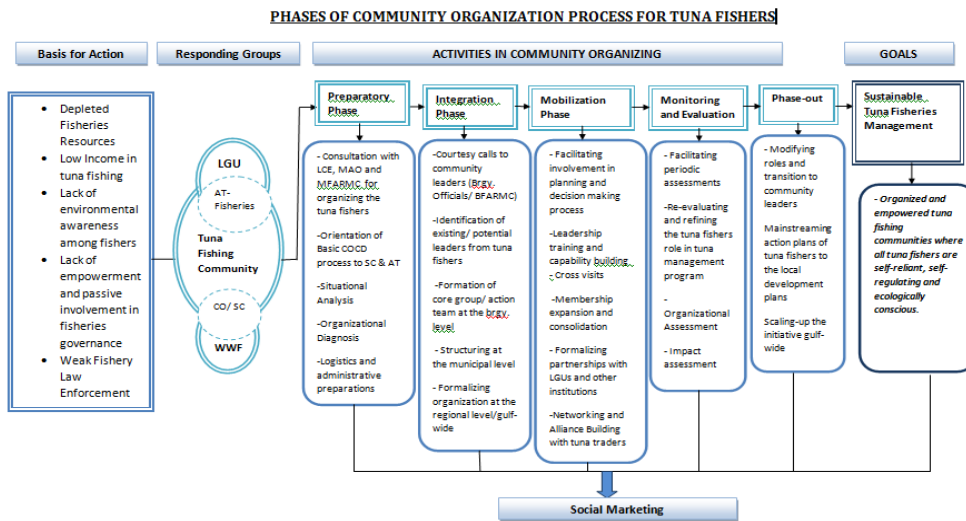


Figure 4. The Local Government Hierarchy of the Philippines

**(2) Community Organizing:** In 2011, a series of community outreach and community consultations were conducted among the 112 tuna fishing villages of Lagonoy Gulf and 28 tuna fishing villages of Mindoro Strait in order to raise environmental awareness and secure support of the key stakeholders. Based on community feedback and issues identified by the tuna fishers during formal and informal discussions, a community organizing framework was designed for the organization of tuna fishers in both project sites. The framework identified different stages essential for the active participation and formation of tuna fishers association encompassing preparatory, integration, mobilization, monitoring and evaluation phases.

Figure 5. PPTST Community Organizing Framework



- **To date, 21 Municipal Tuna Fishers Associations (MTFAs)** were organized, with clear policies and organizational structures, and legally registered with the authorized agencies Security Exchange Commission (SEC) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in both project sites of Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait. These MTFAs have been organized into a Federated Tuna Fishers Association for each site, which have been similarly registered with the DOLE and SEC respectively. The gulf-wide or province-wide tuna fishers' federations have been instrumental in drafting the initial site-specific tuna fisheries management plan in each project site. These plans are subject for review and revision during the second half of 2015 to be consistent with the new National Tuna Management Plan (NTMP). Through these Tuna Fisheries Associations tuna fishers now have a mandate to participate in the fisheries management process at Municipal FARMC and Integrated FARMC<sup>2</sup> level.
- **(3) Strengthening of the local stakeholder bodies (FARMCs) to enable small scale fishers to participate in the management of their fishery resources:** According to the Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO) of the Philippines (196 Section 3), Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (FARMCs) are established at the national level and in all municipalities and cities adjacent to municipal waters. This FARMC system was designed in order to institutionalize the major role of the fisherfolk and other resource users in planning and formulating policies and programmes for the management, conservation, protection and sustainable development of fisheries and aquatic resources. FAO 196 intends to empower the fishing sector and strengthen their position in fisheries governance. At the onset of the project in 2011, very few of the municipalities had an active Municipal FARMC. Based on the MFARMC status assessment, MFARMC restructuring was necessary in all project assisted sites. For example, by policy, fisherfolk representatives to the Municipal FARMC must come from a duly registered peoples' organization and be accredited by the LGUs, but few were compliant with this requirement at the onset of the project. WWF enabled the activation and strengthening of the Municipal FARMC's in the 21 municipalities of the 2 project sites (*See Annexes for the Municipal FARMC Status Assessment Results*).

### 3.2 Component 2: Fisheries Governance Improvement

In this second component, the interventions undertaken by the project were designed to improve fisheries governance at the local and national level in accordance with the MSC requirements. The project advocated the formulation of tuna fisheries management plans and provided technical inputs in crafting the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the newly amended fisheries code, to ensure the sustainability and compliance of yellowfin tuna management with regional and international agreements and commitments for the conservation of tuna stocks and other fishery resources.

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<sup>2</sup> The major role of the Municipal Fisheries Aquatic Resources Management Council (MFARMC) is their involvement in the planning and formulation of policies and programs for the management, conservation, protection and sustainable development of fisheries and aquatic resources in the municipal level. MFARMCs are composed of local fishermen and other resource users. Meanwhile, the Integrated Fisheries Aquatic Resources Management Council (IFARMC) is a unifying body for the several MFARMCs. It is organized to manage a common fishing ground with harmonized policies and programs.

### **Major Outputs:**

Below are the major outputs of the second component, which include (1) Fisheries Profiling and Data Management, (2) Fisheries Policy Enactment, (3) Fisheries Management Plan Development, (4) Fisheries Law Enforcement and (5) Fishers and Vessels Registration and Licensing Compliance:

- **(1) Fisheries Profiling and Data Management:** During the first project phase intensive information gathering through face to face interactions with fishers, traders and boat owners was carried out at all fishing villages in each municipality of both Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait. The profiling was designed and employed in order to gain knowledge on the current structure and dynamics of the fishery and its stakeholders essential for project implementation. The information was very useful in the formulation of appropriate fisheries management and development approaches to secure support at grassroots level and from local authorities. The fisheries data collected was encoded and maintained in an MS Excel database. Specifically, the gathered information included the number of tuna fishers and vessels, months and areas of operations, names of fishers and vessels, number of landing stations and collecting stations, names of local tuna traders as well as exporters, profiles of landing sites or buying stations, and trading relationships between the fishers, local traders and exporters. This fisheries profile was updated semi-annually. The updating of these fisheries and supply chain profile was carried out hand-in-hand with the implementation of other field activities of the WWF staff. In addition to the fishery profile data collected in both project sites, data on by-catch or retained species and bait species were collected and subjected for risk-based assessment. Both project sites had no available data and scientific studies regarding the status of retained and bait species used in tuna handline Fisheries. As one of the criteria of MSC, risk-based assessment should be applied in areas with data deficient on by-catch or retained and bait fisheries. Furthermore, the project also developed a repository wherein all project documents are compiled so that they will be readily available for evaluation for MSC certification. It includes fish catch monitoring with data of retained and bait species. The repository is regularly updated and the data are shared with national government agencies and with LGUs. *(See annexes for the consolidated data of the fishery profile from 2011-2015 of both project sites)*
- **(2) Fisheries Policy Enactment:** Prior to the project intervention in the two project sites, most of the Municipal Fisheries Ordinances<sup>3</sup> (MFOs) of the municipalities the project assisted were either outdated or non-existent, not addressing recent developments in fisheries management. The project initiated policy reviews together with the local legislators, the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) and Municipal FARMCs to clarify provisions and requirements, review local legislation and/or recommend amendments in municipal fishery ordinances for immediate enactment. Intensive lobbying with all relevant units and sectors of LGUs were imperative during the process as the creation and approval of an MFO needed to undergo critical procedural stages of reviews and readings as well as public hearings at the municipality level and a higher legislative body at the provincial level. *(See annexes for the illustration on the form fishery profiles at legislative process).*
- In 2011, the project was confronted with various challenges causing setbacks on its progress due to unclear provisions in the fishery ordinances regarding Registration and Licensing (R&L) implementation. In Lagonoy Gulf only three out of fifteen LGUs had a clear legal basis on R&L

<sup>3</sup> Municipal Fisheries Ordinances are set of laws for the governance, management, and protection of the fishery resources and coastal habitats within the municipality.

implementation, the remaining twelve LGUs needed to amend their outdated MFOs, while in Mindoro Strait, only one LGU did not have a MFO in place, the rest of the five LGUs just needed to clarify some grey areas on the R&L provisions in their MFOs.

- By April 2015 the project has managed to facilitate the amendment of all fifteen remaining Municipal Fisheries Ordinances, resulting in all LGUs in Lagonoy Gulf having the necessary MFOs with clear provisions in place on how to effectively enforce the fishers' registration and licensing. In Mindoro Strait, all six LGUs have already revisited their MFOs to harmonize its implementation process.
- The old Fishery Code of the Philippines was created six years earlier than the relevant WCPFC resolutions, which is why most of the provisions in the Fisheries Code were not aligned with the relevant WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures for yellowfin tuna and some international laws. Until the start of the project there was no prior effort for amendment to meet the updated international regulations. This was also one of the reasons, the EU issued a yellow card to the Philippines in 2014, as they identified the Philippines as a non-cooperating country in combating IUU Fishing. Hence, by the year 2014, the process of amending the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 (RA 8550) was initiated. During the revision of the Fisheries Code, WWF participated in the review process and, where appropriate, formed in alliances with other NGOs, to advocate for a strong fisheries reform. The revision process was finalized at the beginning of 2015. The new Fisheries Code now includes references to both the precautionary approach to fisheries management, the ecosystem-based management (EBM) approach to fisheries management and is aligned with requirements of international and regional fisheries regulations, e.g. making reference to Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) of WCPFC and the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU fishing (IPOA). The Fisheries Code has yet to be implemented through Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). The drafting of the IRR however has now started from March 2015. The Fisheries Code and its IRRs form the framework for all Philippine fisheries management plans, including the National Tuna Management Plan and the Site Specific Tuna Management Plans in the project site of Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait. The revision of the Fisheries Code and the IRRs set the right frame for sustainable fisheries management and are thus an important prerequisite for sustainable fisheries management and reaching MSC Certification.

**(3) Fisheries Management Plan Development:** The National Tuna Management Plan (NTMP) that is currently still in place is generic and does not explicitly define fishery specific short-term objectives, outcomes, activities or measurable indicators. Decision making processes are not clearly based on available scientific information. For a sustainable tuna fisheries management framework in the Philippines, the National Tuna Management Plan needs to be revised and elaborated to include the application of the precautionary approach to fisheries management, regional Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) for tuna stocks and the use of scientific advice provided from research and a clear and transparent process need to be elaborated in the NTMP. Therefore, the project was advocating for the review of the National Tuna Management Plan. The revision process started in 2015 and is likely to run until the beginning of 2016. Continuing participation by the project leaders in this revision is part of the follow-on project phase of the PPTST (Follow-on Project from May 2015- December 2017).

- WWF initiated the drafting of new Site Specific Tuna Management Plans for both project sites. The Mindoro Strait management planning was initiated through the help of the Manila Exporters and the office of Assistant Secretary of the Department Agriculture (DA). At first a meeting with political decision makers and representatives from relevant local agencies was facilitated by WWF. In the workshop the strategic action plan to address the prevailing issues confronting the tuna handline fishery in Mindoro Strait was initiated. In Lagonoy Gulf the initial meeting with the regional BFAR office and all the fishery officers of Lagonoy Gulf led to the creation of a Technical Working Group (TWG) for the development of a draft gulf-wide tuna fisheries management plan. The preliminary strategic action plan basically identified issues that need to be addressed as well as incorporated these in the development of a Lagonoy Gulf Tuna Fisheries Management Plan. In 2013, WWF agreed with BFAR- Fisheries Regulatory & Quarantine Division (FRQD) to seek technical assistance from a regional tuna fisheries expert to draft the tuna management plan templates. In early 2015, WWF engaged Richard Banks (Poseidon Consultancy) to prepare the draft National Tuna Management Plan and the two site- specific management plans for the tuna fisheries in Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait. The consultation process for all three management plans is ongoing, also in the second Project Phase. The development of the site-specific management plan involves a social and institutional process, as well as technical input. It involves the changing of the mind-sets of the key stakeholders towards sustainable fisheries management wherein consultation and awareness raising about sustainable fisheries management with grassroots level stakeholders are of utmost importance. The aim is to finalize the tuna management plans by the end of 2015.

**(4) Fisheries Law Enforcement:** The enforcement of the fisheries policy is applied at the municipal waters through the Bantay Dagat (Fish Warden), a community-based surveillance team which is composed of fisher's volunteers and was supported by the respective LGU and BFAR regional offices while for the national waters, the competent authorities like the National BFAR office, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) or the Maritime group of the Philippine National Police are responsible to enforce the fishery law. The most relevant measures applied to the handline fishery are registration and licensing. Compliance of handline fishers with registration and licensing has gradually risen in both project times over Philippine Coast Guard the project time. Once the local tuna management plans are finalized, these will also be enforced by the Bantay Dagat and fisher's volunteers.

- The Fishery Law Enforcement Team (FLET), locally known as Bantay Dagat, of the twenty-one LGUs of both Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait was organized and strengthened through the help of the WWF project staff. At the start of the project in 2011, only three out of twenty-one LGUs in both project sites had an active Fishery Law Enforcement Team (FLET). As early as 2012, WWF assisted BFAR and the LGUs to train and deputize the selected 680 tuna fishers to be part of the enforcement team of each LGU. By the end of 2014, all twenty-one LGUs covered by the project have activated their FLET by providing them the necessary enforcement training and equipment for effective implementation of fishery law.
- To continue our pursuit to deter IUU fishing operations, the FLET needs to conduct regular seaborne patrols. For the FLET to effectively implement fishery laws, they need enforcement materials, tools and logistics. BFAR assists the LGUs by giving them patrol boats or engines. The LGUs in return shoulder gasoline expenses during operations. Finally, WWF through PPTST

funding also provided life-vests, megaphones and searchlights for more effective seaborne patrolling and safety of life at sea for FLET members during operations.

- WWF continues to extend technical assistance to the Local Authorities in monitoring and tracking the progress of for the strict enforcement of their respective Municipal Fishery Ordinances (MFOs). Some of the LGUs have faced difficulties in increasing compliance for vessel licensing. Therefore, WWF exerted more effort in strengthening the Fishery Law Enforcement Teams (FLETs) and Bantay Dagat<sup>4</sup> members to promote strong compliance in the local fisheries. However, additional investments from the government and enhanced political will of local leaders and fishery authorities is required to effectively and fully implement the fishery policies that will eliminate IUU fishing within the waters of Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait.
- The national government through BFAR has started to take action on this and strengthened the fight against IUU fishing by increasing the number of law enforcers to 700 staff. The additional personnel will soon be deployed to the country's major fishing areas after completion of their intense 90 day-training in marine law enforcement and learning about BFAR operations and protocols, fishery laws and aquatic protection.
- **(5) Fishers and Vessels Registration and Licensing Compliance:** The proper registration and licensing<sup>5</sup> of all tuna fishers, vessels and gears is a pre-requisite for the fishery to ensure legal origin of fish in the supply chains from the project sites. The registration process only needs to take place once. In this process fishers and boats are registered and individual registration numbers are issued once. The licensing process on the other hand takes place on an annual basis, as fishing permits (licenses) are only issued on a yearly basis. At the onset of the project implementation in 2011, only 1,958 out of a total of 4,690 tuna fishers were registered in both sites, which is a compliance rate of only 40%. The rate of licensing was even lower with only 1,020 out of 2,904 of the tuna vessels owning fishing licenses, which is a compliance rate of 30% for both project sites. Through WWF's intense effort to raise awareness for the need to register and obtain licenses and by supporting fishers and local government with the process, the compliance rate for registration of tuna vessels was increased to 80% (5,043 fishers out of the total number of 5,917 fishers) by the end of 2014. While the compliance rate for licensed tuna vessels remained low, with only 2,129 of the 3,042 tuna vessels licensed by the end of 2014, which is a compliance rate of 60%.

### 3.3 Component 3: Supply Chain Management

The third component focused on the supply chain work of the PPTST. WWF commissioned consultants that supported WWF staff on the activities related to improving the traceability and quality in the supply chains originating in the small-scale yellowfin tuna fishery in Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait. This component concerned major improvements in the supply chain to ensure that the tuna coming from the

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<sup>4</sup> *Bantay Dagat* (Sea Patrol) is a civilian fisheries patrol force made up of volunteers that try to keep a 24 hour watch against illegal fishing activities on the municipal waters where they are assigned.

<sup>5</sup> Municipal Fisheries Registration according to Executive Order 305 requires the fisher to provide pertinent information before they can be lawfully allowed to engage in fishing activities. While Fisheries Issuance of License and Permits bestows upon fishers the right to gain access to fishery resources within municipal waters and engage in fishing and fishery related activities



project sites are fully traceable (from hook to cook or boat to plate) and meet international standards on quality and food safety as well as improving compliance with the EU-IUU Regulations.

**Major Outputs:**

The following are the major outputs of the third component (1) Tuna Traceability, (2) Tuna Quality Improvement, (3) Landing Site Development:

- **(1) Tuna Traceability:** To improve the traceability of the tuna coming from the project site, a traceability standard was developed, using existing standards as a basis, and tailored to the needs of the handline fishery supply chain. For this traceability standard, the project incorporated the ISO 12875 traceability standard for finfish fisheries together with MSC Chain of Custody standards (Coca), BFAR requirements and additional EU requirements into a single standard that is now being applied to the artisanal handline fisheries in both project sites. The main steps in the traceability system are included in the visualization below.

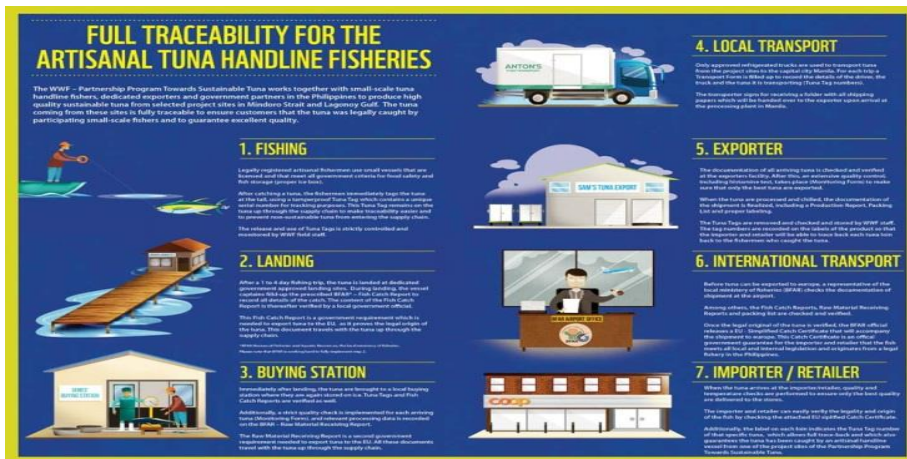


Fig 6. Main steps of the traceability system as being implemented by the project.

- To ensure wider implementation of the traceability standard, WWF staff conducted series of hands-on trainings and activities to improve traceability along the supply chain. These trainings included discussions on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing that emphasized the importance of fishing regulations and the monitoring of fishing effort through licensing and registration, on the proper use of the fish catch documentation and the importance of traceability. With the guidance of the supply chain consultant the WWF field staff conducted regular visits to buying stations and exporters’ facilities to further discuss improvements in the traceability standard to be implemented by these supply chain actors.
- **(2) Tuna Quality Improvement:** WWF conducted numerous trainings for various levels of supply chain actors; from fishers, local landing stations, traders and to the exporters. These trainings were designed to capacitate the supply chain actors on the proper tuna handling and processing. For the supply chain improvement work with local landing stations WWF engaged an international expert (Stephen Roberts) on fish processing, food safety and EU regulations.

Stephen Roberts the training courses in four provinces; Catanduanes, Albay, Camarines Sur and Occidental Mindoro with approximately 30 participants at each training location. Alongside with the training on tuna handling and processing, other training topics included food safety and quality, HACCP, additional Good Manufacturing Practices, Safety at Sea and tuna traceability.

- In order to continue the efforts on quality improvement, WWF staff together with the consultant on supply chain management conducted the series of mentoring activities to improve the quality and food safety of the tuna along the supply chain. Through regular visits to monitor progress in the landing sites, buying stations and exporter’s facilities project staff ensured that handling and hygiene practices are applied in accordance with national and international regulations.
- WWF and the supply chain consultant developed and distributed training manuals, field guides on quality and legal tuna, calendars on traceability and quality improvements as well as additional information material regarding proper tuna handling and processing to supply chain actors and other integral partners.

Fig. 7: PPTST Calendar of 2015



Fig. 8: Field guide for tuna fishers



- **(3) Landing Site Development:** At the start of the project in 2011, an assessment of the current fishing and handling practices was initiated to identify the needs for improvement. These practices were being documented and monitored regularly by the field staff to track changes of the handling practices and improvements of the facilities at the landing sites. One of the major challenges of the project was to improve the hygiene and sanitation, since tuna catches were landed everywhere along the beach and just dragged to the nearest buying station. WWF staff undertook regular visits to buying stations at the major landing sites to discuss the need for improvement of their handling practices and storage facilities in accordance with international standards on food safety and quality.
- In the same manner, the project staff also made the competent authority from the LGUs and BFAR fully-aware of the pressing need for landing site improvements. WWF staff recommended local authorities to conduct regular inspection to the landing sites and storage facilities of the

tuna buyers. WWF closely collaborated with National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) and DA-BFAR for the establishment of the Fish Landing Centers (FLC). These will be modern, well-equipped facilities to provide adequate means for post-harvest handling. National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) initially pre-selected two hundred sites for the whole country. Of the twenty-one Municipalities in the project sites ten have been identified in this preselection process. Nine sites in Lagonoy Gulf and one site in Mindoro Strait. In addition, WWF-Philippines identified one fish landing site in Lagonoy Gulf as a pilot project for the “Solar Powered Fish Landing Site” through the funding assistance of Wision and technical expertise of Philips.

### 3.4 Component 4: MSC Certification Requirements

This component discusses how the two PPTST project sites were being assessed in accordance with the MSC requirements for certification and how this assessment has evolved through years of project implementation. Additionally, this component will also highlight some important processes and approaches employed by the project and the initial interventions of PPTST that will enable the fisheries to achieve MSC certification for the two fisheries site in Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait.

#### **Major Outputs:**

Stated below are the key outputs of this fourth component, which include: (1) MSC Internal Pre-Assessment (2) Risk Based Assessment, (3) Research Plan Development and (4) Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) Action Plan.

- **(1) MSC Internal Pre-Assessment:** Based on the fisheries data gathered during February – October 2011 in the two project sites, Blueyou Consultancy first assessed the handline fishery in Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait against the standard of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). This analysis provided initial direction for the project and defined the first steps towards MSC certification.
- In the second half of 2012 it became clear that a more detailed analysis of the MSC certification requirements would be needed to fine-tune project activities in order to be able to achieve MSC certification. This was addressed in mid-2013 by hiring an international expert for MSC certification in tuna fisheries. The expert Richard Banks, together with the project team, did not only prepare a comprehensive MSC pre-assessment, but also compiled a Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) Action Plan, which identified stakeholders and their responsibilities in achieving MSC certification. (*see Annex with MSC Pre-assessment and FIP Action Plan 2013*)
- In January 2015, WWF commissioned Richard Banks again to conduct a review of the PPTST fisheries to assess the progress of the project against the FIP Action Plan. The review also included a revision and adjustment of project activities against the updated MSC Fisheries Certification Requirements version (FCRv 2.0). The MSC Standard is anchored on three principles comprising a total of 30 Performance Indicators (PIs). The revised MSC standard that is now in force and has been downsized to 28 Performance Indicators.

Table1. Three main principles used by the Marine Stewardship Council in the certification process.

	Principles	Description
<b>Principle 1</b>	Sustainable fish stocks	The fish stock is in a healthy state.
<b>Principle 2</b>	Minimizing environmental impact	The fishery is not damaging the ecosystem in which it depends on.
<b>Principle 3</b>	Effective management	The fishery is managed in a sustainable way that ensures healthy fish stock in the long term.

- The assessment of the current status of the project fisheries against the MSC Performance Indicators (PIs), is based on results of the FIP review meeting conducted last January 2015 and shows the project's progress in complying with MSC requirements. In 2013, out of thirty- one PIs, only sixteen PIs were scored as "Pass" (> 80), twelve PIs scored " Pass with conditions" (60-79) and three PIs scored as "Fail" (<60). But in 2015, the new MSC Criteria now has only twenty-eight PIs, and out of this, twenty-two PIs were scored as "Pass" (>80) four were scored as "Pass with condition" (60-79) and the other 2 PIs scored as "Fail" (<60), as summarized in the table below.

Kommentar [BM1]: 28 or 29? Says 28 above.

Table 2: MSC Benchmark tracking tool:

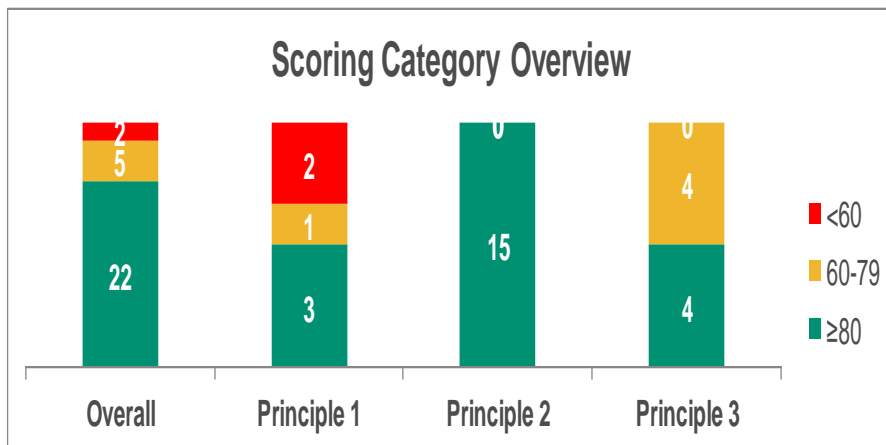
Principle	Component	PI number	Performance Indicator	MSC RESULTS					
				2011 (with Blueyou)		2013 (w/ Richard Banks)		2015 (w/Richard Banks)	
				PI Scores	Results	PI Scores	Results	PI Scores	Results
1	Outcome	1.1.1	Stock status	60	Pass w/ condition		Pass	80	Pass
		1.1.2	Reference points	80	Pass		Pass w/ condition	n.a.	n.a.
		1.1.3	Stock rebuilding	n.a.	n.a.		Pass w/ condition	n.a.	n.a.
	Management	1.2.1	Harvest Strategy	30	Fail		Fail	<60	Fail
		1.2.2	Harvest control rules and tools	30	Fail		Fail	<60	Fail
		1.2.3	Information and monitoring	40	Fail		Pass	90	Pass
		1.2.4	Assessment of stock status	70	Pass w/ condition		Pass	100	Pass

Principle	Component	PI number	Performance Indicator	MSC RESULTS					
				2011 (with Blueyou)		2013 (w/ Richard Banks)		2015 (w/Richard Banks)	
				PI Scores	Results	PI Scores	Results	PI Scores	Results
2	Retained species	2.1.1	Outcome	80	Pass		Pass w/ condition	80	Pass
		2.1.2	Management	60	Pass w/ condition		Pass w/ condition	100	Pass
		2.1.3	Information	60	Pass w/ condition		Pass w/ condition	80	Pass
	Bycatch species	2.2.1	Outcome	90	Pass		Pass	100	Pass
		2.2.2	Management	80	Pass		Pass	100	Pass
		2.2.3	Information	80	Pass		Pass	100	Pass
	ETP species	2.3.1	Outcome	95	Pass		Pass	100	Pass
		2.3.2	Management	n.a.	n.a.		Pass	100	Pass
		2.3.3	Information	60	Pass w/ condition		Pass w/ condition	100	Pass
	Habitats	2.4.1	Outcome	100	Pass		Pass	100	Pass
		2.4.2	Management	n.a.	n.a.		Pass	100	Pass
		2.4.3	Information	n.a.	n.a.		Pass	100	Pass
	Ecosystem	2.5.1	Outcome	80	Pass		Pass	80	Pass
		2.5.2	Management	n.a.	n.a.		Pass	80	Pass
		2.5.3	Information	60	Pass w/ condition		Pass w/ condition	80	Pass

Principle	Component	PI number	Performance Indicator	MSC RESULTS					
				2011 (with Blueyou)		2013 (w/ Richard Banks)		2015 (w/Richard Banks)	
				PI Scores	Results	PI Scores	Results	PI Scores	Results
3	Governance and Policy	3.1.1	Legal and customary framework	75	Pass		Pass	100	Pass
		3.1.2	Consultation, roles and responsibilities	80	Pass		Pass w/ condition	80	Pass
		3.1.3	Long term objectives	20	Fail		Pass	80	Pass
		3.1.4	Incentives for sustainable fishing	10	Fail		Pass	80	Pass
	Fishery specific management system	3.2.1	Fishery specific objectives	50	Fail		Pass w/ condition	60	Pass w/ condition
		3.2.2	Decision making processes	60	Pass w/ condition		Pass w/ condition	70	Pass w/ condition
		3.2.3	Compliance and enforcement	20	Fail		Pass w/ condition	70	Pass w/ condition
		3.2.4	Research plan	20	Fail		Fail	n.a.	n.a.
		3.2.5	Management performance evaluation	20	Fail			70	

Table 3: MSC Benchmark tracking tool summary: 0.84

Kommentar [BM2]: Formatting? Can't see the table.



- **(2) Risk Based Assessment:** The MSC's Risk Based Framework provides a structure for collecting credible qualitative information from a diverse range of stakeholders to enable scoring against Performance Indicators (PIs) for which insufficient quantitative data is available. The two PPTST sites were considered as a data deficient areas in terms of tuna fisheries. WWF deployed substantial resources to assess the impact of the handline fishery on primary, secondary, Endangered, Threatened and Protected ETP species and habitats. Following a data collection Program, WWF prepared the Productivity, Sensitivity Analysis (PSA) report covering all retained and baitfish species caught in each fishery. These demonstrated a low risk for all retained and bait species, minimal interaction with sharks, no interaction with dolphins and sea turtles and limited possibilities for entanglement from FADs.
- WWF will continue the data gathering in June 2015, to ensure a sufficient data collection for a project report on ecosystem interaction of the handline fishery elaborating the PSA report for the MSC assessor's to evaluate. In addition, PPTST also mobilized members of the Municipal Tuna Fishers Association (MTFA) to gather fish catch monitoring data in their respective localities to be used in PSA.
- **(3) Research Plan Development: Fisheries:** Research on the yellowfin tuna stock in the sites and at the national level is important to enable a science-based approach to fisheries management. The research plan included a proposal study on the gut content of tuna. It aims to identify the main diet of tunas so that future plans will include the management of tunas as well as the management of the type of fishery they feed on. Also, studies about gonadosomatic indices <sup>6</sup>(GSI) of yellowfin tunas, coupled with ichthyoplankton<sup>7</sup> studies, would help in identifying whether Lagonoy Gulf is a probable spawning site. These might be able to confirm or refute the hypothesis of the previous consultant, that the area is indeed a spawning ground, albeit it was only based on several anecdotal observations.
- However, the criteria for Research Plan Development has been removed from the current version of the MSC standard, but still remains part of the FIP since the FIP stakeholders wanted to keep it in to reflect the requirement to provide support for fishery specific research as part of the decision making process. WWF has continued to closely coordinate with the local universities with previous research interventions on tuna fisheries of the PPTST assisted sites. A series of meetings has been organized by PPTST and together with researchers from local Universities a research plan was developed to address tuna related research in Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait. The Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PCAARRD) were involved in the development of the research plan and committed to make funds available for the research proposals from the universities. Bicol University spearheaded the development of research proposal for the Lagonoy Gulf and for the Mindoro Strait, it was Western Philippine University. Both universities have developed a research development program related to Yellowfin Tuna and was submitted to DOST-PCAARRD<sup>8</sup> for possible funding.

<sup>5</sup>Gonadosomatic Index (GSI) is the ratio of fish gonad/egg weight to the body weight. It is particularly helpful in identifying days and seasons of spawning.

<sup>6</sup>Ichthyoplankton are the eggs and larvae of fish.

<sup>7</sup> DOST-PCAARD - Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology is a council that formulates policies, plans, and program for science and technology-based research and development in the different sectors under its concern.

The Bicol University developed a research plan entitled Enhancing Tuna Fishery Production in Lagonoy Gulf by Reducing Juvenile Catch, Sustaining Bait Fish and addressing other Challenges for Sustainability. The major research topics are as follows:

- a) Sustainable Tuna Industry in Lagonoy Gulf Through Sustained Bait Fishes
- b) Economic Analysis of Tuna Handline Fisheries in Lagonoy Gulf for Sustainable Fisheries and Resource Governance
- c) Partnership for Stewardship of Tuna Fisheries in Lagonoy Gulf;

For the Mindoro Strait, the Western Philippine University also developed a research plan and their major topics for research are:

- a) Fishing Methods, Gears and Accessories, and Areas of Tuna in Mindoro Strait
- b) Tuna Bait/Prey Fisheries
- c) Biology, Ecology and Population Dynamics of Tuna and Tuna-like Species
- d) Molecular Approaches on Tuna Fisheries Management in Mindoro Strait
- e) Analysis of Tuna Supply/ Value Chain in Mindoro Strait, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines.

- **(4) Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) Action Plan:** WWF together with its partners and stakeholders is promoting a Fishery Improvement Project. The FIP will support the goal of Marine Stewardship Council certification of the handline yellowfin tuna fishery in Mindoro Strait and Lagonoy Gulf. To this end, all stakeholders have endorsed the Fishery Improvement Plan. Outputs from the FIP are expected to support the strength of fisheries management both within the Philippines tuna sector as a whole, and for the handline fisheries in particular. In 2013, after the first internal pre-assessment, a corresponding FIP Plan was formulated and fifty-two (52) milestones were identified. In 2015, after the last FIP review, twenty-six (26) milestones were met, ten (10) milestones are still to be implemented effectively, fourteen (14) milestones were withdrawn because these management issues were no longer required due to improvements in the project related to these milestones. Only two (2) milestones outcomes related to governance still remain in the fail category. These are being prioritised in the WWF advocacy strategy. The revised FIP Action Plan now contains nineteen (19) milestones which need to be achieved before the project fisheries can go into the full MSC certification process.
- **Revised PPTST FIP Action Plan Milestones (until beginning of 2016):**
  1. Philippines incorporates Reference Points into the national tuna management strategy;
  2. Philippines to adopt the Conservation and Management Measures (CMM's) from the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) for yellowfin tuna (Revised wording to ensure actual and not compatible measures) in national fisheries legislation;
  3. Philippines to implement the Conservation and Management Measures (CMM's) from the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) for yellowfin tuna (Revised wording to ensure actual and not compatible measures) into Implementing Rules and Regulations;
  4. BFAR National, National FARMC's Municipal FARMC's develop CMM actions for 'other commercial' fisheries to conserve the yellowfin tuna stock (Focus of required action pertinent to handline fishery);
  5. Implement Municipal FARMC Codes consistent with WCPFC requirements for conserving the yellowfin tuna stock;
  6. Undertake and assess evidence that the measures established are effective;
  7. Summary data collected, rational for sampling and PSA written up into a PPTST ecosystem report;



8. Results from research on trophics (food chain) incorporated into stock assessment modeling;
9. Creation of a repository of FARMC minutes to demonstrate that the consultation system is effective
10. Update the National Tuna Management Plan to ensure that Conservation and Management Measures (CMM's) from the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and Reference Points are incorporated;
11. Upgrade the national tuna NTMP to include fishery specific objectives, outcomes and activities – This is already a stated requirement as part of the EU compliance;
12. Preparation of site-specific tuna management plan for Lagonoy Gulf and Mindoro Strait;
13. Strengthen Policy and guidelines on decision-making through BFAR by incorporating MSC principles;
14. Policy and guidelines strengthened on decision-making to include reference to decision making processes for Municipal FARMCs and National FARMC revised;
15. Evidence available that decisions in the tuna fisheries management respond to serious and other important issues identified through research and consultation and explanations are provided for any actions or lack of action;
16. All < 3 GT and > 3 GT tuna vessels registered and licensed;
17. Evaluate and implement incentive schemes to encourage licensing;
18. Research Plan developed by State Universities and colleges that support handline, as well as other fisheries;
19. Research results disseminated to the FARMCs

#### 4. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES:

The WWF project team encountered various implementation challenges in the course of the project implementation.

- **(1) Compliance on Licensing of Tuna Vessels:** Anywhere in the world, fisheries registration and licensing are the foundation of all fisheries management schemes but registration is not the same as licensing. Registration is required for the fishers to provide pertinent information before they can be lawfully allowed to engage in fishing activities while on the other hand, issuance of licenses and permits grant the fishers the right to gain access to fishery resources within municipal waters and engage in fishing and fishery related activities. Adherence to the annual process of licensing of tuna vessels and ensuring high compliance has been a critical challenge of the project. Fishers and vessels registration can easily be fulfilled by tuna fishers since it is just one time registration as provided by law and were mostly free of charges. While vessel and gear licensing is an annual requirement and with corresponding annual fees. The Local Government Code of 1991 (R.A. 7160) mandates the municipalities to have the exclusive authority to grant fishery privileges in the municipal waters and impose rentals, fees or charges. With this autonomy of the LGUs, the implementation of the licensing systems varies from one municipality to the others, even the cost and scheme of payments on licensing fees as imposed by their respective Municipal Fisheries Ordinances differs, some are free, some with affordable licensing fees and others are expensive for the fishers to pay. The project needs to harmonize these varying policies and find some licensing scheme that will facilitate high compliance for tuna fishers in order to combat IUU Fishing. The LGUs need to realize that aside from revenue generation on fisheries rentals and licenses, fisheries regulation and effective management is what matters most.

- **(2) Complexity of the Supply Chain:** Every site has different trading systems depending on the target market outlet they sold their tunas. The buying stations have various marketing strategies to ensure steady supply of the tunas from the fishers. In most cases, they finance the fishing operations of the tuna fishers, while other casa owners provided financial credits to tuna fishers families for their basic necessities in order to tie –up these fishers and oblige them to land their catch to their buying station, leaving the fishers no choice at all to bargain for a higher price with several buying stations. There were many variations in the structure of the tuna supply chain in every site, some operate with middlemen, some with associated buying stations while others are direct with exporters. The project attempted to document the trade flow of the tuna supplies and its impacts on the lives of the tuna fishers and the fisheries because at the moment what is more visible is the improvement of the buying stations facilities and economic gains of the buying station owners who are also the financiers of the tuna fishing operations.
- **(3) Changes in Administration and Political Leadership:** The project has been affected by the changes in leadership at the local level due to the 2013 local election. Some of the Local Chief Executives (LCEs), whom the project considered as cause champions ended their term of office or were defeated in the electoral process. With this, the project started all over again in establishing rapport and securing buy-ins to various LGUs. Now, the project will be facing more challenges with the upcoming 2016 national election since it is expected that major changes of leadership from local to national level will be encountered again by the project thus affecting some important policy advocacies.

## 5. LESSONS LEARNED:

The following are the lessons learned from the first Phase of PPTST project implementation and its strategic approaches to ensure both sustainability and adaptability for future interventions by the project key stakeholders and integral partners from government agencies and other institutions.

- **(1) Building Constituency and Alliance with Strategic Groups and Institutions:** Partnership building requires close coordination with various stakeholders. It is very important to create both vertical and horizontal linkages. It is also very essential to build relationships and reach consensus because institutional coordination involves more than formal agreements and commitments. What is most important in developing successful institutional coordination is the prolonged engagement and sincere friendship among tuna fishers, buying stations, local traders, exporters, LGU officials, partners from national agencies and other institutions. The strong partnership of WWF with the various institutions in fisheries management has promoted the ideals and principles on good governance. WWF's partnership has been further strengthened and has become very productive through regular planning and feedback sessions with all the stakeholders in every activity being conducted. The collaboration with LGUs, i.e. provincial, municipal and barangay level were instrumental in the formation of tuna fishers' organizations in all fifteen municipalities of Lagonoy Gulf and six municipalities in Mindoro Strait. These institutions are part of the tuna fisheries management framework required at the grassroots level to ensure proper implementation of tuna fisheries Conservation and Management Measures. Only through continued support of these institutions could the newly established fisheries management framework remain operational. In each province, alliances were established with the provincial offices and institutions.

These provincial government institutions are essential in ensuring that each local government is functioning cohesively especially in a gulf wide or province wide tuna management plan and in sustaining the impacts and objectives of the project. By virtue of Local Government Code, they are the frontline institutions apart from BFAR, mandated with the primary responsibility for the management of natural resources. They are especially created to support and provide technical assistance to the constituent cities and municipalities to implement and scale up initiatives towards responsible practices and good governance. Also, the provincial legislative body is mandated to review municipal ordinances.

- **(2) Favorable Political Environment:** Securing support of the stakeholders from different localities is best ensured by emphasizing the role of the LGUs in FIP implementation. Tapping or identifying potential leaders or strategic key influencers of a certain locality is very crucial in the successful implementation of any fishery improvement project. Careful scrutiny of the socio-political dynamics of the LGUs must be considered. Different sites have very different dynamics; hence a flexible management approach must be employed depending on the pace of the LGUs and its constituents to adopt good fishery governance practices. Some local determining factors must be taken into account such as the policy process, political will, good leadership, commitment and capacities of its officials and staff in fisheries management. The progress of the project was largely affected by the different levels of capacity, awareness and priorities of each LGU. The project staff had to closely collaborate with identified local counterparts at LGU offices to prove sincerity in our partnership with them. As the project progressed, LGUs officers were constantly provided with project updates to maintain good relationships and keep their interest drawn to the project. It was essential that the members of the WWF project team also engaged and supported important social events of the localities, whether with direct relevance to the tuna project or not, so as to maintain the trust and confidence of the stakeholders in the project and its undertakings for the greater benefit of the constituents of the LGU particularly with the tuna fishing communities.
- **(3) Empowering Tuna Fishing Communities:** Understanding the social dynamics of the fishing communities are highly important where the interests and perceived needs of the fishers were determined. A series of focused group discussions with relevant stakeholders in the localities were held during the preparatory stage of the project to come up with situational analysis, prioritizing related activities and diagnosing the organizational structure. The formation of the tuna fishers' organizations was a tedious process that involved a series of dialogues, consultations and meetings with fishers in an effort to motivate interest and appreciation for the significance of such an organization. Trust building was needed amongst the members of the fishing communities prior to any intervention. The social marketing approaches were employed to gain meaningful participation at the grassroots level. The community integration activities were repeated until the majority of the tuna fishers joined in. Through these interactions, the understanding of the fishers on the need to manage their resources for a secured and sustained livelihood was enhanced. The growing support base was manifested by the successful organisation of tuna fisher associations in each municipality of the two project site.

## 6. WAY FORWARD:

The project team will be starting to implement the second phase of the project with Bell and Coop as continuing funders , as well as new funding donors from the seafood companies of the United Kingdom, namely; New England Seafood International, Waitrose, Sainsburys and Marks and Spencers. It will be co-funded by the DEG through a second public-private partnership program since DEG, a subsidiary of German government-owned development bank, will continue to supporting the follow-on the project. The main focus of the follow-on project is to prepare the two project sites to enter the MSC-full assessment by 2016 and with the aim to obtain MSC certification of the yellowfin tuna handline fisheries of both project sites in 2017. The focus will also be on continuing to support the overall goal of the project to ensure sustainable catch levels in the yellowfin tuna fishery which will secure the livelihoods of the artisanal fishers and their families in the two project sites in the long-term.