



CASE STUDY: SUSTAINABLE SEAWEED FARMING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Microfinance to strengthen seaweed farming practices and build climate resilience.

Lead organisation (sponsors) and partner:
WWF-Philippines and Amogues Fisherfolks Association

Country/region: Philippines - Palawan



Overview: Palawan is one of the Philippines' major seaweed producing regions, with seaweed providing a vital livelihood for coastal communities. However, seaweed farming is threatened by climate change through rising ocean temperatures and increased storm intensity.

To test ways of improving the ecological and economic viability of seaweed farming, this project works in collaboration with a local fisherfolk organisation – the Amogues Fisherfolks Association (AFA) – to promote sustainable seaweed farming and protect vital coastal habitats. It aims to demonstrate the capacity of community-led seaweed farming to attract funding for improving seaweed cultivation and processing practices, and to establish robust governance for managing the greater commercialisation of AFA business.

Current status:

- **Project feasibility studies** have assessed the economic case for shifting to more sustainable, productive seaweed farming.
- **A seaweed farmers' training toolkit** has been launched with the AFA.
- **A seaweed nursery** has been established and installed offshore.
- **The AFA has established a Group Savings and Loans Association (GSLA)**, keeping local savings within the community, reducing reliance on buyers or external lenders for expensive short-term finance.
- **The project has signed an MoA with local public authorities**, confirming their support and collaboration.
- **Initial discussions with Philippine financial institutions** are being held to establish funding appetite for projects of this type.

Collective project expenditure (CapEx):
nursery, dryers, storage facilities

\$ = CapEx

Amogues Fisherfolk Association

Philippine bank or microfinance institution

\$ = total microfinance

Fisherfolk equipment and working capital

Microfinance disbursements

Community cash box (GSLA)

Sponsor estimated capital cost (current phase):

MICROSCALE FINANCE

Revenue sources:

National and export seaweed market

FACTSHEET



Successes or innovative features: The intended project structure is a model for how small-scale NbS can address both centralised funding needs and on-the-ground (or in the water) individual farmer needs. Nursery set-up, drying and storage facilities can be Association level capital expenditures, while through the GSLA (which can borrow), individual farmer equipment and working capital needs can be met.

Impact Measurement: Project monitoring will include indicators for:

- Quantity and variety of seaweed seedlings available to farmers, aiming to increase marketable yields and reduce seaweed disease
- Improving drying and storage
- Income improvements from higher yields, higher quality and ability to store harvests
- The number of farmers helped to break out of predatory lending cycles.

Scalability and replication potential: Scope for operating scale-up is limited due to the small size of licensed individual seaweed plots, and the need for adjacent landing and drying. Financing scale-up is limited to microfinance or SME lending. However, this project's model is being developed to be replicable to other areas, to serve as an exemplar business case lending proposition for domestic banks to apply in a targeted lending programme.

“The Accelerator provides crucial support [to develop] seaweed production's commercialization and scalability potential in Sitio Amogues

- Geoff Aludia, WWF-Philippines