

MEMORANDUM

TO : **The Regional Executive Directors**
All DENR Regions except CAR

FROM : The Undersecretary for Special Concerns
and Director, in concurrent capacity

SUBJECT : **HIGHLIGHTS AND AGREEMENTS MADE DURING THE
NATIONAL ORIENTATION OF THE IFIT IUU FISHING INDEX
AND THREAT ASSESSMENT TOOL**

DATE :

This is in reference to the recently conducted National Orientation For The Roll-out Of the Philippine Illegal, Unreported And Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Index And Threat Assessment Tool (I-FIT) last 27 July 2021.

The IUU fishing assessment using the I-FIT Tool seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the vulnerability, prevalence and current responses to IUU fishing in specific sites, for consolidation to a national database which may be used by all concerned government agencies and private institutions. Together with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and USAID FishRight Project, we target the implementation of long-term solutions to threats to biodiversity and the coastal and marine environment.

The Workshop was able to provide our DENR Regional participants with the overview and scope of the I-FIT, including the way forward on the activities to be supported by the Regions. Our attendees were able to provide an initial list of NIPAS MPAs and a tentative list of local government units where I-FIT can be implemented.

In relation thereto, kindly see attached Records of Discussion of the said orientation, together with the initially-identified areas by the participating representatives from your respective offices. You may access the zoom recording of the orientation at <https://tinyurl.com/IFITNationalOrientation> and the google site of the IFIT at <https://tinyurl.com/IFITGSite>.

We hereby request your office to provide us with your concurrence on the use of the IFIT Tool and your determined list of priority areas, **on or before 13 August 2021**, for our consolidation and endorsement to BFAR and FishRight. Should you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Jacqueline V. Concepcion at email address cmd@bmb.gov.ph or at phone number +(632)9258948.

For your information and appropriate action.

EDILBERTO DC LEONARDO

Cc: The National Director, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
The Administrator, USAID

**National Orientation For The Roll-out Of The Philippine Illegal, Unreported And
Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Index And Threat Assessment Tool (I-FIT)**

27 July 2021, 9AM-12PM

Records of Discussion

Agenda:

- a. to present the overview, scope, and activities under the I-FIT to the DENR field offices;
- b. to get the commitment and support of the DENR and Regional Field Offices on the implementation of the I-FIT; and
- c. to establish the way-forward and activities of the BFAR to be supported by the DENR Regional Offices for 2021.

Attendees: (see attached)

Facilitator: Ms Siara Jeanne Nulada

I. Preliminaries

Welcome Remarks of Ms. Desiree Eve R. Maaño, BMB

IUU fishing has been a widespread problem and global concern that needs to be urgently addressed not only because of its seemingly vast impact on our marine environment but also because of its threatening effect on the fishery sector. Statistics reveal that IUU fishing in the country ranged from 27-40% in 2019, which amounts to around P62 billion in annual losses. The pandemic hasn't stopped the IUU fishing incidence as there are reports mentioning that there is an apparent increase in IUU fishing especially during the lockdowns when patrol activities were reduced in our waters. BMB is glad that our partner from the BFAR is continuously strengthening their assets and capabilities in order to provide a more robust and responsive structure to promote fisher compliance to laws and regulations and to eliminate the IUU fishing practice in the country following a whole-of-society approach and guided by the best available science.

Recognition of Participants (attendance sheet as attached)

Welcome Remarks of Assistant Director for Operations Samuel Malvas, BFAR

Assistant Director Sammy Malvar commended the efforts of the government agencies; the enforcement, the functions, and their mandates to fight and arrest our problem with the illegal unreported IUU fishing. He enumerated programs and activities BFAR implemented to combat this problem. They are currently implementing the following:

- Integrated Marine Environment Control System. With the idea of monitoring the operations/ activities of the commercial fishing operators.

- Boat Registrations and fisherfolk registration systems- Implemented several years ago. Currently, we have about 1.9 million individuals already in the registry system.
- Licensing and registration of Commercial Business fishing Vessels- included in the database.

Despite the numerous programs, there are still illegal IUU fishing reported. DENR is actively pursuing IUU under their jurisdiction. Actual quantification of the extent of IUU Fishing figure in the PH is still not available, thus, the assessment tool will provide us with a very good estimation of the extent and impacts of IUU fishing to our ecosystem and to our economy This will be helpful in identifying long term solutions to IUU fishing and will also help in the monitoring of interventions. The collaboration of different government agencies is one of the highlights; the BFAR DENR convergence initiative is still in the works and the IFIT rollout can be one of its main initiatives.

Presentation of the Objectives of the session - Siara Nulada

Ms. Siara Nulada then proceeded to discuss the objectives of the session namely a.) The presentation of the overview, scope, and activities under the I-FIT to the DENR Field offices, b.) the gathering of commitment and support of the DENR Regional Field Offices on the implementation of the I-FIT and c.) the establishment of the ways-forward to be supported by the DENR Regional Offices for 2021.

II. Background and Rationale

Philippine IUU Fishing Index and Threat Assessment (I-FIT) Tool

Crejay Lacena, OIC FPLEG, BFAR

Background of I-FIT Tool by Mr. Crejay Lacena

Mr. Lacena discussed the background of the I-FIT tool, the first issue that he tackled was why do we need a tool to assess IUU fishing in the Philippines and that is because there is a large percentage of apprehension made in municipal waters due to unregulated fishing and the I-FIT tool will be helpful in addressing this issues. Mr. Lacene then proceeded to present the data of BFAR of the activities they have done to address IUU fishing, these include Seaborne patrols, Landing denials, marker denials, mobile checkpoints, and special operations. Also, poachers have been apprehended which are part of the illegal trade of marine species.

Mr. Lacena also discussed the different types of established hotspots during the apprehension and the kinds of IUU fishing such as Danish Seine fishing, Commercial

Fishing Vessels (CFV) intrusion in municipal waters, dynamite fishing, cyanide fishing and poaching by foreign fishing vessels. He then proceed on the numbers of apprehensions BFAR has conducted in the last 5 years and mention the areas where most of the apprehensions take place (*Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Cagayan, Camarines Sur, Quezon, Pangasinan, Cavite, Misamis Oriental, Samar, Zamboanga City, Easter Samar, Bulacan*). He then stated that majority of the apprehensions are not broadcasted but media stations are now starting to notice the efforts of BFAR on the issue of apprehension

RATIONALE

The rationale of the workshop is as follows;

- How much more do we need to do to eliminate IUU fishing?
- How far have we gone in preventing, deterring and eliminating IUU fishing
- How small is the IUU result

IFIT Tool - partnership from FishRight

Mr. Lacena then proceeded with the discussion on how the I-FIT tool on fighting IUU fishing, IUU fishing utilizes its advantage due to it's covert nature and the IFIT tool will utilize the engagement of the general public to be updated with what is happening with IUU fishing. The I-FIT tool will also utilize science-guided and evidence-based planning for large, purposive and measurable reduction of IUU fishing in hotspot areas, and lastly this will also provide a basis to increase resources need and generate additional support community and other groups to eliminate IUU fishing from the community.

III. Presentation of the I-FIT Tool

Dr. Michael Atrigenio (USAID) presented an overview of the IFIT Tool. He said that IUUF constitutes around 30-40% of our fish catch, and we have to address this because it contributes to overfishing. He mentioned that overfishing has a cascading effect on our marine ecosystem. Further, IUUF undermines our activities/program in protecting our coastal and marine resources in general. Key messages from his presentation include the following:

- i. Initiatives are already being done (e.g. apprehensions) but this does not give an idea to what is really happening with regard to IUUF, so there's really a need for a tool. IFIT Tool is the first tool developed for the Philippines that will enable us to show the bigger picture, assess and score the severity of the problem, and plan out for reduction.

- ii. There's really a need to address IUUF because it contributes largely to our national catch. Data we have right now are from regional or international efforts. It is estimated that we are losing as much as USD 1B/year or Php 60B per year due to IUUF.
- iii. IUUF assessment must be done at the municipal level. The national data is not enough to show where the prevalence of the IUUF is. IFIT Tool envisions to come up with an estimate of IUUF based on our own data from the ground up. Baseline will be useful when we monitor later on.
- iv. Our water is very vast, assessment and monitoring of IUUF cannot be done by BFAR alone. Because IUUF is illegal, no one will report (give data) because of its covert nature. There is a need to engage the general public because they are also the source of information. There is a need to engage other agencies to capacitate or even the LGUs and HUCs because they will be the one to roll this out on the ground.
- v. IFIT tool is measuring more the "Illegal" component, compared to the other two components of IUUF which is the "unregulated" and "unreported".
- vi. The Philippines, in general, has a high prevalence of IUUF but not the entire country has that large amount of fishery resources that can attract IUUF.
- vii. IFIT tool is just a collection of tools to guide the development of IUU Fishing Reduction Plans and assess interventions towards deterring, preventing, and eliminating IUU fishing in Philippine waters across various levels of governance, from municipal to national. It is envisioned to be used regularly (e.g. annually).
- viii. Currently, application of the IFIT Tool was done in three FishRight sites. The process was participative in nature, data was provided by different enforcement agencies, universities and state colleges, DENR, LGUs, etc. Through the IFIT application, IUUF in Calamianes (4 LGUs), Southern Negros (11 LGUs) and Visayan Sea was quantified at Php 45M, Php 65M, and Php 175M (10 LGUs), respectively. Another good thing about this tool is that it identifies the sources of IUUF (connectivity of illegal fishing) as well as the gears used. Further, the same participants scored prevalence and vulnerability of IUUF in their sites. A map was generated with all the scores from the sites and it shows that Calamianens has high prevalence of IUUF, which actually makes sense because Palawan is considered as the last frontier and all kinds of fishers congregate in this area.

- ix. The most important part of the tool is the planning part. We use the information gathered from the assessment to address the IUUF. This is what we call evidence-based planning. Sometimes the problem is so huge that we cannot address it all at once. There is a need to prioritize.
- x. The other aspect of the tool is how we can communicate the report. Data must reach the decision makers. The map helps the decision-makers to easily visualize where the prevalence is so that they can prioritize and know where to channel their resources.
- xi. IFIT is envisioned to be rolled out to at least a hundred municipalities this year, and in the next 2-3 years, to all coastal areas nationwide.
- xii. Currently, USAID and BFAR is trying to convince more agencies and other interested individuals to participate because this cannot be done by USAID or BFAR alone. IUUF fishing is quite a serious problem. It is undermining our efforts in NIPAS MPAs because our MPA incidentally has a higher biomass of fish, it becomes a natural magnet for IUUF. This alone should be a rationale for participating in the IUUF benchmarking. We have to address IUUF at a larger scale not just in identified fishing grounds but also in the NIPAS MPAs managed by the DENR.

IV. GSuite Navigation

Atty. Wilmon Peñalosa of USAID Fish Right provided a preview of the GSuite for the Philippine I- FIT. This website serves as the database of the reference materials and guide on the process of assessing the vulnerability, prevalence and current responses to IUU fishing of certain areas. The I-FIT has 3 components, namely: Part A: IUU Fishing Assessment Guide, Part B: IUU Fishing Index Scoring Form, and Part C: IUU Fishing Reduction Planning Guide. Part C is still under the development phase. For each component, there were session guides and pre-recorded presentations to guide the facilitators and field implementers on the process of assessing the IUU fishing. He also mentioned that besides the presentations, there were forms that can be accessed on the website, as a guide on scoring and evaluating the indicators and index of IUU fishing. He added that the website has a discussion board feature that would be an avenue for the user's feedback, comments and other ideas with regards to the tool.

V. Presentation of the Roll-out Map

Mr. Howard Cafugauan of USAID Fish Right presented the BFAR and USAID Fish Right schedule and the target areas for the I- FIT roll-out. Hereunder are the highlights of his presentation, to wit:

i. Among the identified sites for National IUU Assessment , only Siargao Island was already oriented on the IUU FIT , last June 2021. Provinces under Region 13 such as Agusan del Norte, Dinagat Island, Surigao del Sur were scheduled in the 3rd Quarter.

ii. Rest of the target sites are still to be identified as to the time and dates for the assessment (refer to the presentation in <https://tinyurl.com/IFITNationalOrientation>).

iii. Some of the sites/ provinces are being scheduled in partnership with different NGOs and CSOs that are operating in the area (e.g. Rare Philippines in Sorsogon). In the case in Region 12 they have identified local NGOs and institutions to help facilitate the workshop.

iv. Since the tool is in its roll-out phase, it tries to cover and assess the cases of IUU fishing in different water bodies. The BFAR and Fish Right have included areas in Cordillera Administrative Region to assess the IUU fishing in riverine areas. In addition, BFAR targeted to cover more than 100 municipalities for this year 2021 and expected to continue over time. An IUU national report on the areas will be released by the end of the year presenting the results of the areas assessed in this roll-out.

V. The purpose of showing the map and the proposed schedule is to have a discussion on the identified areas that could overlap with the NIPAS- MPAs and under DENR's jurisdiction. In addition, this is also to gather commitments and discuss the further collaboration with BFAR counterparts. This tool can be harmonized with the DENR's efforts and initiatives in maintaining and protecting our NIPAS- MPAs and further strengthen the collaboration with DA- BFAR.

VI. Question and Answer (Open Forum)

The presentation proper was followed by a 20 minute Open Forum, where the concerns, queries and recommendations of the participants were addressed. This was facilitated by the following representatives, to wit:

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|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Sir Howard Cafugauan | USAID - FishRight |
| 2. Atty Alett Nuñez | USAID - FishRight |
| 3. Atty Wilmon Peñalosa | USAID - FishRight |
| 4. Dr. Mike Atrigenio | USAID - FishRight |

5. Ms Mary Rose Martin

BFAR - Fisheries Protection and Law
Enforcement (FPLEG)

6. Ms Siara Nulada

DENR - BMB

7. Ms Criselda Castor

DENR - BMB

Questions/Concerns Raised	Response
Question from Region1- Abra is considered as landlocked area, why is it included given IUU fishing is more prevalent in coastal areas	<p>Sir Howard: Actually, it was also consulted with the team with regards to the inclusion of landlocked regions such as Cordillera Administrative Region given it is not a coastal area. We have agreed not to limit the tool in coastal areas, instead we will try to apply this tool if in any case there will be IUU fishing in riverine areas. Also with coordination with BFAR-CAR they will pilot this on Abra River.</p> <p>DENR Region 1: We suggest changing the areas in Cordillera to the areas in La Union, since there are NIPAS- MPAs located in the region.</p> <p>Sir Howard: We acknowledge the suggestion of Sir Ariel. This could be helpful, since BFAR targeted Lingayen Gulf for Region 1, and still no feedback on it. We can advise BFAR Region 1 to reach out and invite your Office to explore the areas of collaboration in initiating this tool.</p>
Question of Region 13 – Explain further the map for region 13	<p>Sir Howard: R13 BFAR is leading the mapping in R13, covering all of Agusan this Norte this week, by next month, Surigao del Sur. They are already done with Siargao, and the next target is Dinagat scheduled this August.</p> <p>Ms Siara: Maybe our Field Offices can contribute to the activities going on in the field in partnership with BFAR</p>
Question from Region 7: Why is there only	Ms Rose: The BFAR R7 is already conducting

<p>seaborne patrolling activities (in the presentation) for Region 7? No market denial and others</p>	<p>land-based operations (not reflected in the presentation)</p>
<p>Question from R6 CDD: How can the DENR engage in the activities, considering that R6 top the Regions in terms of IUU</p>	<p>Atty Alett: While we did see that R6 has the most apprehensions, this does not translate that they have the most IUU incidence. It could be that they have the most apprehensions because of the persistence and hard work of the enforcement team. Precisely why we have the IFIT Tool as explained, mostly what we have is apprehension data, not the IUU fishing. That's why we have the IUU Fishing assessment. The DENR can extend their help in areas identified by BFAR, NGOs and SUCs where the IFIT tool will be used. We hope that DENR will adapt the use of the IFIT to determine the extent of IUU in your areas. At the same time, the information that DENR can gather will contribute to the baseline data. We hope to cover as many LGUs as possible this 2021. In the spirit of bayanihan, we would also like to engage DENR, of course subject to the availability of your resources, if you would wish to use the IFIT Tool, there is a guide/website where you can get all the materials, what you just need to do is use it, implement it, decide to use it and decide to contribute to the IUU Fishing.</p> <p>You can decide with your PAMO if you want to do the IUU Fishing Assessment in target areas in NIPAS MPAs. Our base would be the LGU, we can do the assessment with the cluster of LGU, this will be a 1 day workshop, BFAR can also conduct a training for the facilitators., You can also go to the website.</p> <p>Points to the IFIT implementation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check if you have available resources in your target areas 2. Inform BFAR where the areas are

	<p>3. BFAR and FishRight can provide the Training</p> <p>4. BFAR and FishRight can provide the materials for the forms that you may need</p> <p>Counter parting on the expenses would be on the venue and the food for the participants.</p> <p>That's route 1, for route 2, you can work closely with your BFAR Field counterpart, so that next year, when the LGUs do their IUU Fishing Assessment, you can be one of the facilitators. What we are envisioning is for a National Baseline on IUU Fishing which may be used by the BFAR, DENR as well as other agencies such as the PNP Maritime Group. We have the Philippine Committee on IUU Fishing Assessment, and the hope is every year, the IUU fishing assessment will become an irregular activity for our target areas, in the LGUs and NIPAs areas, especially if IUU fishing is a big threat that you've identified in the MPA Management Plan. And then the idea is to have the national baseline so we can compare, not just in terms of output indicators and apprehension reports but a standardized and comparable index.</p>
<p>Region 11: On the Fishing issues, what and how many kilometers is allowed, especially in those small fisherfolks, because we can still see fisherfolks fishing nearby seas.</p>	<p>Ms Rose: There is no limit for small fishing folks or municipal fishing boats, there is no boundary as to where they can fish, but rather as to the distance where their boat can reach. For commercial fishing vessels, they can only fish outside the municipal waters, or the 15km distance from the shoreline.</p>
<p>Siara: Are there laws that we have to specifically look into when we are talking about the NIPAs areas? Including laws in relation to the Fisheries Law.</p>	<p>Atty Alett: Right now the IFIT Tool is focused on fishing law violation incidence, the version 1 of IFIT, for the version 2 which we may prepare next year, we can include endangered species in relation to the NIPAs areas and to</p>

	<p>capture more of this.</p> <p>Sir Wilmon: The current version of the tool was actually used in the MPA Assessments (threat mapping) in the Palawan area. It's something that you can actually use.</p>
<p>Region 10: Do we have IUU reports beyond the 15km , for instance on unregistered commercial fishing, can we use the IFIT Tool beyond the 15km mark?</p>	<p>Atty Wilmon: We are still developing the tool on how to capture the data outside the 15km mark, with BFAR and the other agencies, and it would be good to bring DENR into the discussion also.</p> <p>Doc Mike: NIPAS areas are different, for instance the fishing grounds. In NIPAS Areas you have your own norms and regulations, even your own zoning, no-take area and multiple use zones. For example, if they fish in a no take zone, it is already a violation. There's no need for you to read out all the Fisheries Law, because you can already determine if there are violations/illegal activity through the regulations imposed in NIPAS areas.</p>

VII. Agreements:

As a way-forward, Ms Criselda Castor of DENR-BMB suggested individual expression of each region on the use of the IFIT Tool, and their initially identified priority sites, as well as the LGUs that they can initially identify to be covered for the assessment. For clarifications, the responses from the Regional and Field Offices are not binding, for the meantime, the purpose of the consultation is for the DENR and BFAR to have an idea at the national level on what the Field Offices can commit. The commitment of each Office shall be endorsed to the BMB through each respective Regional Executive Directors.

The responses of the DENR Regions are reflected as follows:

REGION	Will adapt the Use of the IFIT Tool? (Yes/No)	Priority Sites/Remarks
I	Yes	HINP - Alaminos City ADPLS - Sto Tomas, Rosario and Ago
II	Yes	PPLS NSMNP - Palanan, Divilacan and Maconacon, Dinapigue
III	Yes	Bataan (within Manila Bay and portion of the WPS) MOBPLS
IV-A		
IV-B	Yes	(subject for concurrence of PAMB)
V	Yes	TBPPS (for discussion with PAMB) JOPARVINZ and Asid Gulf Inclusion of MPADANGAT for discussion with FO and PAMB
VI	Yes	TINMR and Sagay (for discussion with the field offices and PAMB)
VII	Yes	Tanon Strait, subject for PAMBs approval for funding
VIII	Yes	GMRPLS- Guiuan Eastern Samar, subject to the concurrence of the PASU and PAMB
IX	Yes	Priority areas for discussion with the Field Offices and PAMB

X	Yes	Further discussion with the CENRO and include in the PAMB meeting
XI	Yes	Mabini Protected Landscape, Davao, for concurrence of the Mabini-MPLS PMB
XII	Yes	Sarangani Bay Seascape
XIII	Yes	Western Dinagat Landscape and Seascape For discussion with other PENROs and CENROs

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