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# Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) Implementation in the Philippines

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Regional Workshop on Information Exchange on Monitoring Control and Surveillance for Combating IUU Fishing  
in Southeast Asia, 24–26 February 2026 Bangkok, Thailand



# Fisheries Profile

## OVERVIEW & ECONOMY

Number of Fisherfolk as of 2023

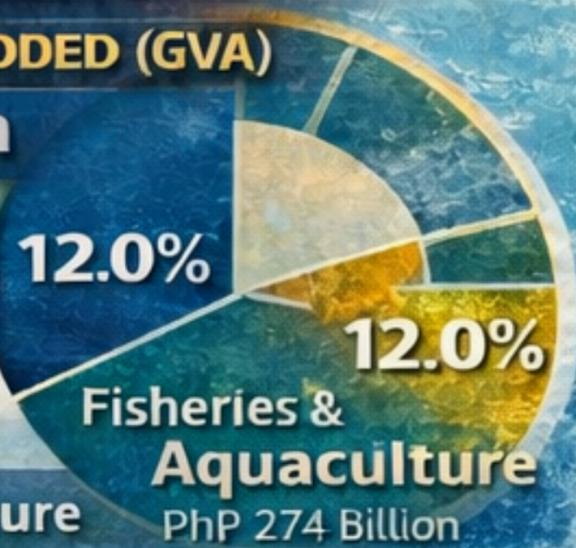
**2,299,127**

**4,560**

## GROSS VALUE ADDED (GVA)

**PHP 2.29 Trillion**

- Agriculture Crops 44.8%
- Livestock Industry 13.9%
- Support activities in agriculture, forestry & fishing 12.0%



### - Fisheries & Aquaculture

**Commercial**  
**4,560** (3.1 GT and above)

**407,215** (~3.1 GT)

## FISHING FLEET & VESSELS

**Total = Fishing vessels** of December 2023:

**4,560**

**Commercial fishing**  
 ~ 3.1-GT and above

**407,215**

**Municipal (up to 3 GT)**  
 ~ 3.1 GT

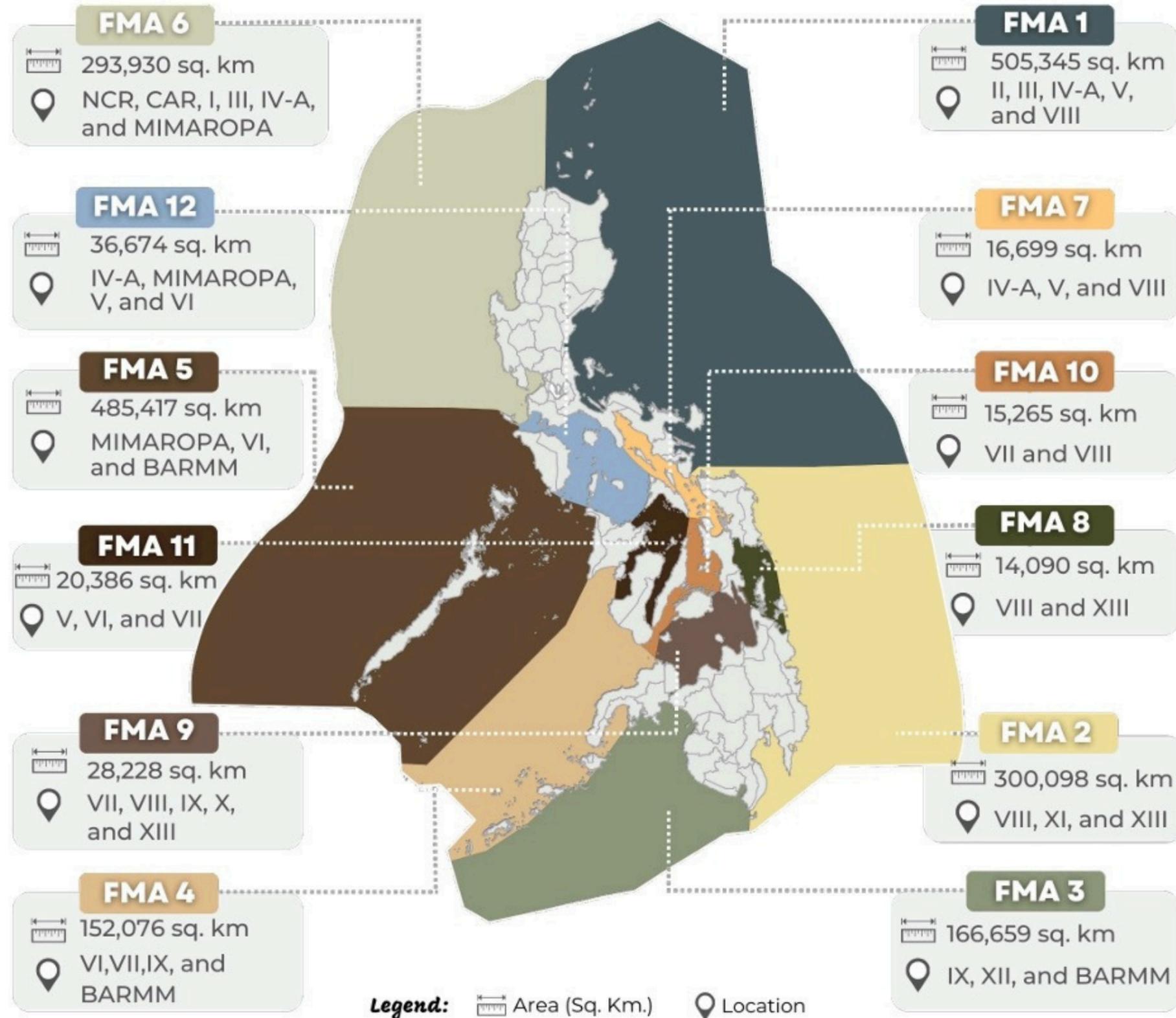
## FISHERFOLK STATISTICS

Average monthly family income of Fisherfolk

**PHP 15,617,50** | **~12% of GDP**  
 Fishing Contribute (2023)

## TOP COMMERCIAL FISH SPECIES

- 1. Skipjack Tuna** 399,000
- 2. Yellowfin Tuna** ~118,000
- 3. Tilapia** ~117,000
- 4. Roundscad (Galunggong)** ~97,000
- 5. Sardines** ~90,000



# Fisheries Management Areas

## Establishment & Goal:

To address overfishing and habitat destruction, the FMA approach moved management from a strictly political boundary to an ecological one (stock distribution, oceanography)

## Structure & Participation:

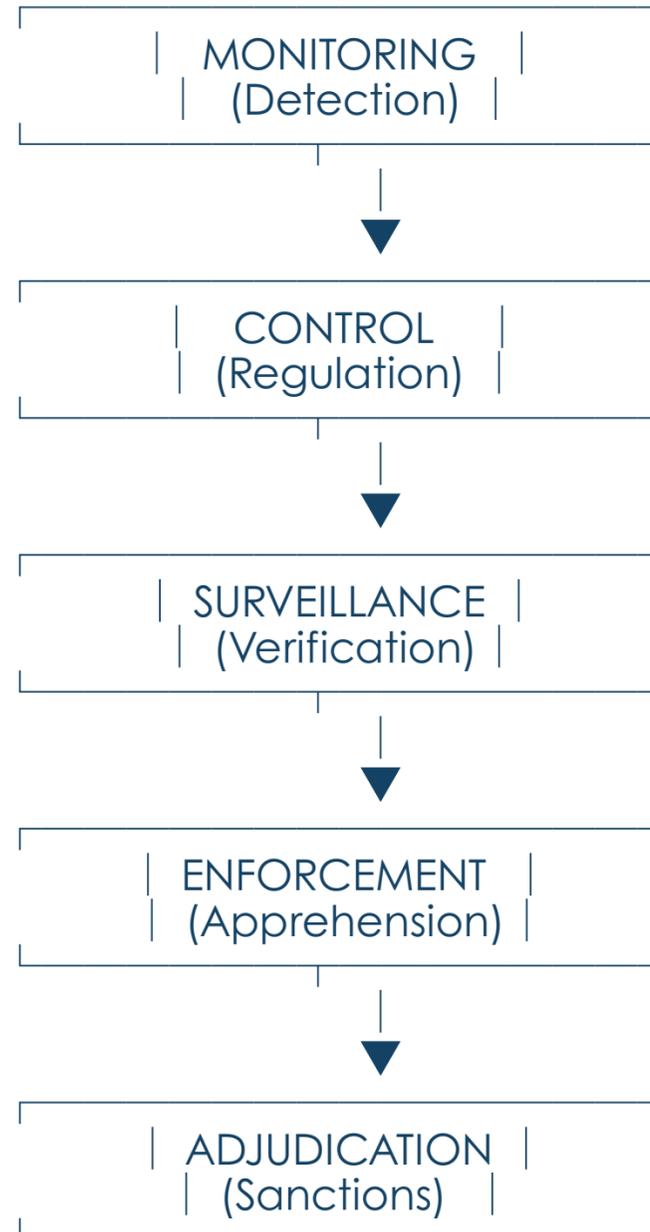
Each FMA is governed by a management board representing stakeholders, including fishers, traders, and local government, focusing on science-based data for decision-making.

## Sub-sectors Managed:

Covers municipal (within 15 km of the coast) and commercial fisheries (beyond 15 km) to curb illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

# NATIONAL MCS FRAMEWORK

## NATIONAL MCS SYSTEM – PHILIPPINES



# Monitoring



**NSAP**

National Stock Assessment Program



**VMS**

Vessel Monitoring System



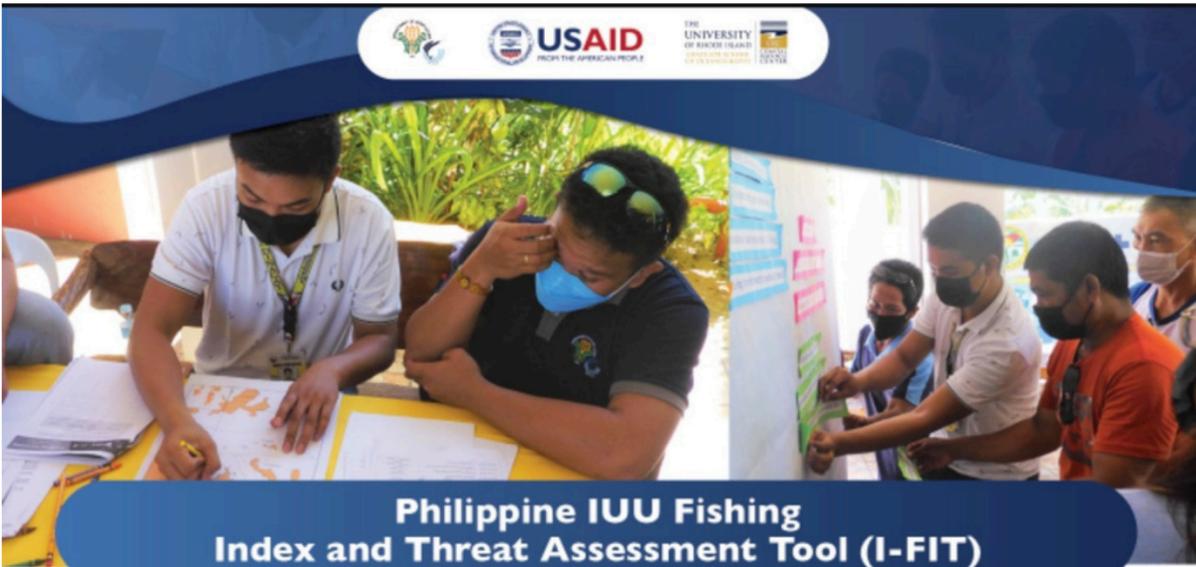
**FISHERIES OBSERVERS PROGRAM**



Gathering data to support better management of across 12 fishery management areas



# Monitoring



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

DA-BFAR and USAID Fish Right collaborated on a holistic approach to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing in Philippine waters. This strategic approach emphasizes the benefits of compliance for legal fishers while targeting IUU activities through (1) IUU Fishing Quantification Workshop with experts and development practitioners and (2) developing an IUU Fishing Assessment Framework and Index with DA-BFAR and local government units (LGUs). The Philippine IUU Fishing Index and Threat (I-FIT) Assessment Tool is a suite of tools to (a) assess the status of IUU fishing in a given area, (b) identify other longer-lasting and targeted solutions to reducing IUU fishing, and (c) track the progress towards preventing, deterring, and eliminating IUU fishing in Philippine waters across various levels of governance, from municipal to fisheries management areas to the entire country.

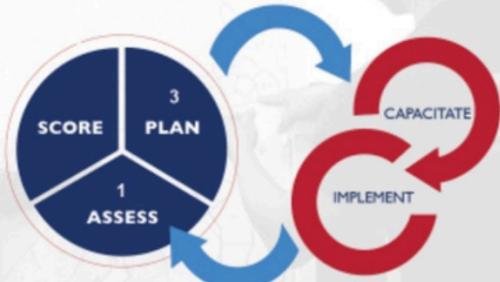


FIGURE 1: The IUU Fishing Index and Threat Assessment Tool is more than a scoring index. It serves as a guide for developing IUU Fishing Reduction Plans and evaluating interventions to deter, prevent, and eliminate IUU Fishing in Philippine waters.

### Three components

**Part A: IUU Fishing Assessment Guide**

Toolkit (consisting of modules, workshop session plans, and forms) for participatory IUU fishing assessment workshops with local stakeholders

**Prevalence:** How big of a threat is IUU fishing?  
**Vulnerability:** Why is IUU fishing still occurring?  
**Response:** What is being done?

**Part B: Philippine IUU Fishing Index**

Standardized evidence-based scoring tool for assessing IUU fishing vulnerability, prevalence, threats, and response efficacy across areas, post participatory and facilitated IUU Fishing Assessment.

Rating scale used to report IUU fishing prevalence, vulnerability, response, and risk

**I-FIT Assessment Tool**

**IUU Fishing Reduction Planning Guide**

After completion of assessment, scoring and processing of result from the IUU Fishing Assessment, this guide assists stakeholders in drafting response plans to mitigate IUU fishing within an agreed timeframe

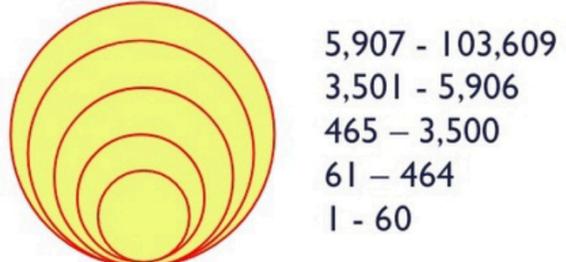
How much IUU fishing have we reduced?  
Do we need to change our response?  
What needs to change?  
How do we implement it?



## Philippine IUU Fishing Index and Threat Assessment Tool (I-FIT) Value, and Activities

### Illegal Fishing Volume, Value, and Activities

#### Volume of illegal fishing (MT)



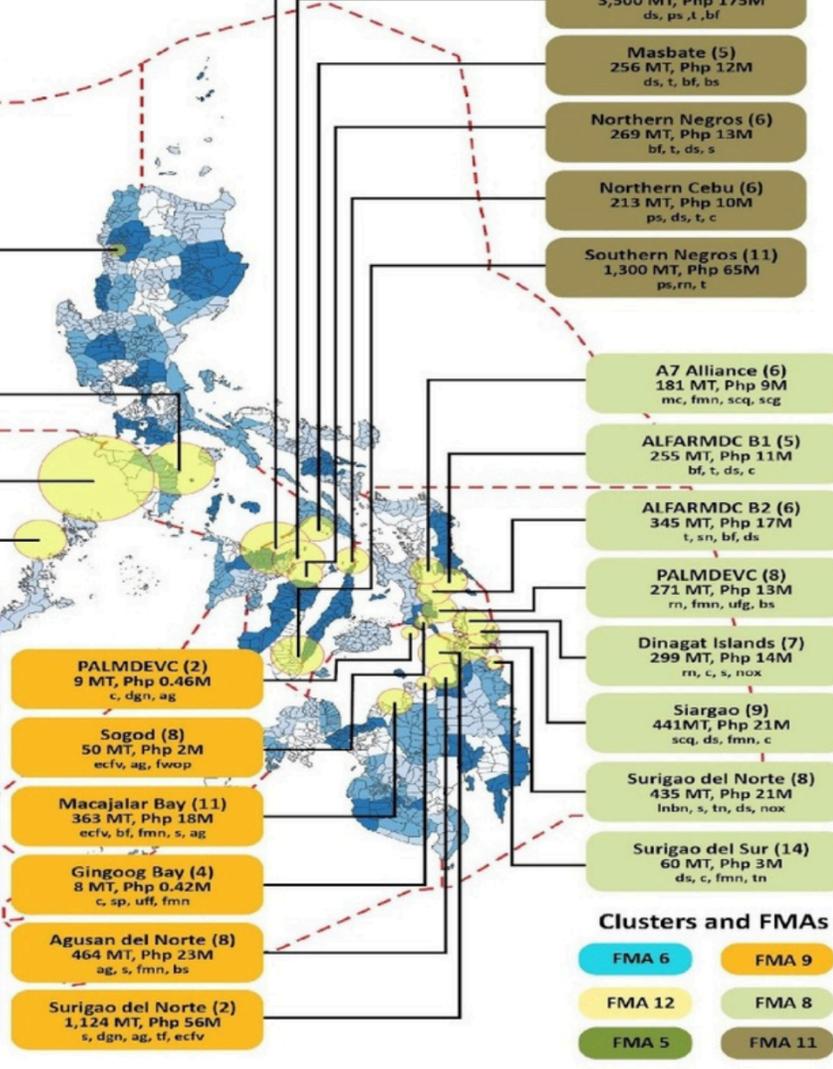
### Illegal Fishing Volume, Value, and Activities

#### Volume of illegal fishing (MT)

- San Quentin, Abra (1)  
0.7 MT, Php 0.4M  
ef, bf, fmn
- Oriental Mindoro (12)  
5,906 MT, Php 295M  
fmn, ecfv, ag, uff, ufp
- Occidental Mindoro (5)  
103,609 MT, Php 5,153M  
ufg, fmn, ecfv, ag
- Calamianes Islands (4)  
900 MT, Php 45M  
ma, s, ds, t

**Codes of gears/activities**

ag	using active gear
bf	blast fishing
bs	using beach seine
c	compressor fishing
dgn	drift gillnet fishing
ds	dansh seine fishing
ecfv	encroachment of commercial fishing vessel
ef	electro-fishing
fmn	use of fine mesh net/padail
fwop	fishing without permit
lnbn	liftnet/bagnet fishing
ma	muro-ami
mc	mangrove cutting
nox	fishing using noxious substances
ps	purse seine fishing
m	ring net fishing
s	superlight fishing
scq	sea-cucumber gathering
scq	sand/coral quarrying
sn	surrounding net fishing
sp	spearfishing
t	trawl fishing
tn	trammel net fishing
uff	unlicensed fisherfolk
ufg	unregistered fishing vessels/gears
ufp	unregistered FAD/payao



- Clusters and FMAs**
- FMA 6
  - FMA 9
  - FMA 12
  - FMA 8
  - FMA 5
  - FMA 11

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

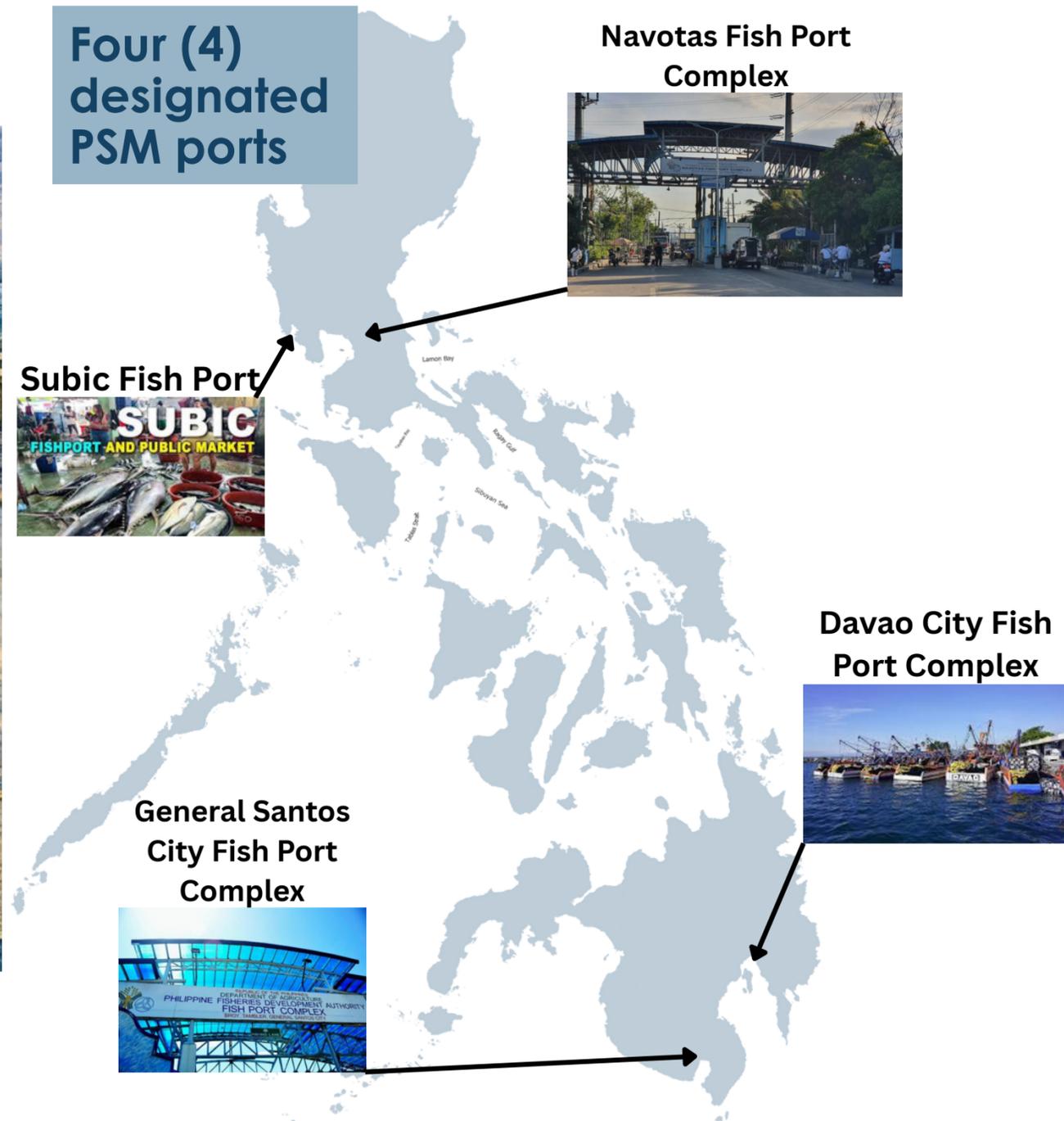
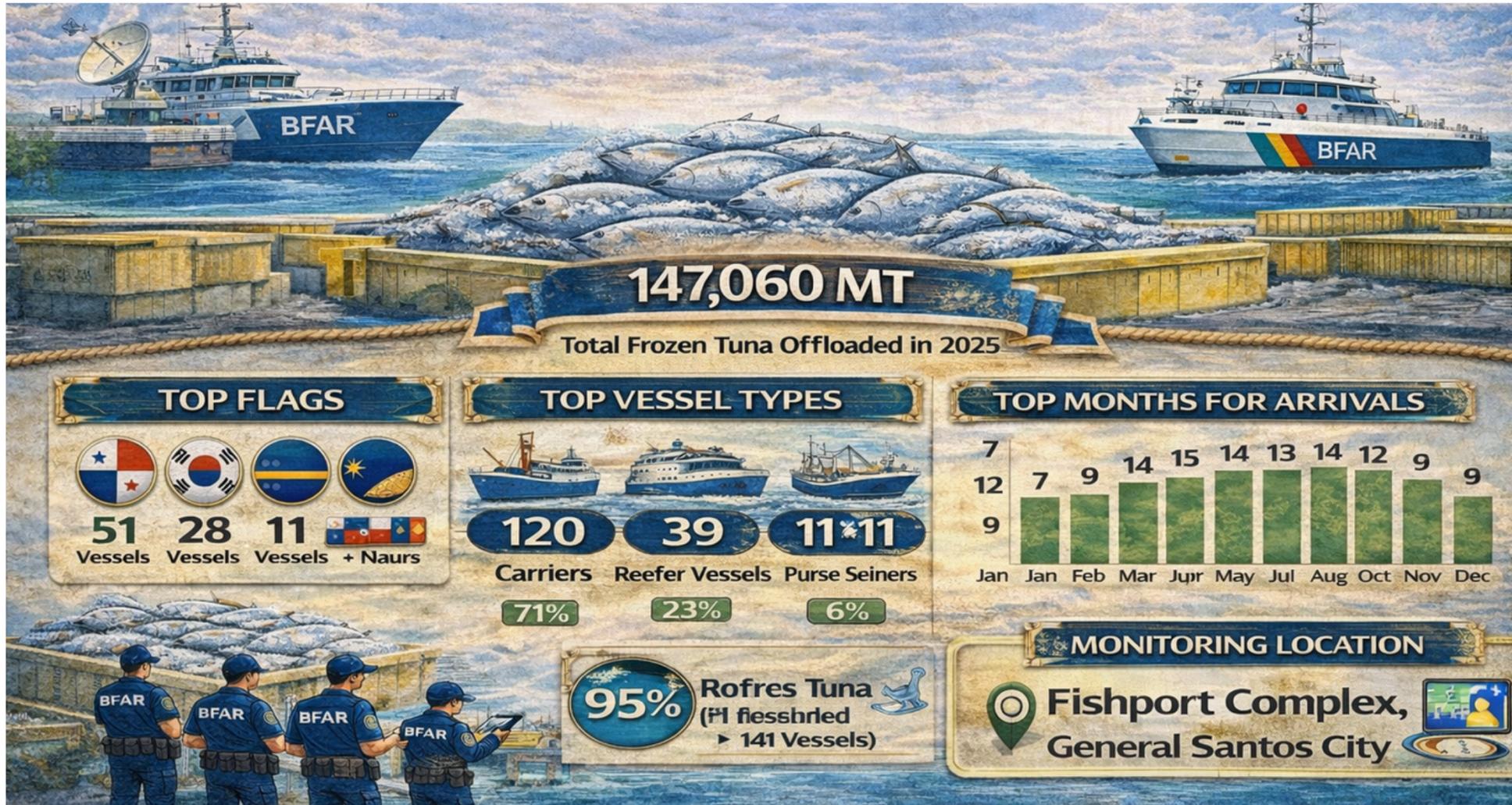
# Control

## ENSURING COMPLIANCE IN FISHERIES





# CURRENT PSM IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PHILIPPINES







# Issues and Challenges

## MONITORING



- Data Interoperability

- Limited Analytics Manpower



- Monitoring Blind Spots



- Monitoring Blind Spots

## CONTROL



- Pressure from Economic & Political Actors

## SURVEILLANCE



- Uneven VMS Compliance

## ENFORCEMENT



- Evidence Documentation Gaps

- Custody & Impounding Limitations



- Case Build-Up Capacity



# LAW AND REGULATIONS TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MCS ACTIVITIES



Republic of the Philippines  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Elliptical Road, Diliman,  
1100 Quezon City

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE  
ORDER NO. 267  
Series of 2021

SUBJECT: RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE LANDING AND TRANSHIPPING OF FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN PREVIOUSLY LANDED, AND OTHER PORT SERVICES IN THE PHILIPPINES BY FOREIGN-FLAGGED FISHING VESSELS.

Whereas, the Philippines ratified and adopted the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;

Whereas, the Philippines is committed to implement the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing and the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing;

Whereas, the Philippines acceded to the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing on 26 April 2018 to which the Senate gave its concurrence on 05 March 2018;

Whereas, as a participating member in good standing of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the Philippines is committed to implement IOTC Resolution 16/11 titled; "On Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing";

Whereas, on 27 February 2015, Republic Act No. 10654 amending Republic Act No. 8550 (The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998) lapsed into law;

Whereas, Section 41 of Republic Act 8550, as amended by Republic Act 10654, otherwise known as the "Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998", states that "Commercial and other passage not in the regular conduct of fisheries activity shall be made at designated navigational lanes";

Whereas, Section 42 of the same Code, provides that "the Department is authorized to adopt port state measures that must be complied with by foreign fishing vessels. These measures shall include: prior notification of port entry, use of designated ports; restrictions on port entry and landing or transshipment of fish; restrictions on supplies and services; catch and other documentation requirements; port inspections; and other related measures.";

In view of the foregoing and in the exercise of the authority to adopt port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the following rules and regulations governing landing and transshipment of fish and fishery products that have not been previously landed, and other port services in the Philippines by foreign-flagged fishing vessels is hereby issued for information and compliance by all concerned.



Republic of the Philippines  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Elliptical Road, Diliman,  
1100 Quezon City

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE  
ORDER NO. 266  
(Series of 2020)

SUBJECT: RULES AND REGULATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VESSEL MONITORING MEASURES (VMM) AND ELECTRONIC REPORTING SYSTEM (ERS) FOR COMMERCIAL PHILIPPINE FLAGGED FISHING VESSELS AMENDING FAO 260 SERIES OF 2018

WHEREAS, SEC. 119 of Republic Act No. 8550 as amended by Republic Act No. 10654, entitled "An Act to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, Amending Republic Act No. 8550, Otherwise Known as the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 and for Other Purposes", provides that no municipal, commercial or distant water fishing vessel shall engage in fishing activity without complying with the vessel monitoring measures promulgated by the Department of Agriculture- Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) in coordination with the Local Government Units.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 14 of the Fisheries Code, as amended, the DA-BFAR is mandated to establish a Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system in coordination with the LGUs, FARMCs, the private sector and other agencies concerned to ensure that the fisheries and aquatic resources are judiciously and wisely utilized and managed on a sustainable basis and conserved for the benefit and enjoyment exclusively of Filipino citizens.

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a signatory to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and is a party to various Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), Island Overseas Transport Corporation / Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and other Tuna RFMOs, as such, the Philippines must implement management measures such as vessel monitoring systems in accordance with the Convention and resolutions issued of the RFMOs.

WHEREFORE, the Department in consultation with the NFARMC hereby promulgates the rules and regulation on the vessel monitoring measures) the importance of vessel monitoring measures as an MCS tool to achieve the conservation and management of fisheries and aquatic resources in the Philippines and pursuant to the foregoing laws, the Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) hereby promulgate and implement the following rules and regulations, in accordance with Republic Act No. 8550 as amended by Republic Act No. 10654, for compliance of all concerned.

 *A food-secure Philippines*  
with prosperous farmers and fisherfolk 



## LEGAL FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING MCS IN THE PHILIPPINES

### INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

- Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA)
- RFMO Commitments
- FAO Compliance Instruments

### NATIONAL LEGISLATION

- RA 8550 - PHILIPPINE FISHERIES CODE
- RA 10654 - ANTI-IUU AMENDMENTS
- RA 9993 - COAST GUARD LAW

### IMPLEMENTING RULES & REGULATIONS

- Fisheries Administrative Orders
- VMS Regulations
- PSM Port Rules
- Catch Documentation

### ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES



### ADJUDICATION & SANCTIONS

- Administrative Adjudication
- Criminal Prosecution
- Fines & Forfeitures



# Recommendations

## National-Level Priority Actions (Next 3 Years)



- ✓ Expand VMS coverage and compliance enforcement
- ✓ Integrate MCS databases into a unified platform
- ✓ Institutionalize digital case management
- ✓ Strengthen Port State inspection capacity
- ✓ Standardize national enforcement SOPs
- ✓ Enhance analytics-driven patrol deployment

The infographic features a background of a blue sky with clouds and a sea view. It includes several illustrations: a boat with a satellite in orbit, a laptop with data storage icons, a clipboard with a magnifying glass, a gavel with 'SOPS' and 'BFAR MANUAL' documents, and two port inspectors in blue uniforms looking at a large screen displaying a map. A large circular graphic with the Philippine flag is at the bottom right.



# RECOMMENDATIONS





## END OF PRESENTATION.

*“The Philippines recognizes that IUU fishing is  
transboundary in nature.*

*No single country can effectively combat IUU  
fishing alone.*

*Regional transparency, data sharing, and  
operational coordination are no longer optional  
— they are strategic necessities.”*



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Implemented by



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