

Plan International SAFE Seas Project

Protecting Fishers From Labor Exploitation on Fishing Vessels

IMPACT REPORT

Plan International
SAFE Seas Project

Protecting Fishers
from Labor Exploitation
on Fishing Vessels

December 2022



Table of Contents

	Introduction	3
I	Improved FL/TIP Regulation and Policy	7
2	Improved Governance, Capability and Knowledge	13
3	Improved MDI Capability and Coordinated response	16
4	Support for Fishers in Fishers Centers	20
5	Improved FL/TIP Reporting Mechanisms	25
6	Improved Community Awareness	32
7	Improved Knowledge and Research Produced	39





Introduction

The Safeguarding Against and Addressing Fishers' Exploitation at Sea (SAFE Seas) project is a 5 year project running from 2018–2022 in Indonesia and the Philippines.

The goal of the project is to combat labor exploitation on fishing vessels, including forced labor and trafficking-in-persons (FL/TIP).

The project strategy is to impact fishing labor practices both at the institutional level through improved policy and practices among duty-bearers , and also at a grass-roots level by improving community awareness of FL/TIP and strengthening grievance reporting mechanisms.

The project is designed to reflect this two-pronged approach, through two complementary outcomes:

- 1) improved enforcement and coordination to combat labor exploitation and FL/TIP on fishing vessels—by strengthening FL/TIP policy frameworks and their implementation
- 2) decreased indicators of labor exploitation and FL/TIP on fishing vessels - by increased awareness and improving access to grievance reporting and remediation.

Project sites

The SAFE Seas project was implemented across multiple fishing sites across Indonesia and the Philippines, including large commercial ports such as General Santos and Bitung, as well as fishing grounds frequented by traditional fishing communities made up of artisanal small-scale fishers.



Project partners

The project has been funded by the US Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) and implemented by Plan International USA in cooperation with the Plan Asia Regional Office, Yayasan Plan International Indonesia (YPII) in Indonesia, and Plan International country office in the Philippines. The project was implemented in partnership with Destructive Fishing Watch (DFW) in Indonesia and with Oblates of Notre Dame Hesed Foundation (OND Hesed) in the Philippines.



The problem: Unacceptable labor conditions faced by Indonesian and Filipino fishers

Egregious labor abuses on fishing vessels in Southeast Asia are well documented. Reports are numerous telling of trafficked workers trapped at sea and forced to work 20-hour days for little or no pay. In many of these cases employers even subject fishers to severe physical abuse and put them in chains or cells. Even in less extreme cases, fishers are subject to a range of exploitative practices, including deceptive recruitment practices, lengthy periods at sea, underpayment of wages, refusal of work contracts, no occupational health and safety standards, no breaks and little sleep, unfit living conditions, non-transparent debts to employers and recruiters, and a range of forced labor indicators.

Fishers from Indonesia and the Philippines are highly represented among these cases, as both countries are a major source of fishing labor in the region.

"My son was contracted for four months with a certain target of catch production. The captain promised that if he could achieve the target, he would get a premium (bonus) in addition to his salary. In fact, the target was achieved in only three months, but my son got nothing."

– WOMAN IN BITUNG, OCTOBER 2018

"The other day there was someone whose hand got injured due to contact with a freezer machine. There was no proper treatment on board the vessel. There was no aid when he got home. In Indonesia occupational health and safety insurance is very limited. Occupational safety is poor. So, we must work carefully to prevent any accident. Once we have an accident, nobody cares for us."

– FISHER, TEGAL, OCTOBER 2018

"My son worked on a Taiwanese fishing vessel. He got a salary different from what he was promised in the beginning. He got only three million rupiahs (\$214) for working five months. If he did not work, he did not get meals."

– WOMAN, TEGAL, OCTOBER 2018

"There are over 200 of us in one group. When you really look at the work and what it entails, what is the cost? Your life is what is at risk."

– FORMER FISHERMAN, PHILIPPINES

"We're working the whole day until well after the sun comes down... It's a huge deal when they cut down your wages. It's really difficult... Each person is contracted to do ten months of work each trip. You don't sign any actual contracts. When you get home, you immediately sign up again. When you leave, you already get an advanced payment, which goes to your family. If your total earnings amount to 10,000 pesos, you're stuck with a debt of 20,000. So of course you have to join again, because you have a debt to settle. That's how the system works. That's all I knew at the time, that kind of work. And to be able to support my parents, my siblings, all you think about is your family, to do what it takes so they can live."

– FORMER FISHERMAN, PHILIPPINES

"On February 23, 2015, approximately 43 undocumented Filipino fishers were repatriated to the Philippines after being detained for six months in Indonesia. They were recruited through the Cabo system by a local manpower supplier to a tuna exporting company based in General Santos. They were supposed to work as a crew for a Philippine-registered commercial fishing vessel but lacked the required travel documents and ended up in jail on an island in Indonesia."

– SAFE SEAS, PRE-SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS REPORT

Challenges to combating FL/TIP faced by Indonesian and Filipino fishers

There are many barriers to ending abusive practices in the fishing industry, including:

- the isolated nature of work at sea
- jurisdictional complexities related to the legal regulation of vessels and fishers
- lack of awareness about labor rights and acceptable working conditions among fishers, employers, and authorities
- existing norms and employment practices (such as lack of employment contracts, unfair catch sharing systems, no employee-employer relationship, debt arrangements with employers)
- labor trafficking is not often included in the checklists used by authorities when inspecting fishing vessels
- coordination challenges across various regulatory agencies, while having different levels of expertise, resources, priorities and oversight mandates
- fishers are excluded from conversations about how they may best be protected

“This is the part that confuses us the most... on one side there is no regulation but on the other side when an issue arises, we are expected to solve it... Most of the time we work together with the police department because it is within their jurisdiction.”

LABOR INSPECTOR, CENTRAL JAVA PROVINCE, OCTOBER 2018, explaining that if people come to report FL/TIP cases to them, referral networks and support services for victims are unavailable.

“We don’t have any legal ground to carry on inspections of this fishing vessel crew. Although we have to admit that there are many reports coming into us, there are many labor rights issues which are not solved.”

LABOR INSPECTOR, NORTH SULAWESI PROVINCE, OCTOBER 2018, explaining his challenge in dealing with FL/TIP cases on fishing vessels

“... our inspectors are severely lacking, a lot of our inspectors aren’t trained . . . so, you can’t necessarily count on them to find the problems immediately. . . there is still a need for capacity building.”

UNION LEADER, PHILIPPINES, OCTOBER 2018

The lack of awareness of all possible types of FL/TIP may partly be due to the Indonesian translation of ‘forced labor’; that is, ‘kerja paksa,’ which indicates those forcefully working under extreme violence. In other words, most participants in the study perceive FL/TIP in its worst forms but fail to identify subtle or covert forms of FL/TIP practices. Others consider that working at sea is tough and involves various high risks. Therefore, only tough people can survive. To a certain degree this perception allows acceptance of poor safety and working conditions on fishing vessels. Nevertheless, they agreed that FL/TIP practices are unacceptable because they are inhumane.

SAFE SEAS,
PRE-SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS REPORT

This Impact Report

This report seeks to summarize the impacts of the SAFE Seas project in achieving its program goal to combat FL/TIP and safeguard fishers in their employment. Each section of the report outlines a different way in which the project has worked towards this goal as follows:

- developing FL/TIP regulation and policy
- improving FL/TIP governance, capability and knowledge among authorities
- strengthening multi-disciplinary inspection capability and coordinated FL/TIP response
- establishing support for fishers through fishers centers and on vessels
- strengthening FL/TIP reporting mechanisms
- improving community awareness and community support for fishers
- the production of new knowledge and research about fishing communities



1. Improved FL/TIP Regulation and Policy

SAFE Seas played a vital role by advocating for targeted policy development to tackle FL/TIP in the fishery sector.

SAFE Seas worked closely with legislators and government authorities at both national and sub-national levels, providing advice in drafting new regulatory provisions and policy frameworks.

Key policy developments in Indonesia

In Indonesia, SAFE Seas supported the government in the development of a national FL/TIP strategy, in negotiating international recruitment channels, and producing local ordinances to support coordination among regulatory officials.

National Action Plan for the Protection of Fishers

SAFE Seas worked closely with Indonesia's Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment (CMMAI) to advocate for the development of a comprehensive national policy to provide protection for fishers from FL/TIP on fishing vessels in both domestic and international waters. With the support and technical advice of the SAFE Seas Project, the CMMAI was able to drive government efforts in developing the National Action Plan for the Protection of Fishers (NAP) - a comprehensive four-year strategy (2021- 2024) to tackle FL/TIP on fishing vessels.

The process to develop the NAP started in early 2020 and involved a series of discussions involving various stakeholders: government agencies, national and sub-national government offices, labor recruiting agents, fishers' organizations, fishing vessels owners, NGOs and CSOs. One specific challenge identified during

consultation was the difficulty of coordinating policy implementation as a result of overlapping ministerial jurisdictions that govern the fisheries sector. For this reason the NAP is designed to synchronize and harmonize efforts to combat FL/TIP across multiple government actors.

The NAP provides a series of cross-cutting policy priorities, and ties implementation to funding sources. Key provisions of the NAP include:

- guidelines and activity plans for all relevant ministries and stakeholders for protection of seafarers;
- strengthening commitment, coordination, and cooperation between relevant ministries/ non-ministerial government institutions;
- strengthening coordination and cooperation between central and regional governments;
- strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of seafarer protection, including developing an information system;
- strengthening community involvement through communication, information and education;
- building commitment of the business sector in protecting seafarers;
- providing guidance to conduct multi-disciplinary inspection on fishing vessels in Indonesia;
- strengthening grievance mechanisms to report labor rights violations at sea, both in Indonesia and international waters;
- strengthening FL/TIP response and assistance to fishers, such as through fishers centers and other reporting channels.

The NAP was submitted to the President's office in 2021 for review and approval. Once endorsed by the President, this plan assures a pathway for sustained national action through government funding. The CMMIA's backing of the NAP provides optimism for its eventual approval.

Negotiating Memorandums of Understanding for Recruitment of Indonesian fishers to Work Abroad

Many thousands of Indonesian migrant fishers work on fishing vessels flagged to other countries around the world. SAFE Seas has advised government ministries in their negotiations with foreign counterparts to strengthen oversight of international recruitment channels of Indonesian fishers. For example, Taiwan, South Korea and South Africa are among the destination countries which have been actively contacted by the Indonesian Government to develop and finalize mutual legal assistance standards and/or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for the protection of Indonesian migrant fishers. SAFE Seas was even invited to attend the discussion between the Government of Indonesia and the Government of Taiwan.

In the course of these international policy discussions, the SAFE Seas project regularly shared updates about the work conditions faced by Indonesian migrant Fishers, and discussed case reports gathered from the projects' Fisher Centers.

These reports were also regularly shared among the National SAFE Fishing Alliance (SFA) which spurred relevant ministries to proactively strengthen collaboration with destination countries. Recently, China has been a particular focus of diplomatic dialogue as there are many Indonesian migrant fishers working on Chinese fishing vessels, and have been a significant source of complaints made to SAFE Seas Fisher Centers.

Sub-national policy development

SAFE Seas worked with sub-national governments at its respective project sites to develop policy and regulations to ensure local government commitment to address FL/TIP. In North Sulawesi, the provincial governor issued a decree in March 2020 establishing a provincial Safe Fishing Alliance (SFA), endorsing its role as a local coordination body tasked with addressing fishermen's labor conditions. In Bitung district a document setting out the continued operation of a local Safe Fishing Alliance has been prepared to reflect ongoing collaboration between local stakeholders, and is still in the process of mayoral endorsement. These policy documents outline a commitment for continued collaborative action at the provincial level and a focus for ongoing government action.

“The Fishing Port of Tegal has enforced a policy requiring insurance for fishers before departure. The current life insurance coverage for Fishers who departed from the Tegal Fishing Port has reached more than 90%. We will implement mandatory working contracts between vessel owners and Fishers starting January 2023 as additional requirements to officially dispatch the fishing vessels from the port.”

TUTI SUPRIANTI – HEAD OF FISHING PORT
OF TEGAL, CENTRAL JAVA

“Assisting with obtaining health and life insurance has been very helpful for Fishers. It has also been helpful for the business owners as they don't have to worry when there are accidents or injuries experienced by the fishers at sea. Support to claim the insurance provided by Tegal Fishing Port authority has been very helpful to smooth the insurance claim. Insurance protects everyone - both the fishers and the vessels owners.

HASTO – FISHING VESSELS AND
FISH COLD STORAGE OWNER IN TEGAL

Key policy developments in Philippines

In the Philippines, SAFE Seas advocacy strategy focused on promoting specific labor protection for fishers by building upon existing national FL/TIP institutions and policy frameworks.

Promotion of DOLE Order 156-16

The Philippines has a relatively strong national legislative framework for both labor standards and migration governance. These laws were supplemented in 2016 by the Department of Labor and Employment Order 156-16 (D.O. 156-16), which is a comprehensive national legislation setting out standards for working and living conditions on board commercial fishing vessels. Based on the ILO's Work in Fishing Convention No. 188 of 2007, DOLE Order 156-16 is comprehensive, but it has not yet been ratified into binding law at the national level. Accordingly, the SAFE Seas project focused its policy advocacy in the Philippines on promoting the benefits of adopting D.O.156-16 standards to protect fishers at sea, as well as holding discussions with authorities and stakeholders on how they can localize laws to adopt D.O. 156-16 standards to eliminate labor exploitation at sea.

National Strategic Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons (2023-2027)

In June of 2022 SAFE Seas contributed to the drafting of the Philippine Government's 5-year National Strategic Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons (2023-2027). In coordination with other key stakeholders, SAFE Seas successfully advocated for the inclusion of a specific framework addressing FL/TIP protection of fishers. The strategic plan will thus serve as the blueprint to coordinate action of all government agencies, local government units, NGOs and the private sector in combating fishery FL/TIP. The strategic plan covered several key pillars of FL/TIP law enforcement, including: (a) prevention; (b) protection, law enforcement and prosecution; and (c) repatriation, recovery and reintegration. This policy measure will provide a vital platform to carry the SAFE Seas project agenda forward, with the strategy being implemented under the leadership of the Interagency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) with the support of the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2022 (RA 11862)

The SAFE Seas Project contributed inputs on the amendment of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (Republic Act 10364). This amendment

was passed to congress in February 2022 and was signed as a law in June 2022. In particular, the Project successfully advocated to include provisions requiring that:

- DOLE must standardize labor conditions across all sectors for the employment of persons locally and overseas;
- DOLE must standardize monitoring, documenting, and reporting across all sectors of FL/TIP cases involving employers and labor recruiters;
- Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) are included in the list of agencies required to have programs that address FL/TIP.

Legislative Amendments strengthening action on fishers

In an initial assessment of the Philippines' regulatory environment, SAFE seas found that programs and policies on combating FL/TIP in the fisheries sector were very limited at the local level, despite national and international level frameworks. Taking a site-specific approach, the SAFE Seas project engaged strongly with provincial and municipal governments, prompting several government ordinances on local implementation of fishery standards.

In particular:

Puerto Princesa City has drafted an Executive Order which (i) creates a sea-based task-force to address FL/TIP and IUU fishing, (ii) institutionalizes joint inspection on fishing vessels, and (iii) strengthens the implementation of anti-trafficking laws and D.O. 156-16. The ordinance has been scheduled for final reading in the City Council.

Tay Tay Municipality has drafted a municipal ordinance that would give SFAs a recognized legal status and budget to carry out advocacy activities. The first hearing of the ordinance in Tay Tay Municipality took place in September 2022.

General Santos City drafted a resolution for the creation of a Technical Working Group under the Local Inter-Agency Task Force Against Trafficking (LIATFAT), and for the activation of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Councils (FARMCs) in fighting FL/TIP.

Sarangani Province continues to coordinate with the Provincial Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (PIACAT) for the creation of a Technical Working Group to address FL/TIP on fishing vessels and to require a sea-based task force in its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).



2. Improved Governance, Capability and Knowledge

A key strategic intervention of the SAFE Seas project has been to build institutional collaboration to tackle FL/TIP by facilitating the establishment of coordinating bodies comprised of representatives from government agencies, the private sector, civil society and workers.

Safe Fishing Alliances (SFA) – A forum for building institutional collaboration

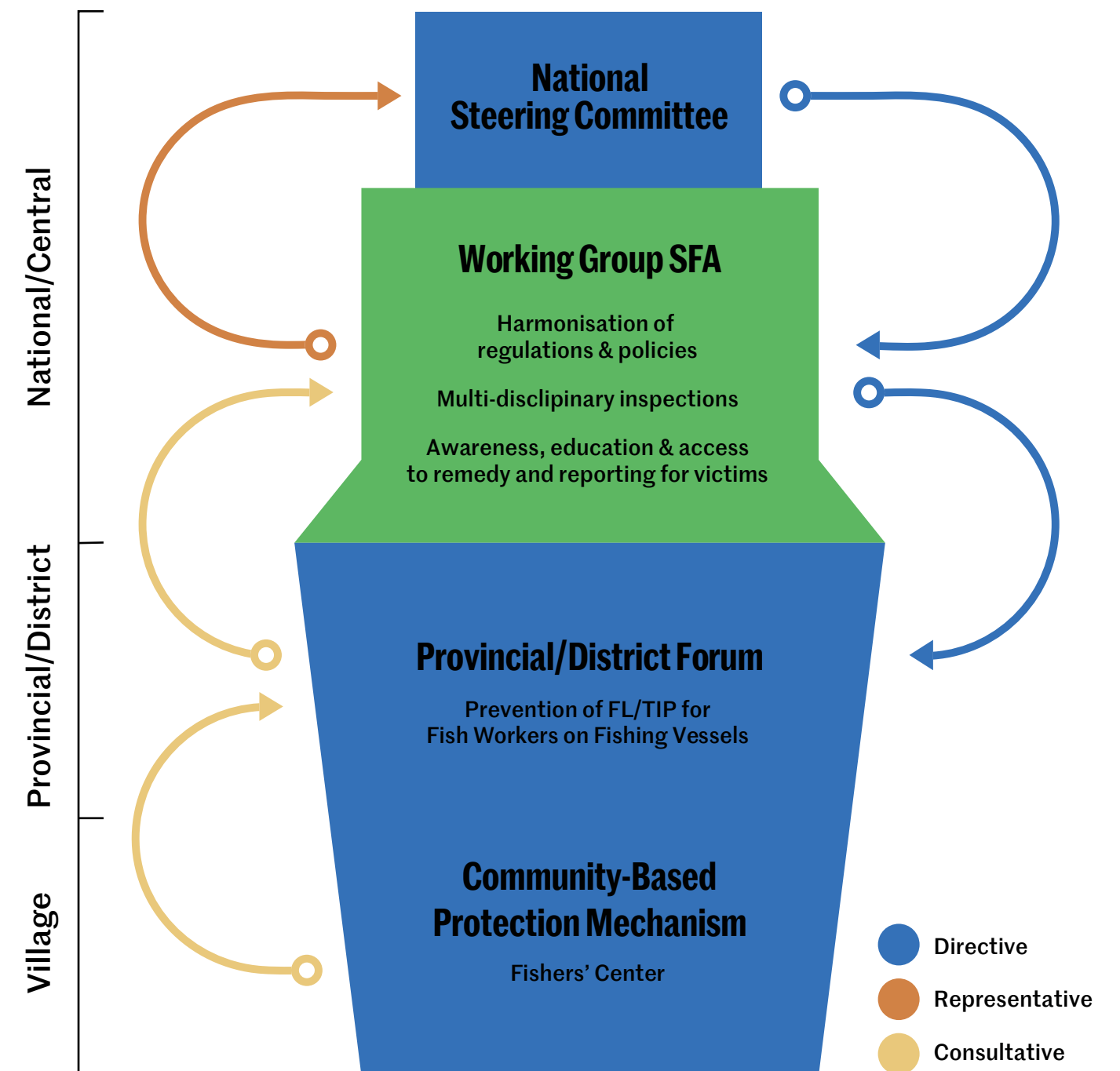
Known as Safe Fishing Alliances (SFA), these steering committees were set up at both the national and sub-national levels to guide program interventions with government and stakeholder support. At the outset, the SFAs played a key role in increasing FL/TIP awareness among government decision makers. Meeting regularly, the SFAs ultimately became a forum for coordinating action to tackle FL/TIP, and in the process develop the capacity of governance actors to formulate and perform their ongoing roles in tackling fishery FL/TIP.

Another key outcome of the SFAs has been to develop sustainable mechanisms for coordination and collaboration across governmental authorities and between different levels of government. In Indonesia the SFA was set up as a newly created structure, while in the Philippines the SFA has been situated within the existing government Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT). The SFAs have proven an effective model for stakeholder action, and will continue to provide a forum for fishery FL/TIP coordination beyond the life of the project.

How does the SFA work?

At the national level, the SFA acts as a steering committee to ensure that the laws relating to fishers' labor rights and working conditions are interpreted, understood and followed appropriately by relevant government agencies. Within the SFAs three working groups are established, the first focusing on policy and regulations; the second on labor inspection; and the third on awareness, access to reporting, and remediation services. The diagram illustrates the structure of the SFA in coordinating action across various government agencies.

The SFA has proven to be an effective multi-level and multi-stakeholder mechanism for raising awareness and building consensus on the human rights and labor risks on board fishing vessels. The SFAs have also created opportunities for stakeholders to discuss policy reform, and to engage with industry. The SFA has been successful in promoting a common understanding of FL/TIP, which has facilitated effective collaboration to resolve the problem of different mandates and overlapping regulations, and to close the gaps in the law. Most importantly, the SFA has emphasized stakeholders' responsibilities in addressing the exploitation of fishers.



In Indonesia

In Indonesia, SAFE Seas prompted the establishment of the SFA as a new body at the national level. The national SFA in Indonesia included representatives from 14 agencies, and was chaired by the Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment (CMMAI), and also received key support from the three core ministries involved in the regulation of fishing labor – Ministry of Manpower (MOM), and Ministry of Marine and Fisheries (MMAF) and the Ministry of Transport (MOT). Provision for the continuance of the SFA has been adopted in Indonesia’s National Action Plan (NAP) document, including a work plan for the SFA which provides key targets, timelines and dedicated agencies for undertaking actions.

Two similar SFAs were also established at the provincial level – in North Sulawesi and Central Java. There is also an active local forum in Bitung District, which is the center of the provincial fishing industry and a major economic driver for the whole province. These forums were led by the provincial Manpower Department, who are tasked with conducting labor inspection on fishing vessels. The provincial MMAF has also been particularly involved in the SFA and engaged in project activities. Through the SFA, government actors came to recognize the important role that working conditions play in the sustainability of the fishing industry, and came to form a shared vision for its governance.

In the Philippines

In the Philippines, SAFE Seas activated the SFA model at the national level by prompting IACAT to house a Technical Working Group to address fishery FL/TIP. With SAFE Seas performing the role of Secretariat, this multi-agency forum was attended by key Government Agencies such as Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resource (BFAR), Department of Justice (DOJ), Philippines Coast Guard (PCG) and the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina). The SFA proved an effective forum for duty bearers to discuss the legal and regulatory frameworks governing fishing labor. By identifying the various gaps in fisheries governance among Philippines’ agencies, these discussions were crucial for achieving harmonization of fishery policies and regulations. The SFA was also effective as a mechanism for consultation with the private sector and fisher representative groups, particularly on the topics of implementation, practical challenges and improvements to DO 156-16 standards.

At the sub-national level, SFAs were established in Puerto Princesa and Tay Tay, both in Palawan province. These SFAs proved effective in activating existing local IACAT structures such as at the provincial, municipal, and city level IACATs and local IACAT-Violence Against Women and Children (LIACAT-VAWC) bodies.

In Mindanao, the project similarly set up “sea-based” task groups within the Sarangani and General Santos councils to coordinate awareness, enforcement, and access to remedy for FL/TIP victims. Across all these sites the SFA members demonstrated commitment to driving coordinated responses to FL/TIP. The SFA was also very effective at building links between community leaders and local authorities such as municipal officers, barangay councilors and members of the barangay FARMCs. The SFAs were successful in driving development of local ordinances, including draft municipal ordinances to give legal recognition and budget allocation to the SFA.

“The project really opened up a space for conversations about the issues”

—IACAT TWG MEMBER





3. Improved MDI Capability and Coordinated Response

The goal of multi-disciplinary inspection (MDI) is to coordinate government authorities to implement a unified monitoring and enforcement mechanism for upholding fishers' labor rights.

MDI - Building Coordinated Vessel Inspection Capability

There are several barriers that prevent authorities from identifying labor violations that occur on fishing vessels. One barrier is that responsibility for fishery oversight is shared among various government authorities, yet they have inconsistent mandates for responding to labor violations at sea. For example, a coast guard is able to inspect an ocean vessel, but is not tasked with responding to labor rights violations. In other cases, oversight responsibility differs depending on the size of the vessel and in which waters it is sailing. Without a common approach for monitoring and enforcement, unacceptable labor conditions on fishing vessels often persist unchallenged, while FL/TIP victims go without support and redress. The goal of multi-disciplinary inspection (MDI) is to close these gaps by establishing a unified protocol among multiple duty-bearers to collaborate systematically in upholding fishery labor rights.

“The Office of Manpower does not have the authority to carry out inspection of fishing vessels, they need permission to carry out inspection from the Office of Marine and Fisheries and the harbormaster. Therefore, the joint inspection initiative from SAFE Seas is very important.”

– MOM REPRESENTATIVE, BITUNG

Key agencies for MDI Philippines

Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE)
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)
Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA)
Philippines Coast Guard (PCG)
Philippines National Police Maritime Group (PNP-MG)

Key agencies for MDI Indonesia

Ministries of Transportation (MoT)
Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF)
Ministry of Manpower (MOM)
Indonesian Coast Guard (BAKAMLA)
Local port authorities (within MMAF)

Developing multi-disciplinary labor inspection (MDI) procedures

A key intervention for ensuring that more FL/TIP cases and labor violations are identified is to increase the prevalence and effectiveness of labor inspection of fishing vessels, both at ports and at sea. Given the fragmented regulatory environment governing fisheries, a primary focus of the SAFE Seas project was to work with various government agencies to develop and implement a coordinated approach to inspecting fishing vessels for labor violations.

The program worked with government agencies to develop procedures and manuals for identifying labor violations on fishing vessels. Through a participatory process of extensive consultation with government agencies, site-specific labor inspection procedures were formulated for key ports. These procedures, along with labor inspection skills, formed the basis of MDI training manuals. These manuals were piloted through a multi-day training-of-trainers program, attended by various government agencies that contribute to inspection activity. Newly trained vessel inspectors then piloted the implementation of MDI procedures on vessels at port.

SAFE Seas Policy Brief

In both countries, SAFE Seas produced a policy brief for national and provincial inspection stakeholders, setting out the benefits of MDI, and a roadmap for its implementation.

[Excerpt] Multidisciplinary inspection procedures can stop FL/TIP in fishing by:

- i) Unifying regulators, the industry and civil society around a common agreement to stop FL/TIP crime.
- ii) Criminalizing debt coercion and illegal wage deductions.
- iii) Tracking at-risk vessels domestically and providing additional safety training.
- iv) Tracking at-risk fleets abroad and making assistance available to Filipino fishing crew via social media.
- v) Training fishers to know their rights and how to uphold them.
- vi) Training enforcement authorities to know fishers' legally established rights and their specific duties to uphold.
- vii) Checking that work agreements are clearly understood.

Source: SAFE Seas Policy Brief

Establishing pilot systems for inter-agency approaches in Indonesia

The jurisdiction for inspection of fishing vessels is complex, as it is divided between the Ministry of Transportation (MoT), the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF), and the Ministry of Manpower (MOM). Secondly, oversight of vessel inspection lies with the MMAF for oceanic ports, but with the provincial governor in smaller, district ports. While the national ministries can establish policies they cannot direct the provincial level, and therefore the policies and procedures need to be established simultaneously at the national and provincial levels. Moreover, these Ministries work separately. Until now, local authorities have been waiting for policy direction from the central government to prompt joint inspections, while the central government expected local authorities to coordinate with one another directly.

SAFE Seas interventions have thus been impactful in spurring coordination. Activities in Indonesia have been led by a MDI pilot program in North Sulawesi, where authorities were trained on fishery FL/TIP indicators and MDI procedures were developed.

After training was held, SAFE Seas supported personnel from MOM, MMAF, and the harbormaster to implement MDIs in the field by piloting physical inspections using the MDI procedures at Bitung port. Not only will these manuals and procedures inform inspections of fishery vessels in North Sulawesi going forward, but also this example has been taken up as a model to guide future MDI at other sites and at the national level.

“North Sulawesi MOM, Bitung district MOM officers, and the Bitung port authority (MMAF) representatives highly valued the support from the project to promote joint or multi-agency inspection.”

– PROJECT EVALUATION

Timeline to piloting multi-disciplinary inspections in Indonesia

Date	Key Steps
Late 2019	Consultation with national and provincial government stakeholders resulting in a set of recommendations
September 2020	Development of joint checklist with related agencies, taking account of international labor standards
Late 2020	Trial joint fishing vessel inspection in port was pilot tested
April 2021	SAFE Seas produced a roadmap and policy brief of MDI, and shared with national and provincial inspection stakeholders.
March 2022	MDI training using the manual and checklist collaboratively developed
July 2022	Three day second joint inspection follow-up to the multidisciplinary inspection training
September 2022	Further joint inspection was conducted in North Sulawesi, Bitung



Philippines

At the project outset, existing inspections of commercial fishing vessels did not include monitoring of working conditions. Rather, inspections were focused on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, meaning that workers on fishing vessels were viewed as potential violators of fishing laws by inspectors rather than being vulnerable to labor violations and requiring protection. Accordingly, stakeholders indicated that labor compliance was generally low in the fishing industry.

In the Philippines, SAFE Seas' approach has been to build interest and inspection capacity at the sub-national level, and then present the experience to the national level to advocate for wider implementation. Over the life of the project, SAFE Seas has engaged relevant inspection authorities at the local level to develop MDI checklists and procedures for joint or coordinated labor inspection. Taking a bottom-up approach, these procedures were tailored to local conditions, in harmonization with national level regulatory frameworks. In fact, three Local governments (LGUs) have legislation passed or underway that is directly guided by the roadmap for labor-inclusive fishing vessel inspections formulated in the SAFE Seas MDI Policy Brief. Palawan (Tay Tay and Puerto Princesa) has proved a model for MDI in particular, with a strong interest and commitment to implementing a multi-agency approach.

A joint approach to inspection is vital in the Philippines, as the labor inspector, DOLE, lacks vessels to conduct at-sea inspections. In practice, there is an ongoing need for the maritime agencies to lend additional support to DOLE inspectors to inspect at sea. In addition, DOLE is only permitted to conduct unannounced or ‘surprise’ inspections in instances where they receive reports of labor violations or complaints, including from workers or from other government agencies. In the future, a Joint Memorandum Circular among national level agencies will be required to formalize the multi-agency approach to fishing vessel labor inspection. In the meantime, standard operating procedures will be further developed by stakeholders to operationalize the joint multi-agency approach.

Timeline to piloting multi-disciplinary inspections in Philippines

Date	Key Steps
Late 2019	Consultation with national and provincial government stakeholders resulting in a set of recommendations
2019	Trial inspection conducted in Tay Tay, Palawan. This established a commitment to multi-agency inspection approach.
April 2020	First pilot joint inspection in Tay Tay, Palawan. This activity pre-tested the joint inspection checklist produced by the local multi-agency inspection working group.
2020	Further development of labor inspection procedures and tools with government stakeholders, to further include labor and FL/TIP indicators. Tay Tay agencies have a combined checklist, while in Puerto Princesa the agencies prefer to operate separately.
April 2021	SAFE Seas produced a roadmap and policy brief of MDI, and shared with national and provincial inspection stakeholders.
April 2022	Continued collaboration with stakeholders to strengthen the FL/TIP referral and reporting systems for the fishing sector.
July 2022	Philippines national MDI training using the manual and checklist collaboratively developed with stakeholders. This was attended by 60 participants from a wide range of related agencies.
October 2022	Inspectors in General Santos conducted a trial inspection following the MDI training in July 2022.

CASE STUDY

MDI in Action

One of the ground-breaking events for the project was the unannounced trial joint inspection at Tay Tay municipality in late 2019, which involved several maritime authorities, social welfare personnel and the Office of Manpower. During the inspection, minors were discovered to be working on board fishing vessels, highlighting the importance of conducting unannounced inspections. The findings of these inspections caused a significant response among local authorities, but at the same time raised some local opposition at the mayoral level, indicating the challenge of navigating through the various stakeholder interests in order to generate support for joint inspections

MDI TRAINING

A training program for government stakeholders to learn MDI



Key steps

1. Extensive consultation with inspection stakeholders to get buy-in & design materials and processes they will use in practice
2. Training of Trainers (ToT) manuals produced
3. Training workshop on multidisciplinary joint inspections with key government stakeholders
4. Peer- to peer learning webinar on how other countries conduct multidisciplinary inspection

Goal

“Responsive Inspection”
Build government stakeholder capacity for port inspection of labor conditions on fishing vessels, and establish regular inspection.

Training

Module 1. Understanding the Fishing Work Cycle:
Help inspectors to detect true labor conditions and prevent fisheries FL/TIP (eg. minimum wages, occupational safety, ID documents)

Module 2. Establishing Channels:
Help inspectors establish communication channels across organizations, including channels for referring violations and coordinating a response.

Results

Improved understanding of FL/TIP among participants was achieved. Post-training tests showed that 73% of 26 participants experienced an increased understanding of labor inspection in fishing vessels. Knowledge by each participant increased by an average of 51% .



4. Support for Fishers through Fishers Centers

The Fishers Centers are community-based safe-spaces for use by fishers and their families, where they can learn about their rights, report exploitation and seek support.

In September 2019, SAFE Seas established two Fishers Centers in Indonesia, located in Bitung, North Sulawesi, and Tegal, Central Java.

The Fishers Centers have 3 primary functions:

- i) to act as a focal point for awareness-raising activities through outreach to fisher communities;
- ii) to provide legal support to fishers and their families seeking remediation of labor complaints; and
- iii) to work closely with government and law enforcement agencies to refer grievances for follow-up assistance and services.

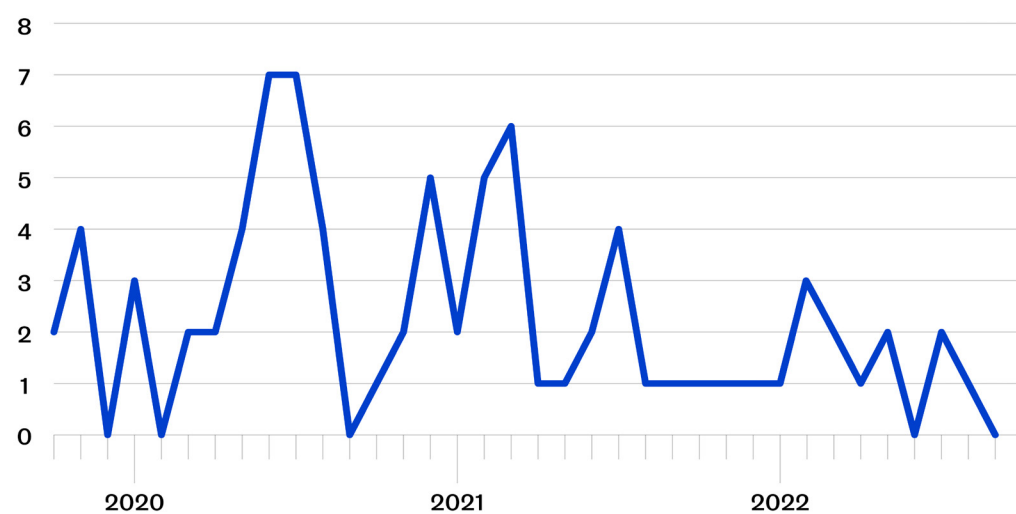
Cases reported to Fishers Centers

Fishers and their families can access the Fisher Center by visiting directly to the center, contacting outreach networks, or by calling the center's hotline service. Upon receiving a complaint, staff make an appointment with the fisher to undertake a formal interview, obtain more information, collate relevant documents and record evidence.

During the project, a total of 81 cases of labor rights violations on fishing vessels were reported to Fishers Centres, covering a total of 212 fishers. These complaints pertained to fishing both in Indonesia and in International waters. Cases were reported not only by fishers, with many reported by fishers' wives, parents, friends and colleagues. These community members learned about the Fishers Centers from various outreach activities in the community, including the establishment of a network of village volunteers trained to identify and report FL/TIP cases.

Complaints received Since October 2019

Unpaid salary/deduction of wages	24	(35%)
Insurance & Social Security	15	(22%)
Early Termination before Contract is Over	5	(7%)
Employment Contract Abuse	5	(7%)
Deception	5	(7%)
Other	4	(6%)
Facilitating Referral	4	(6%)
Physical and Sexual Violence	4	(6%)
Vulnerability Abuse	3	(4%)
Total	69	



CASE STUDY

Adrianus from Bitung, North Sulawesi had a dream of becoming a fisherman after seeing the success of his brother-in-law who had previously worked on a foreign-flagged fishing vessel. He hoped that by taking the same chance as his brother-in-law, it could be an opportunity for him to change his fate and help his family.

Adrianus applied for a vacancy from a recruitment firm in Jakarta to work on a Taiwanese fishing vessel. However, his hopes hit rock bottom when he became a victim of fraud, and sent to work on a Chinese-flagged fishing vessel.

When he became aware that he was a victim of labor exploitation, he looked for help. He found the Fishers Center contact details on a Facebook group and shared his problems. Within 24 hours, the Fishers Center responded to his complaint. The dispute was settled fairly and within a month, through mediation involving the victims, the recruitment agency, representatives from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, and representatives from the Ministry of Manpower.

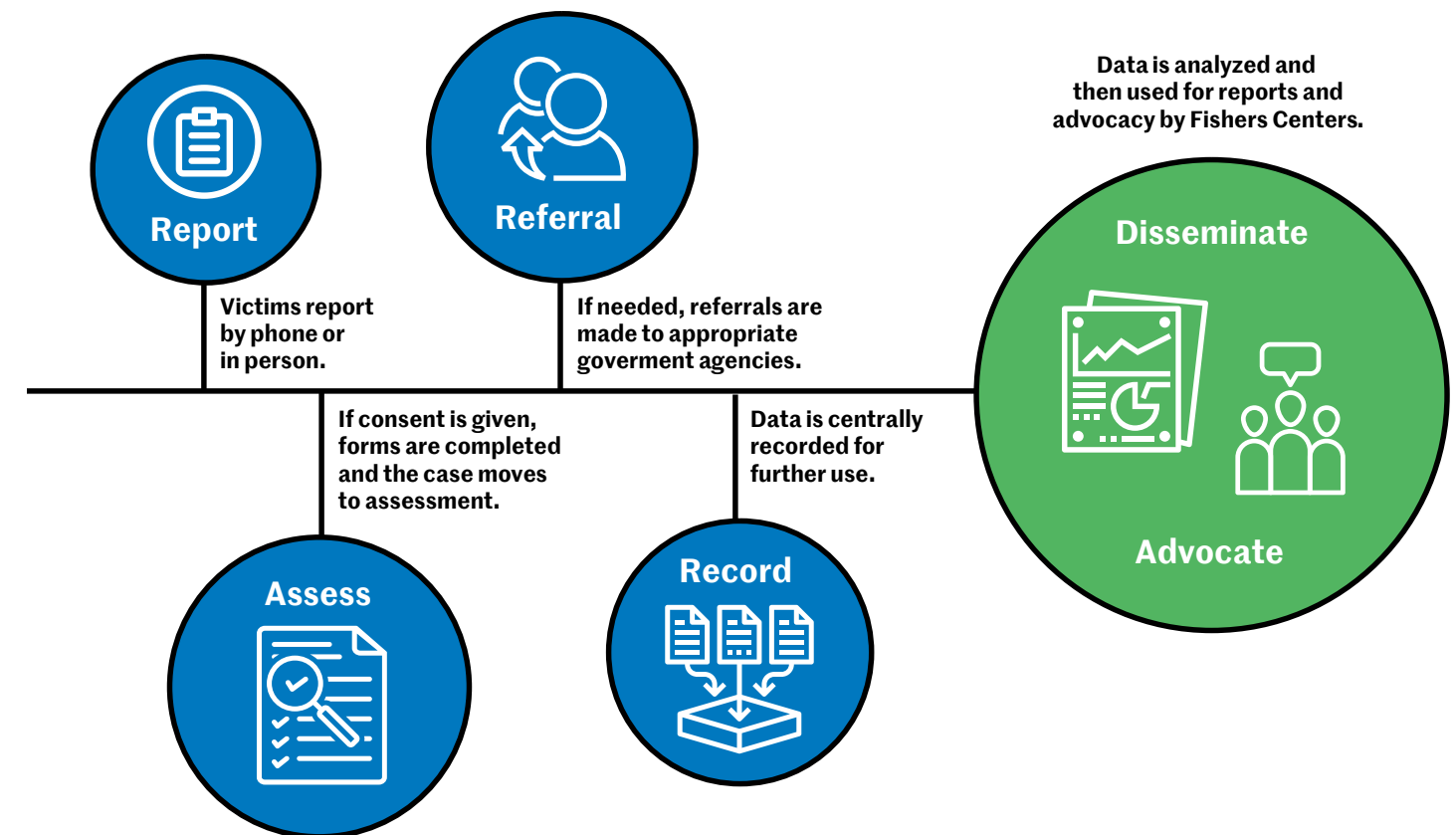
“I am very grateful for the pro-bono assistance provided by the Bitung Fishers Center. It will serve to better protect the fishers’ rights and educate the fisher communities about the vulnerability of fishers to exploitative labor and human trafficking,” said Adrianus.

FL/TIP Referral Mechanisms

After receiving reports of fisher labor violations, the Fishers Centre paralegals work with fishers and authorities to resolve cases. This can involve working with law enforcement agencies, fisheries associations, government authorities and employers. Often, cases are referred for further assistance from civil society support groups and national remediation services. The Centers have developed collaborations with NGOs and other agencies who provide legal, psychological and social services for the victims of FL/TIP. In cases where a fisher suffers abuse abroad, the Fishers Centres play a crucial role in the complex coordination between foreign ministries, law enforcement, labor ministries and marine ministries.

As well as supporting fishers, the Fishers Centers ensure that governing bodies are notified for follow up actions, including CMAI, MFA, MOM, BP2MI and the National Police. The Centers liaise with selected members of the SFA to ensure responsible government parties take urgent action. Where appropriate, the Centers also share information with journalists to bring attention to fisher exploitation and abuse. In time, it is envisioned that such referral networks will be formalized, ensuring that the Fishers Centers can provide legal, psychological and social services for the victims of FL/TIP.

Fishers' Center Complaint Mechanism



CASE STUDY



Fita is a mother of three and the wife of a fisher who died of an illness while working on a fishing vessel. Her husband fell sick while working at sea, and despite Fita fighting relentlessly to get him back home, he died before he could return.

Fita approached the Tegal Fishers Center seeking justice for her late husband. The Fishers Center mediated between Fita and the

recruitment firm that hired her husband, and as a result, Fita received compensation of 35 million Rupiah (USD 2,380) applicable as a surviving spouse of a work death.

For several fishers' wives whose husbands disappeared or died at sea, the Fishers Center were able to support them to make compensation claims and refer them to national government channels.

Fita, mother of three and wife of fish worker died of sickness while working shared her story with IDN SAFE Seas team in Tegal.

Support for fishers and industry

The Fishers Centers also play a variety of roles that support fishers access to their rights, including:

- capacity building for private sector recruitment agencies and employers to ensure the fair recruitment
- operating helpdesks and telephone hotline services to advise fishers to better access their rights.
- facilitating education for Fishers such as helping them to receive Basic Safety Training (BST).
- facilitating work permits and port access with authorities during Covid-19 lockdowns ensuring around 300 fishers from Tegal could return to work.

Continuing impact of Fishers Centers

Initially established in 2019 by Plan SAFE Seas and operated by Destructive Fishing Watch (DFW), the Fishers' Centers will continue to operate beyond the life of the SAFE Seas project, thanks to the support and commitment of local CSOs, community and Government. In Bitung, the Fishers' Center will be managed by Legal Aid Organization, Yayasan Cahaya Mercusuar Indonesia (YCMI), with support from Bitung city government to provide building facilities for the Fishers' Center. In Central Java the Fishers' Center will be operated by PASOPATI Migrant Workers Union with support from local government such as the Department of Marine Fisheries (DKP) Central Java Province.

At both sites, the Fishers Centres will continue to be a hub for community action to support fishers. This includes bringing fishers together with advocates, paralegals, and the perlindungan awak kapal perikanan (PAKP) cadres who have been trained to support fishers through outreach, reporting assistance, legal aid consultation and case support.

“A Fishers Center is one of the solutions to solve the problems faced by fishing vessel crews. The Ministry is always being reminded to pay attention to the fishers. I am here on the President’s order to protect fishers and always be present to defend fishers’ grievances. I am also told to promote the aquaculture industry, and to ensure that we are not making any harm to the environment.”

– MINISTER OF MARINE AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES,
EDHY PRABOWO, officially inaugurating the Tegal
fishers center in Central Java in July 2020

“The Fishers’ Center provides space for Fishers to express their concerns and issues.”

– TUTI SUPRIANTI, HEAD OF FISHING PORT OF
TEGAL, CENTRAL JAVA

The MMAF Minister Edhy Prabowo inaugurated
Tegal and Bitung Fishers Center on July 7, 2020.
Photo credit: Irwan Firdaus/2020



Fishers Centers in the Philippines

In the Philippines, SAFE Seas worked with its local affiliate OND Hesed Foundation, who support local fishers under their 'Apostleship of the Sea' program. OND Hesed Foundation acts as the point of reference for fishers and their families to voice complaints if fishers go missing or are detained abroad, and they were able to coordinate with the SAFE Seas program to support fishers. During the program, SAFE Seas also advocated for the establishment of a dedicated Fishers Center in the port of General Santos City, the major tuna fishing and processing hub on the Philippines.

CASE STUDY

Collaborating with Ond Hesed to respond to fisher cases in the philippines

While looking forward to earning a decent albeit hazardous living as fishers, 33 Filipinos set sail from General Santos City in January 2020 aboard three tuna handline fishing vessels owned by local businessmen. After three months at sea, they were apprehended by Indonesian maritime authorities due to alleged illegal entry into the Exclusive Economic Zone of Indonesia. They spent two months in jail in Bitung City, Manado before their ordeal was reported in June by their wives to the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) program, which is affiliated with SAFE Seas Philippines local partner, OND HESED.

Relying on the existing channels/networks of the AOS program to address such cases, 27 of them, including two minors, were repatriated in July 2020 together with another 18 other Filipinos who were also detained in Indonesia at the time. Things took a turn for the better when OND HESED intervened in their repatriation with the help of both Philippine and Indonesian consulates. It was also timely that the SAFE Seas Project coordinated with other relevant groups to provide assistance.

These repatriated fishers were then enrolled for assistance like the provision of out-rigger canoes or bancas from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and referred to other livelihood assistance programs.



**5.
Improved FL/
TIP Reporting
Mechanisms**

PLAN International is a recognized leader in establishing community based protection networks. Using this approach, SAFE Seas worked with authorities and communities to institute procedures for identifying, reporting and responding to cases of labor abuse. Communities now know when and where to report cases, and authorities now know how to take action in response.

The SAFE Seas program worked to improve FL/TIP Reporting Mechanisms at both the national and local scale, by:

- i) Strengthening existing reporting mechanisms and support services
- ii) Establishing community-based protection networks
- iii) Creating local referral networks for remedy and support
- iv) Developing formal channels for referring fishers cases nationally.

Strengthening existing referral mechanisms and support services

At the outset of this project, nearly all Indonesian project sites did not have formal referral networks and support services set up for victims of FL/TIP. Instead, fishers and their families relied heavily on personal networks to seek assistance. Local labor unions and NGOs played a crucial role in helping victims and their families obtain help from government agencies responsible for providing assistance and remediation. According to one community member, various complaints from fishermen were not responded to by the government prior to SAFE Seas. In their opinion, the government did not care about fishers' lives.

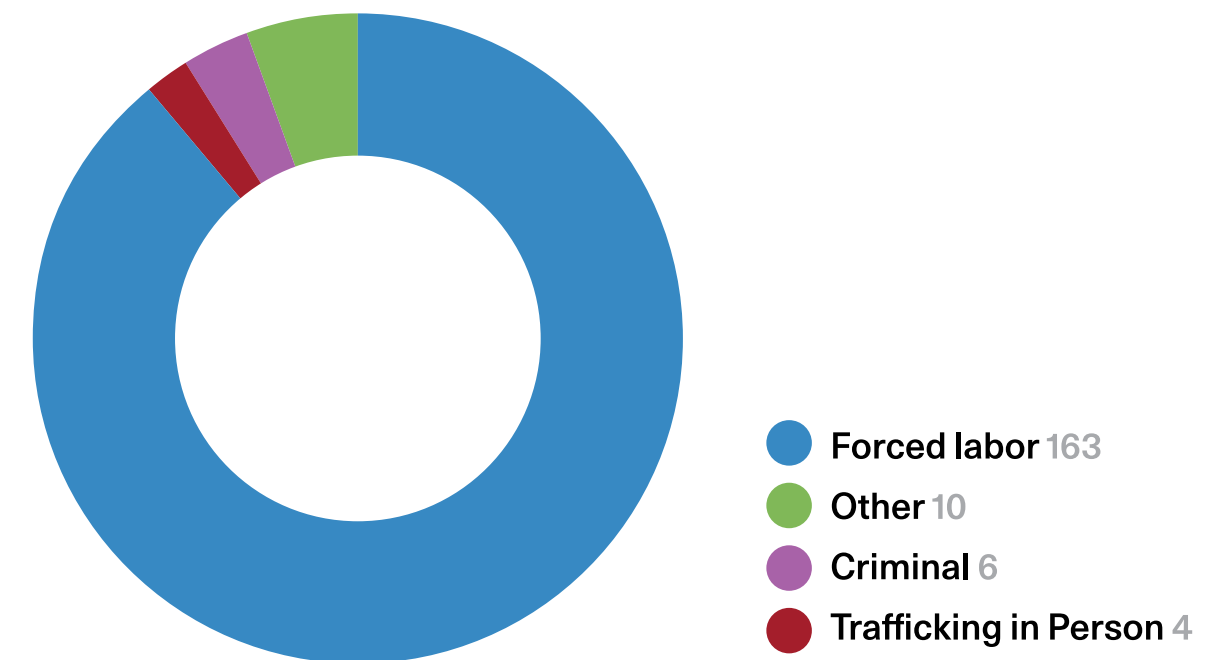
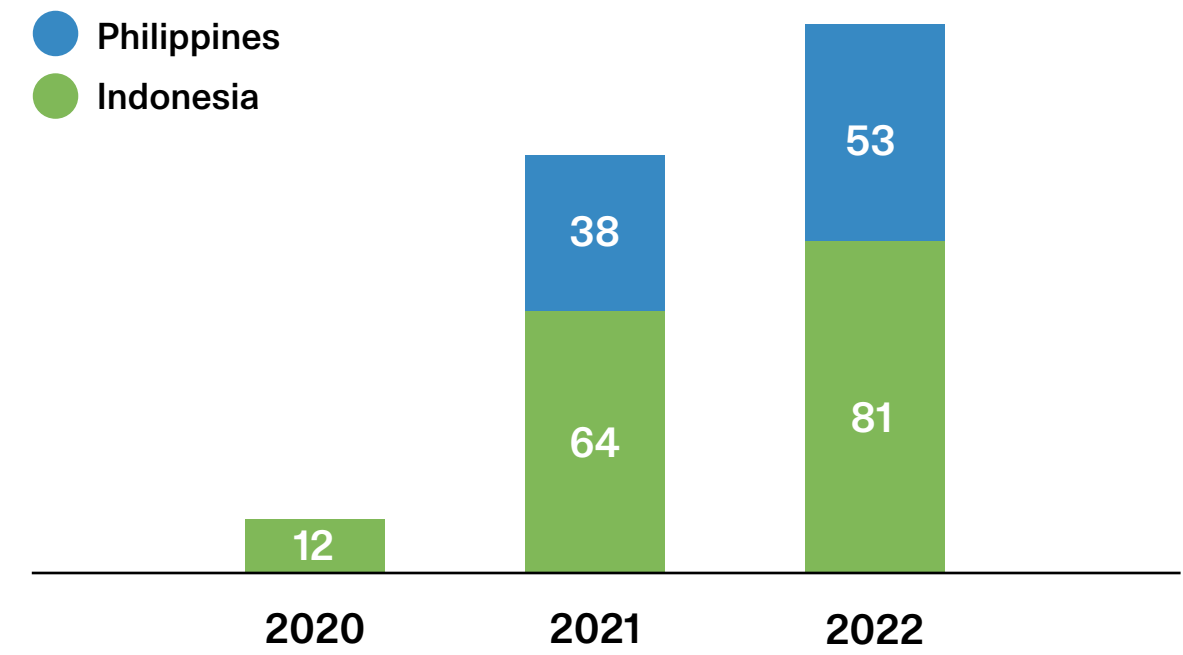
In the Philippines, grievance services and reporting avenues existed through established FL/TIP reporting mechanisms, however they were not often accessed by fishers and these channels were not sensitive to the specific context and needs of fishers. SAFE Seas improved fishers' access to using these channels by strengthening the capacity of Barangay helpdesks, and building capacity among help desk staff at the local Social Welfare and Development Offices. Service directories were produced in each locality to assist in case referrals, and Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCs) were integrated into referral processes.

SAFE Seas worked with stakeholders to update existing reporting and referral systems, including:

- Training help desk officers and staff in fish ports to prevent and respond to FL/TIP
- Enhancing existing help desk protocols and guidelines to include FL/TIP on fishing
- Formalizing new help desk protocols
- Establishing referral network directories
- Outreach to referral bodies and putting a referral system in place for support
- Mapping and connecting with reporting hotlines
- Guidance materials for each stage of FL/TIP Cases, including victim-survivor identification, investigation, gathering evidence, interview techniques, building cases, affidavit drafting, and conducting rescue
- Referral system guidelines and clarifying FL/TIP referral pathways
- MOU agreements signed with national authorities and service providers to coordinate referrals for FL/TIP victims

These interventions increased the ability of fishers and their families to report exploitative working conditions on fishing vessels. With increased access, the number of cases of FL/TIP reported through project supported helpdesks and hotlines increased.

Number of cases of FL/TIP reported through project-supported helpdesks and hotlines



Establishing community-based protection networks

Plan International has extensive expertise in establishing community-based protection mechanisms to safeguard vulnerable populations. This approach was adapted to safeguard fishing communities by activating existing community group networks such as FARMCs and PKKs, as well as through setting up new community networks. The community groups were mobilized to improve FL/TIP awareness in the community, and in turn build capacity in the community to report labor exploitation cases and seek support.

In Indonesia, a dedicated volunteer group was set up as a community-based protection mechanism for fishers, the Kader Perlindungan Awak Kapal Perikanan (Cadre). Each cadre is made up of 8-12 community volunteers, including community leaders, women, fishers and their family. The role of the Cadres is to spread awareness about FL/TIP, receive grievance reports from fishers, connect fishers to the village government, Fishers' Center, service providers and relevant government agencies for follow up assistance.

The role of women is key to the successful functioning of the Cadres. Women have played a major role in reporting complaints or fishers' rights violations on behalf of their male relatives/husbands, as well as accessing information on fishers rights. Women have also proved crucial advocates against

FL/TIP in the community. Cadres have been particularly good at participating in community meetings which are opportunities to share experiences and information related to working on vessels and the rights of vessel workers. There were positive reflections from women participants in the Cadres in helping fishers' families to better understand working conditions on vessels, and the need for required documents, especially a work contract.

Another community organization spurred on by the program is SAKTI (Serikat Awak Kapal Perikanan Bersatu Sulawesi Utara), which was formed partly through being empowered by SAFE Seas' advocacy. SAKTI is a network of paralegal village volunteers trained by local CSOs. SAKTI has a membership of 250 fishers, and is led by a paralegal volunteer who continues to work as a fisher.

As a result of community protection networks, fisher communities were able to strengthen coordination between cadres, villages, and related local government agencies, to respond and prevent FL/TIP cases. They were also a useful mechanism for developing community understanding and awareness of FL/TIP and disseminating fishery information through various channels. These groups were also effective for assisting fish workers in undertaking their job safely, such as by assisting with relevant documentation (eg. contracts, seaman's books, and passports), and complying with fishing and recruitment laws.

Indonesia PAKP Cadres
Community-based Fishers' Protection Mechanism

No of groups established

8

Location

Eight villages in three districts in Central Java, and three villages in Bitung (Tegal, Brebes, and Pemaslang)

Members

8-12 volunteer members per group, including community leaders, women, fishers, and their family

Role

Spread awareness about FL/TIP, receive grievance reports from fishers, connect fishers to the village government, Fishers' Center, service providers and relevant government agencies for follow-up assistance.



Group photo of cadres from Tegal, Brebes, and Pemaslang

"Women share information and have the courage to understand and ask questions about work at sea during the PKK meeting"

– WOMAN CADRE MEMBER, BITUNG

"During the community meeting, most wives are eager to know information about their husband's jobs. Usually, they ask about the problems faced by the fisher and our experience as a Cadre in helping them, why it happens. We explain to them the rights of fishers and how to prevent them from being exploited"

– WOMAN CADRE MEMBER

"We share information with friends, neighbors, and relatives through worship, community activities, recitation, and the PKK. Information, gossip, and rumors usually spread out among the community by word of mouth very fast. We use this channel to socialize the useful information for fishers, their rights, the Sea Work Agreement (PKL), and its content"

– WOMEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS, BITUNG

"With the SAFE Seas project, there is a lot of openness from the government to provide protection to fishers. I have experience, when I was a student in junior high school, during school holiday I just jumped into the ships and saw fishers experience forced labor, so, I'm motivated and eager to help fishers."

– MALE CADRE AND PARALEGAL

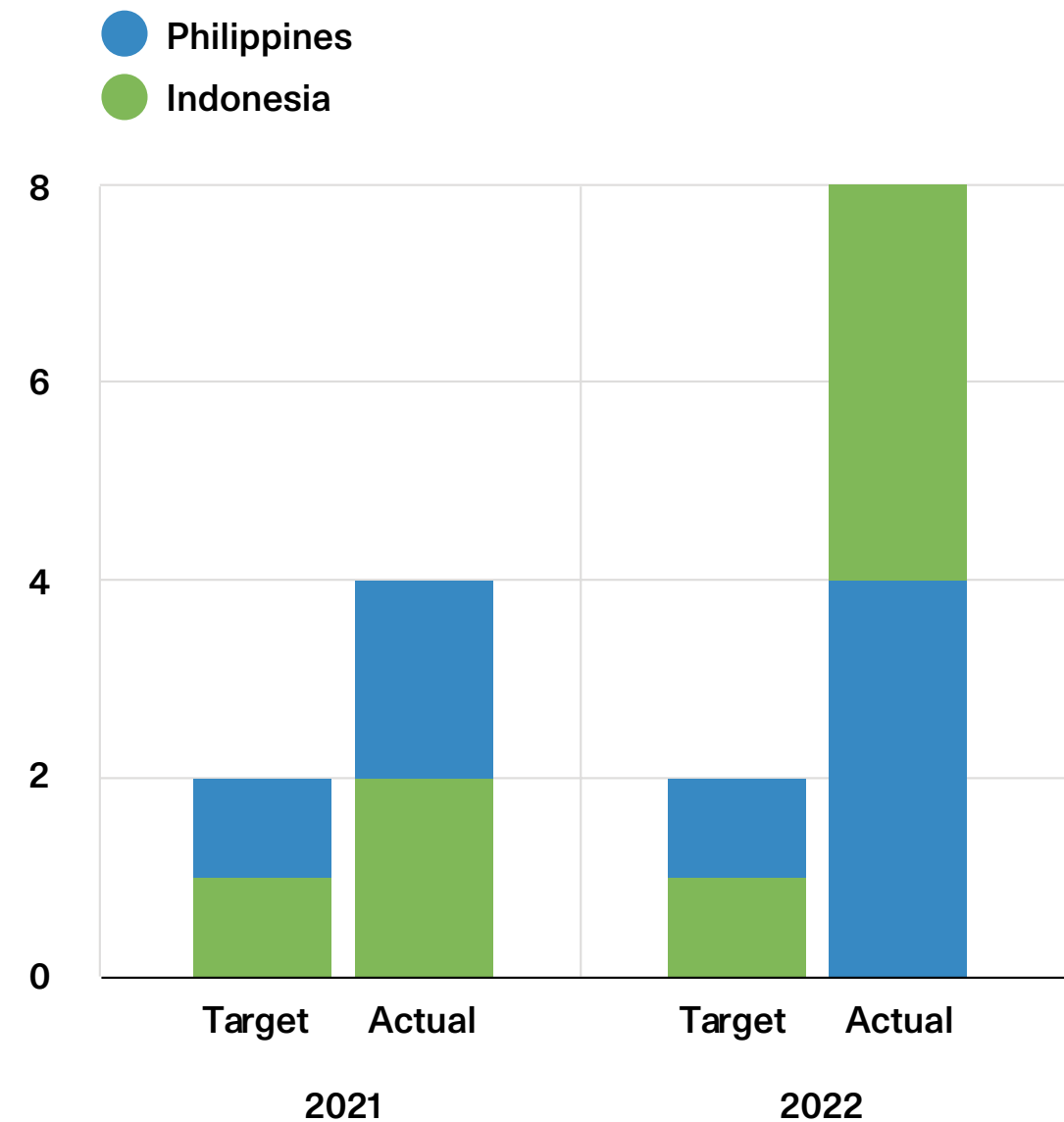
Creating local referral networks for remedy and support

SAFE Seas advocated and worked with local authorities to adopt and strengthen national FL/TIP referral and reporting guidelines at all project sites in order to ensure better access for fishers to remedy and support services. In strengthening existing referral mechanisms, SAFE Seas also worked with local stakeholders to establish new referral networks and procedures by connecting with local authorities and service providers. Plan actively involved fish workers, fish worker organizations, fishing communities, service providers, and relevant government agencies to develop these channels, which resulted in the development of new guidelines, practices and local policies. Ultimately, this led to improved access to remedies for fishers.

Tuti Suprianti, Head of Fishing Port Tegal in Central Java, said:

“The SAFE Seas Project is very helpful to facilitate coordination among different stakeholders. The coordination role played by the project at village level to facilitate complaints from fishers to vessel owners and involving the fishing port authority has been very effective. I hope that this tripartite model will be replicated in the other 11 Fishing Ports in Central Java”.

Number of service delivery guidelines formulated by multi stakeholders working group for FL/TIP victims



CASE STUDY

PHILIPPINES

Barangay Captain Gerry Abad of Palawan, a leader by example

“I did not think twice when I accepted SAFE Seas’ call for support because I need to enhance my knowledge on how to help my constituents better,” says Barangay Captain Gerry Abad of Brgy. Mandaragat in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. Brgy. Mandaragat is one of the pilot sites for the SAFE Seas project in Palawan.

As a seasoned public servant, Kap. Gerry has already established an effective reporting mechanism at the barangay level. Now with the help of SAFE Seas, they are more equipped to handle grievances of fishers and possible cases of labor exploitation on fishing vessels.

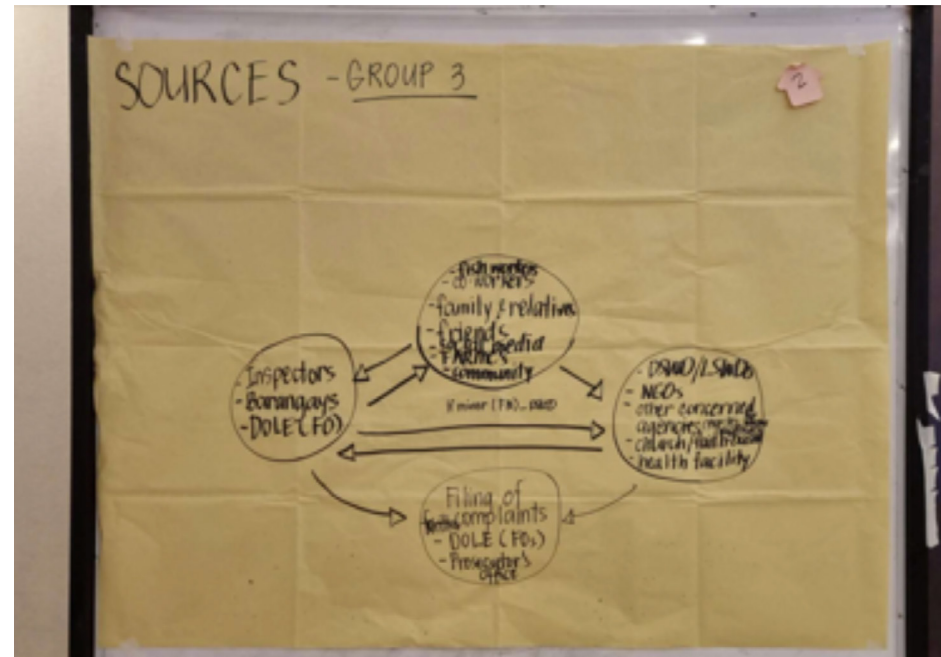
“There was an incident before the pandemic where fishers filed a complaint at our office against their employer. The company issued a contract stating that they will be going on a fishing operation for three months with a fixed amount of share. In the middle of the fishing operation, the fishers were informed that they will be receiving less than what was agreed. They refused to accept this, got off the fishing vessel, and reported the incident to us,” Kap. Gerry shared. He immediately summoned both parties to discuss and resolve the issue. In the end, the fishers prevailed and got their fair share from the catch in accordance with the contract.

Furthermore, Brgy. Mandaragat also provided them with grocery items for their basic needs of educating fishers about their rights and laws that can protect them. Don’t worry, as long as I’m here as a leader of this community, we will continue to support fishers,” says Gerry.

Kap. Gerry graciously attributed part of this win to the SAFE Seas Project. “It’s all thanks to the SAFE Seas project because if you did not educate us on FL/TIP, no one would dare complain about abusive companies.”

This is only the beginning for Kap. Gerry and Brgy. Mandaragat. He plans to continue the advocacy of protecting fishers and educating them about their rights, and help organize a fishers’ group in their community. “We will still practice what SAFE Seas started in terms of educating fishers about their rights and laws that can protect them. Don’t worry, as long as I’m here as a leader of this community, we will continue to support fishers,” says Gerry.





Officials from Puerto Princesa work together to map and develop referral mechanism processes



6. Improved Community Awareness

By learning about fishers' rights at work, the whole community was activated to play a role in protecting fishers.

Awareness raising in fishing communities was a key activity to improve the ability of fishers and their families to identify and report exploitative conditions on fishing vessels and ultimately reduce the instances of exploitation of fishers. Awareness efforts extended to the families and friends of fishers, to all levels of government, and to the private sector. SAFE Seas undertook a whole range of community outreach activities to share knowledge with fisher communities, including:

- Increasing access to information about fishery FL/TIP
- Teaching fishers about their labor rights at work
- Activating the community to identify FL/TIP on fishing vessels
- Building knowledge of fishery labor issues among local government actors
- Including labor rights modules in fishing industry training programs
- Spreading awareness of the gendered impact of FL/TIP activating fishers' families

Pre-program awareness

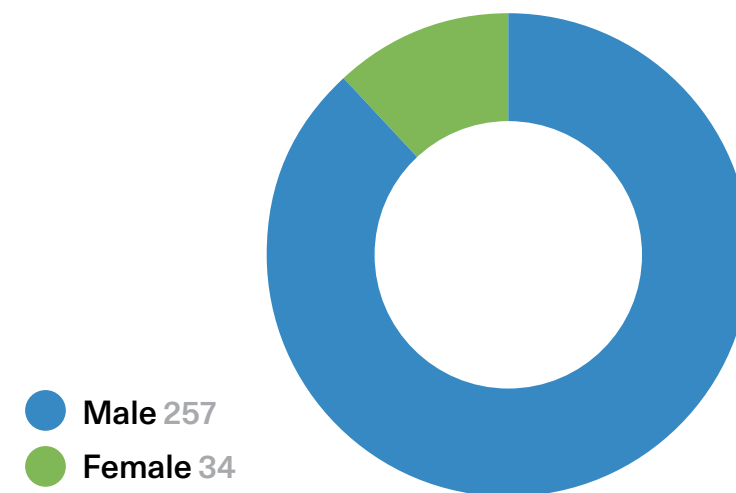
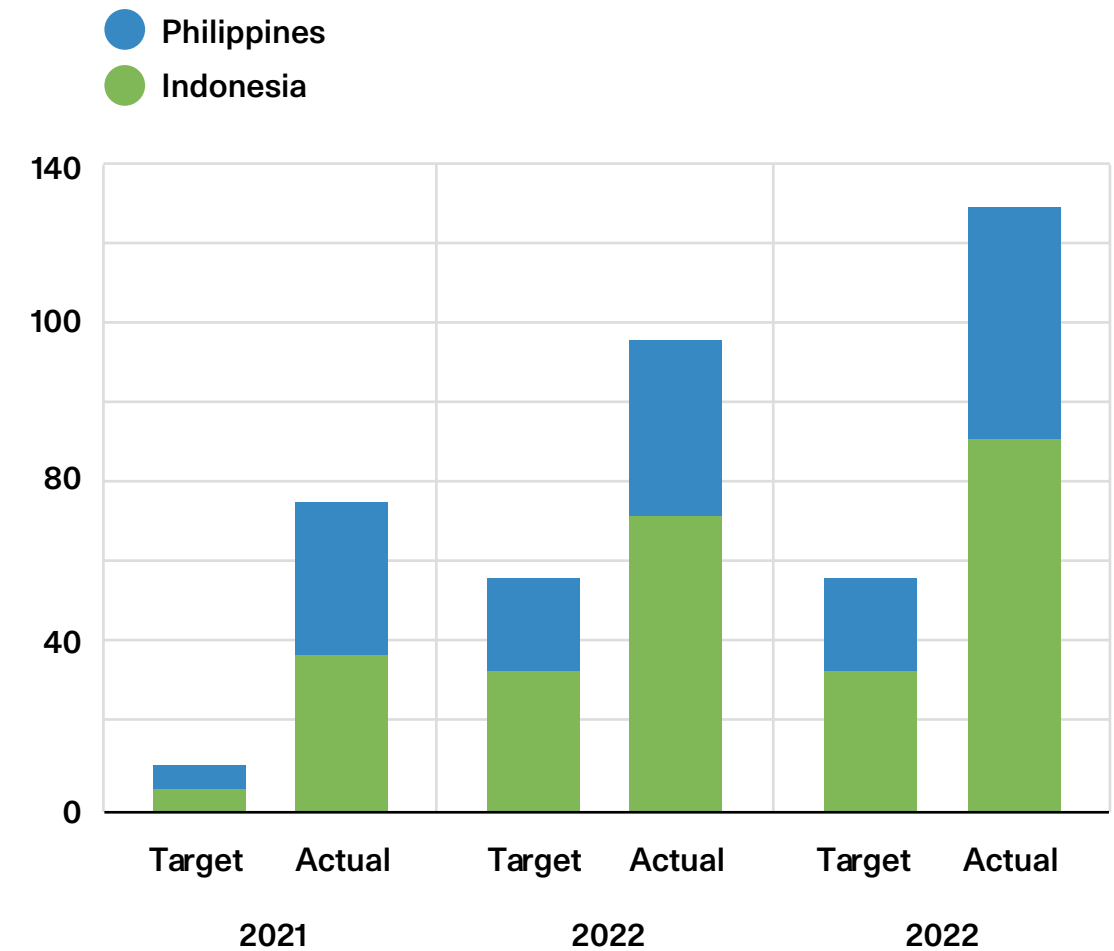
At the outset of the SAFE Seas program, fishing communities at project sites revealed a general lack of awareness of the rights of fish workers. Baseline research indicated that communities had only a vague and limited awareness of FL/TIP, and were not aware how it applied within the fishing industry. Also, many exploitative practices within the commercial and artisanal fishing fleets had been practiced for many years and were considered normal by fishers – such as unfair payment systems, poor occupational health and safety, and exploitative recruitment debts.

A key contributing factor to lack of awareness was found to be the limited availability of FL/TIP information, such as about working conditions in the fisheries sector and unscrupulous recruitment practices. Fishers, women, young men, local officials, and other members of fishing communities also had limited information on what programs, policies, and organizations might be available to support them. By increasing the availability of information, fishers and their families were made aware of their rights and came forward to report issues in their workplace.

“Most participants consider FL/TIP in its extreme forms but fail to see the subtle aspects of FL. Many fish workers consider the toughness of working at sea to be part of the job and, to some extent, accept conditions that may be categorized as FL/TIP to be normal, particularly poor safety and working conditions, as well as a practice involving underage workers that is hidden under the pretense of apprenticeships.”

– SAFE SEAS PRE-SITUATION ANALYSIS REPORT

Number of fish workers who reported seeking FL/TIP services or referrals after receiving SAFE Seas campaign information



Increasing access to information about fishery FL/TIP

A major goal of SAFE Seas was to increase awareness of FL/TIP on fishing vessels and the availability of information. SAFE Seas introduced a range of approaches to raise awareness of fishers and engage their communities.



** Image Caption Required **

SAFE Seas information materials

Indonesia

Board game: Safety Fishing / Aman Berlayar

Teaches fishers how to fish safely & legally

Awareness raising

Thematic leaflets on FL/TIP; Awareness billboard

Videos and music

Educational on safe sailing, avoiding FL/TIP, such as Youtube "SAFE Seas Dangdut"

Advocacy

Policy briefs to government; Community based protection decrees

Philippines

Information, education & communication (IEC) materials

Posters on FL/TIP indicators, reusable face masks, go bags

Videos

showcasing stories of fishers who were detained in Indonesia

Collaboration with partners (DOLE, PIACAT, SFFAI,)

in developing IEC materials (e.g., radio advertisement)

Awareness raising advocacy

About FL/TIP indicators, anti-trafficking laws & policies, DOLE D.O. 156-16

CASE STUDY

'Aman Berlayar' ("Safety Fishing") Board Game and Video Production

In Indonesia, the SAFE Seas Project has produced a board game as a tool to share information regarding the risks, rights, and other important things related to fish workers. Through this board game, players learn how to minimize the risk of exploitative practices on fishing vessels, and maintain physical and social wellbeing of fish workers. For example, the game demonstrates the pitfalls of not having the correct fishing documents.



Teaching Fishers about their labor rights at work

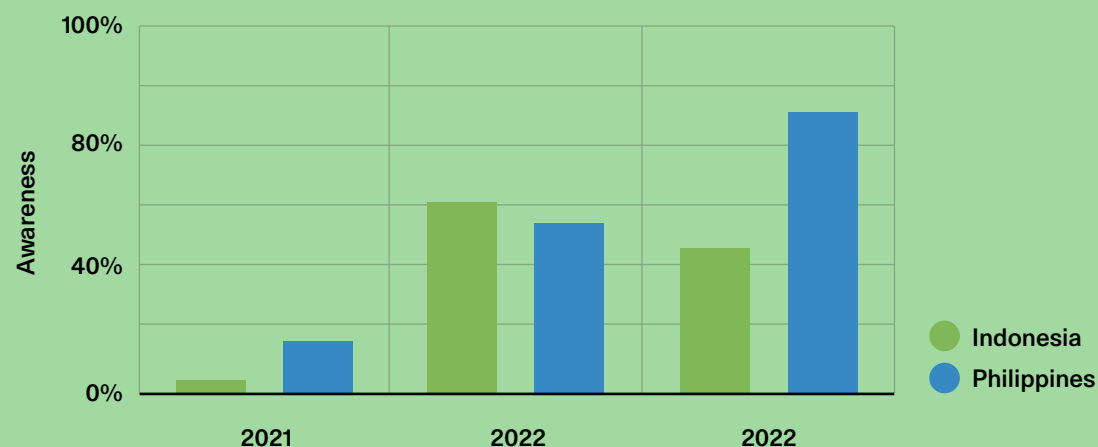
A major program outcome of SAFE Seas was to increase Fish Workers' Awareness of FL/TIP on fishing vessels. By the end of the program, significantly more fishers were able to identify FL/TIP and knew how to report it if it occurred on their vessel.

Outcome Surveys on Fishers Awareness, Aug 2022

Some 344 Fishers in Indonesia and 365 from the Philippines were surveyed to measure their level of understanding of FL/TIP over the course of the SAFE Seas program. In order to be counted as understanding FL/TIP, the respondents had to fulfill three criteria: (1) Must say they are aware of FL/TIP; (2) Must have heard the term within the last year (3) Must be able to identify at least one form of FL/TIP.

Over the course of the program,

1. the awareness of FL/TIP among fishers in Philippines increased from 15% to 81%; and
2. the awareness of FL/TIP among fishers in Indonesia increased from 4% to 42%.



Activating the community to identify FL/TIP on fishing vessels

SAFE Seas worked to build an understanding among fisher communities of the challenges faced by fishers, to ensure the whole community could play a part in the identification, reporting and responding to cases of FL/TIP. SAFE Seas mobilized community leaders and local advocacy networks to raise fishing communities' knowledge of recruitment regulations and how to identify and report FL/TIP cases. In Indonesia, community outreach included the setting up voluntary fishing vessel crew protection groups known as "cadres". Cadres, along with village leaders, were tasked with identifying FL/TIP cases, providing education to fishers, coordinating with the village government to solve exploitation cases involving fishers and boat owners, socializing FL/TIP interventions, and leading awareness raising in the community. This ensured that awareness efforts was integrated with local social networks and practices.

Outreach was also conducted through established community organizations known as PKK (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, empowerment for family welfare), a body created from the national to the neighborhood association level to hold regular events and activities, promote family welfare and support government development policies. In the

“Cadres have been actively coordinating with the village government to solve several exploitation cases involving fishers and boat owners. ... Through this project, we gained knowledge of the rights of fishing workers in having an employee safety program.”

– CADRE, KLUWUT VILLAGE

“The SAFE Seas Project has helped in providing education and training to assisted villages, even though many fishers come from other areas. The information on procedures for dealing with fishers’ cases has been very helpful in the community as we can refer to related agencies and institutions. Our community will continue to provide education on how to obtain information related to working as fishing workers and provide assistance for cases.”

– CADRE, SUGIHWARAS URBAN VILLAGE

“SAFE Seas Project has had an impact on our school because there is information in the form of leaflets/educational media distributed. SAFE Seas Project has provided a lot of information related to working as fishing workers so our students will be more selective and careful about the sweet promises of the manning agencies that offer jobs.

–TEACHER, SUPM (MARITIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOL) AL MAARIF, TEGAL

Philippines, the project mobilized barangay councils and Fisheries Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCS) to engage their local communities. The project also mobilized community champions to raise awareness of fishers’ labor rights. By signing MoUs with the project, local FARMCs have committed to continuing implementation of activities specifically in implementing early detection mechanisms and a roadmap and in raising public awareness.

Industry training

Local fisher education and training institutions were engaged to include FL/TIP information in their curriculum, such as Bitung and Tegal district polytechnics. SAFE Seas developed curriculum materials for the standard Basic Safety Training for fishers, with modules on FL and fishers’ rights. This ensured that new fishers would be aware of FL/TIP when they graduate and work in the industry.

Building knowledge of fishery labor issues among local government actors

Increased attention of fishery FL/TIP among local government was a clear success of the SAFE Seas project. Officials at relevant agencies and institutions were educated about FL/TIP suffered by fishers and learned procedures for dealing with fishers' cases, including providing referral and support. SAFE Seas worked with the local government in the development of service delivery guidelines which cover legal, rescue, transport, psychosocial recovery sessions, and reintegration. Local government officials also took part in learning events in order to build capacity in operating a help desk to receive reports, file cases and assist fishers. The program worked with officials to create information materials on FL/TIP indicators and using existing reporting hotlines, and raising understanding about existing referral systems for FL/TIP victims. Local government representatives at various levels signed MoUs to support local measures to identify, report and remedy FL/TIP cases.



Bringing a gendered lens to working in the fishing sector

Plan International always strives to support women and children in all of its projects. Women are key advocates against FL/TIP, having considerable influence at the community level through local community organizations, and playing a crucial role in advocating to local governments to prosecute labor violators. Developing the role that women can play in the community in defending fisher's working conditions was a major focus of the SAFE Seas program, which emphasized building awareness among women of their husbands and sons labor rights.

Spreading awareness of the gendered impacts of FL/TIP and activating fishers' families

Consistent with this approach, SAFE Seas undertook studies in each of Indonesia and the Philippines to learn how the workplace abuse of fishers was impacting women in fisher communities and households. These studies showed that women and families of fishers suffered extra stress, higher workloads, increased debt burdens and economic instability as a result of poor labor standards in the fishery sector, especially through the manipulation of salary and debt payments that are common tactics used by employers.

These gender studies also showed that women play a key roles in fishers employment by:

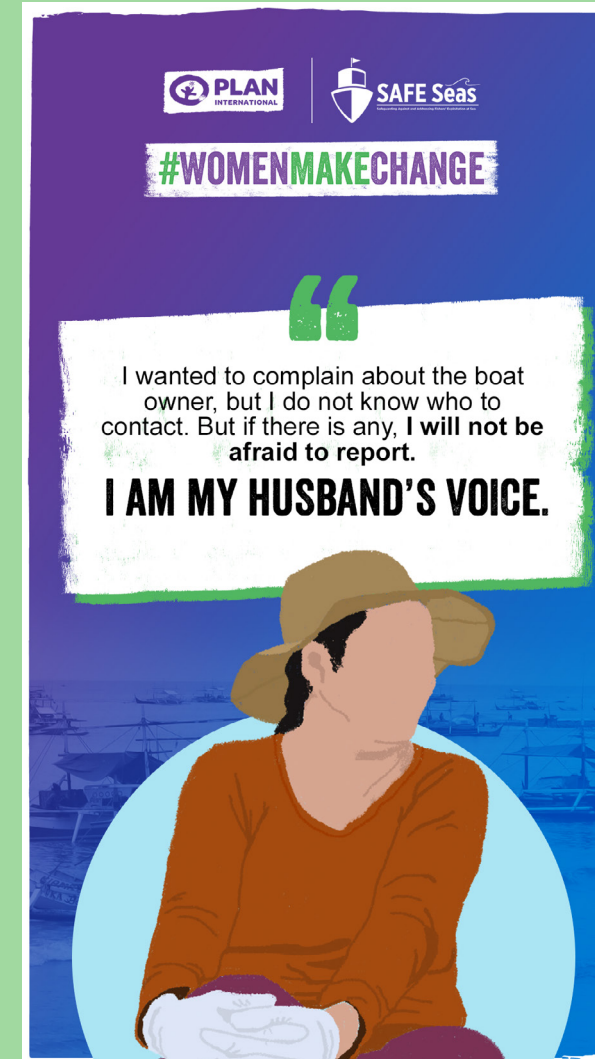
- preparing personal documents of husbands and family members
- giving written approval when crew members work abroad
- managing household finances and fishers' income
- obtaining other sources of family income

With these findings, the program was determined to activate women to improve the conditions for fishers and lessen the negative impacts on their families.

Key Interventions With Women

The program undertook the following interventions focused on women:

- SAFE Seas trained women in fishing communities on FL/TIP, labor rights, legal services, and advocacy strategies
- Several women who are active in community activities have become fishing vessel crew protection cadres. They become involved in sharing knowledge to other women in understanding the work of fishing crews, the risks, as well as efforts to protect their husbands and children.
- In Indonesia, women were promoted as leaders in raising awareness in villages in North Sulawesi and Central Java and as advocates for their male relatives in documenting and filing forced labor cases. The Fisher Centres in Indonesia are now known by women as a place to get information and as a place for filing complaints.
- In the Philippines, SAFE Seas identified the need to build women's alternative livelihoods, and in both countries, promoted womens' agency through livelihood and skills development
- In the Philippines, SAFE seas worked with project partner OND Hesed to raise the confidence of women to report abuses.





6. Improved Knowledge and Research Produced

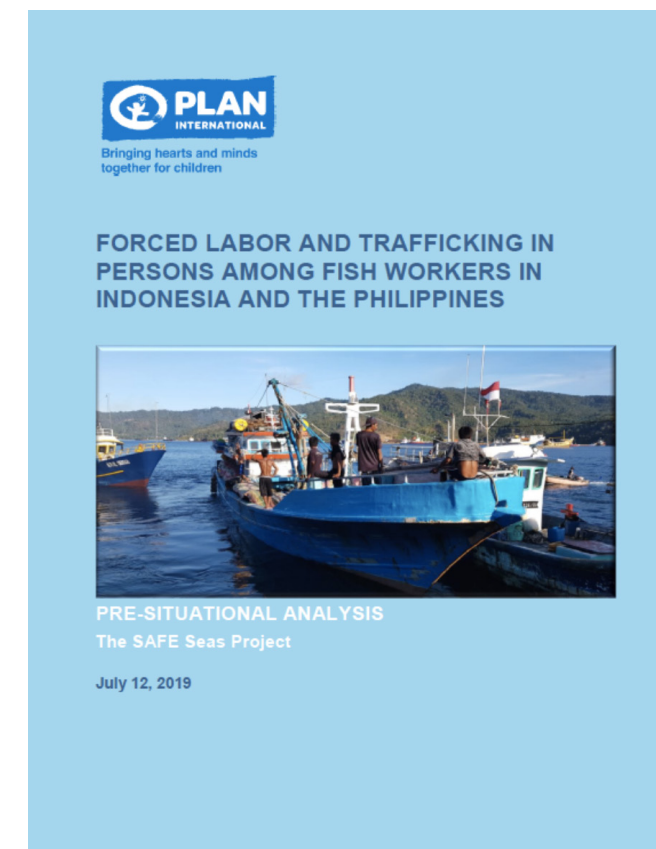
Research studies, manuals and guidebooks have been developed to ensure that policy development and implementation is both informed and collaborative. These materials will continue to guide continuing interventions into the future.

One outcome of the SAFE Seas project has been the production of knowledge and research about labor abuses in Indonesia and Philippines' fisheries. The following research outputs were all used as key points of advocacy during the life of the project, in order to demonstrate to stakeholders the real challenges faced by fishers and their families, as well as the merits of improving policy, inspection and grievance mechanisms in response. These materials also were crucial for guiding program interventions, ensuring that community voices informed program activity and that collaboration was paramount. These materials encapsulate many lessons learned that can be used to advise future interventions seeking to improve labor standards in the fisheries sector.

Pre-situation analysis

This report was conducted at the outset of the project to provide detailed, in-depth information about FL/TIP among fish workers at the project sites.

Topics covered include pre-recruitment, recruitment, working conditions, programs for fish workers and their families, policies and regulations, support services and programs, and gaps in the enforcement of policies concerning FL/TIP. Qualitative research with fishing communities and victims of FL/TIP were conducted to understand perceptions and levels of awareness about FL/TIP. This research not only guided project implementation, but allowed stakeholders to understand the issues addressed by the project.



Gender Study Indonesia, “Labor Abuse In Indonesia’s Fisheries – The Impact On Women And How They Are Taking Action In Response”

Gender Study Philippines, “Effects Of Forced Labor And Trafficking In Persons On Female Relatives Of Male Fishers”

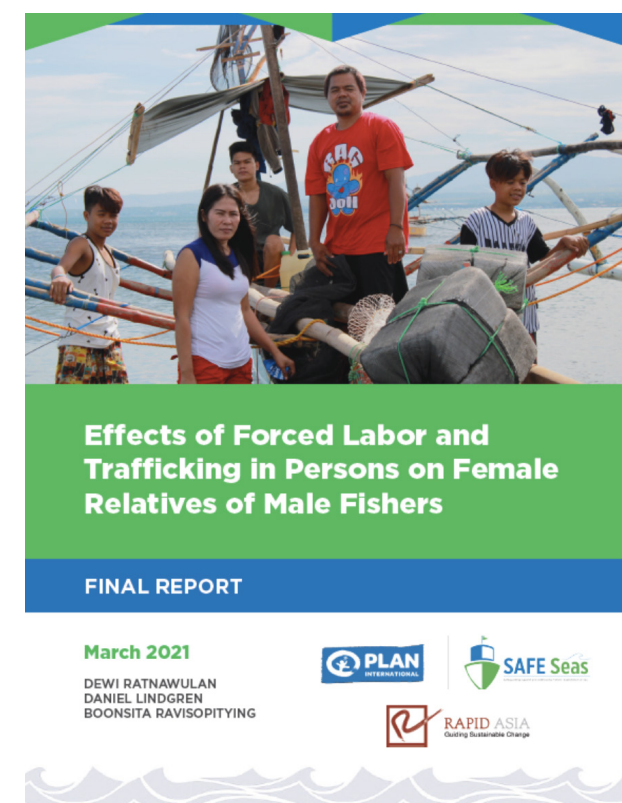
Safe Seas published two mixed-methods research studies to take a closer look at how FL/TIP impacted women connected to fishers. Topics include: women’s awareness of FL/TIP on fishing vessels; how FL/TIP affects women and their families; how women cope; and womens’ potential role as key advocates for fair working conditions at sea.

Across both countries it was shown that women play a key role in managing fishers employment, including in making household decisions such as borrowing money, sharing information about recruitment channels and employers, and finding out about job opportunities. Many partners of fishers could recount exploitation of fishers at sea - such as unpaid wages, abuse and lack of recruitment transparency, even without a detailed understanding of FL/TIP. For fishing households, FL/TIP causes extra workload and stress, as well as debt and economic instability, forcing women to source other work and income.

Women are key advocates against FL/TIP. They have considerable influence at the community level through local community organizations (such

as the FARMCs in Philippines, PKK and cadres in Indonesia), and play a crucial role in advocating to local governments to prosecute labor violators. For those aware of reporting channels such as Fishers Centres, women are very important in reporting grievances and seeking assistance for fishers.

This research increases the very limited knowledge base on women associated with the fishing sector. It was used to inform project interventions, community-level action, stakeholder engagement, and policy responses that seek to decrease indicators of FL/TIP in the fishing communities. These studies have been useful for informing civil society and stakeholders more generally, with over 1,000 views online and hundreds of downloads from the Plan website.

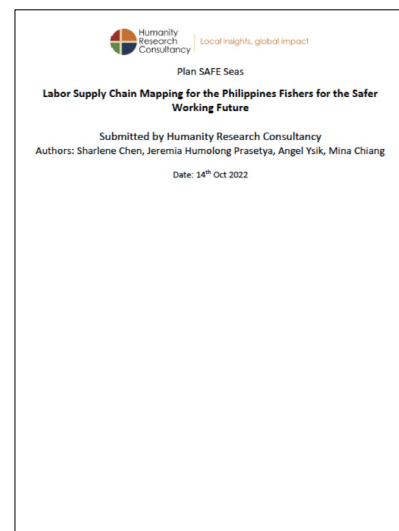


Labor Supply Chain Mapping Philippines & Labor Supply Chain Mapping Indonesia

Across two distinct studies, Labor Supply Chain Mapping was conducted to determine the recruitment practices of the fisheries at respective project sites. Data was collected through focused group discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with select respondents from the fishing communities, government regulatory bodies, traders and vessel operators.

In the Philippines, the study focused on mapping Filipino fishers recruited for work onboard fishing vessels in the domestic capture fisheries corridors. In particular, it assesses purse seine (medium and large scale) and tuna handline fishing in General Santos and Sarangani, medium commercial, artisanal and municipal fishing in General Santos City, Kiamba and Glan in Sarangani, and Taytay and Puerto Princesa City in Palawan. The results of the study were handed over to government agency partners. The study was used to determine better recruitment and remunerations schemes which were recommended to government agencies.

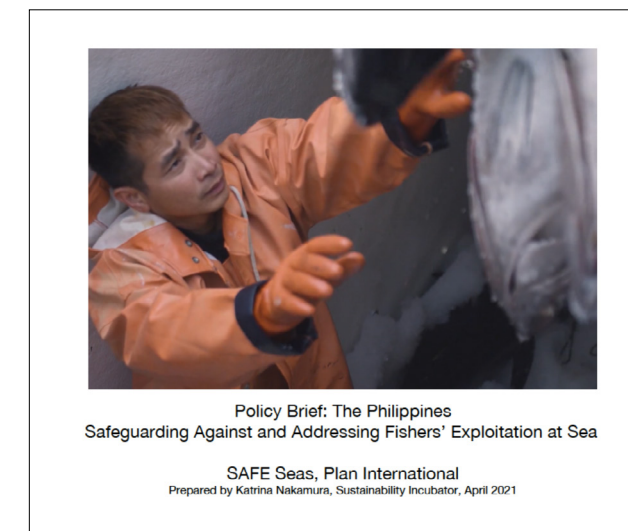
In Indonesia this study focused on the recruitment, hiring and placement for both domestic and foreign fishing vessels. The mapping was used to support decision makers and key government agencies on improving management regulations of fishers, and devising policies and strategies for responsible, fair and transparent recruitment of both domestic and international placements. SAFE Seas shared these findings to the Ministry of Labor in order to inform negotiations with destination countries such as South Korea about the management of recruitment channels. The study also recommended a roadmap for the adoption of the National Action Plan to address fishery FL/TIP.



Multidisciplinary Inspection Policy Brief Philippines & Multidisciplinary Inspection Policy Brief Indonesia

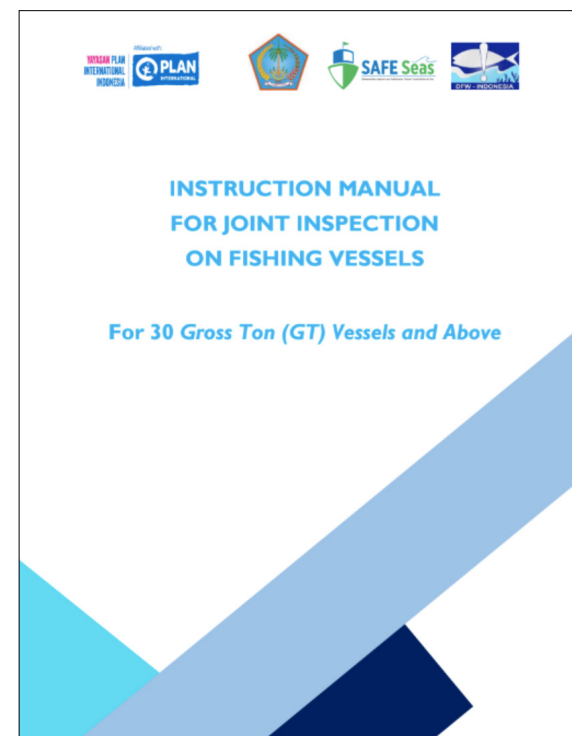
These studies each assess the existing inspection practices of fishing vessels at project ports, and set out the argument for coordinated multidisciplinary inspections. Based on extensive consultation with local and national stakeholders, these briefs provide a vision and road map for stakeholders to achieve coordinated multidisciplinary inspections. Briefs outline identification procedures for “at risk” FL/TIP conditions on fishing vessels and minimum international standards and domestic law requirements to stop FL/TIP in fishing.

These briefs were crucial for generating buy-in among various government agencies to recognize the need for multidisciplinary inspections, and support a training program and trial for conducting multi-disciplinary inspections. These briefs were vital in ensuring that the SAFE Seas multi-disciplinary inspections training program and pilot inspections were successfully undertaken.



Multi-disciplinary Inspection training manuals

Site-specific multi-disciplinary inspection training manuals were produced for each of Indonesia and the Philippines. These manuals are a resource for training government authorities how to conduct multi-disciplinary labor inspections, as well as principles and standards for identifying labor abuses at sea. These manuals have been used to establish pilot inspections in selected ports, and can also be used to guide officials in other ports to build their inspection capacity and develop their own MDI protocols.

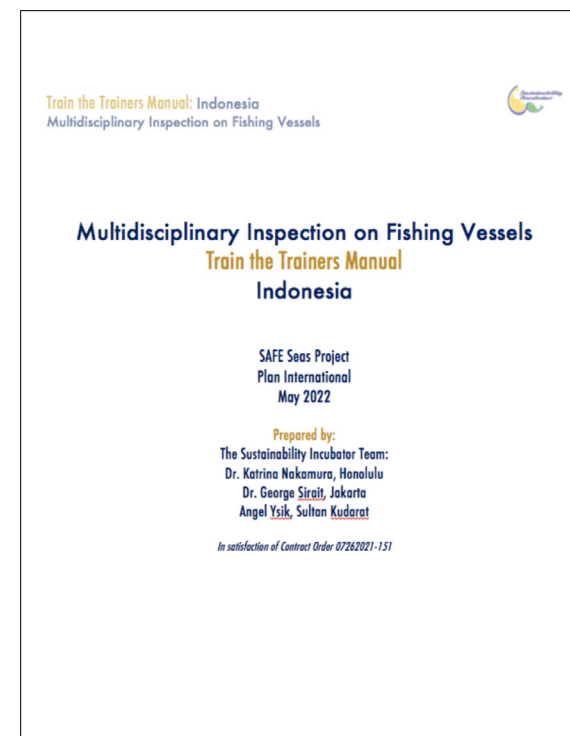


Feasibility Study for Fisher's Center in the Philippines

Addressing the Project's goal in improving fishers' lives and their families' ability to report possible cases of FL/TIP on fishing vessels and make support services more accessible to them, the project evaluated the viability of the Fishers' Center model in Philippine project sites with reference to the existing government frameworks. While the study report noted that the establishment of fisher's center at the project sites could be strategic for long term anti-FL/TIP endeavors, it was argued that first the intervention needed to address existing community perceptions that were barriers to reporting FL/TIP cases. The study recommends building strong political will and leadership among local government units and to continue to increase awareness raising interventions about FL/TIP at the community level.

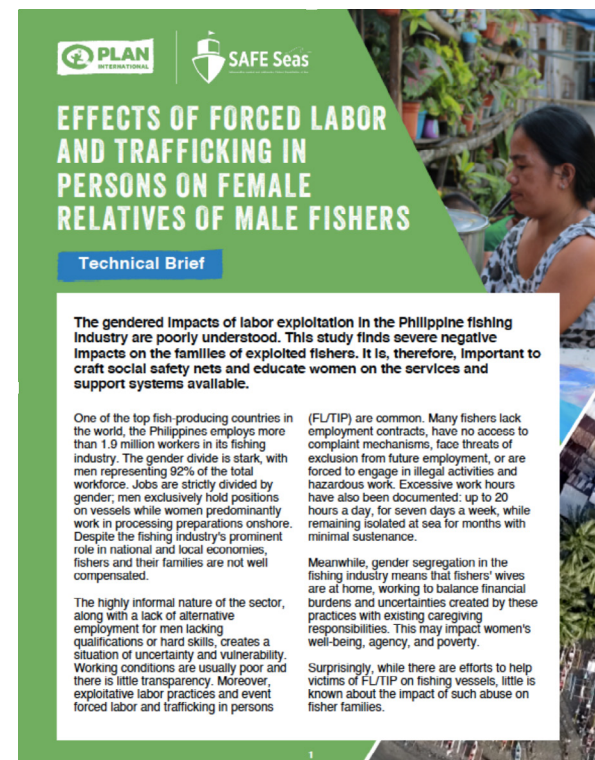
Community Early Detection Guidebook

This guidebook is a community resource setting out how to organize village-based networks for the protection of fishing boat crew.



Technical briefs

A series of technical briefs were produced to encapsulate lessons learned in the course of project interventions and recommendations for building further on the achievements of the SAFE Seas project. These briefs are available online and are particularly useful for distribution to local and national government authorities, industry stakeholders, community leaders and civil society actors in order to guide future interventions. Topics include the learnings of the Safe Fishing Alliances, the gendered impact of FL/TIP, and improving referral procedures to respond to FL/TIP.



PLAN INTERNATIONAL | **SAFE Seas**

EFFECTS OF FORCED LABOR AND TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS ON FEMALE RELATIVES OF MALE FISHERS

Technical Brief

The gendered impacts of labor exploitation in the Philippine fishing industry are poorly understood. This study finds severe negative impacts on the families of exploited fishers. It is, therefore, important to craft social safety nets and educate women on the services and support systems available.

One of the top fish-producing countries in the world, the Philippines employs more than 1.9 million workers in its fishing industry. The gender divide is stark, with men representing 92% of the total workforce. Jobs are strictly divided by gender; men exclusively hold positions on vessels while women predominantly work in processing preparations onshore. Despite the fishing industry's prominent role in national and local economies, fishers and their families are not well compensated.

The highly informal nature of the sector, along with a lack of alternative employment for men lacking qualifications or hard skills, creates a situation of uncertainty and vulnerability. Working conditions are usually poor and there is little transparency. Moreover, exploitative labor practices and event forced labor and trafficking in persons (FL/TIP) are common. Many fishers lack employment contracts, have no access to complaint mechanisms, face threats of exclusion from future employment, or are forced to engage in illegal activities and hazardous work. Excessive work hours have also been documented: up to 20 hours a day, for seven days a week, while remaining isolated at sea for months with minimal sustenance.

Meanwhile, gender segregation in the fishing industry means that fishers' wives are at home, working to balance financial burdens and uncertainties created by these practices with existing caregiving responsibilities. This may impact women's well-being, agency, and poverty.

Surprisingly, while there are efforts to help victims of FL/TIP on fishing vessels, little is known about the impact of such abuse on fisher families.



PLAN INTERNATIONAL | **SAFE Seas**

Safe Fishing Alliance: Protecting Fishers from Forced Labor and Human Trafficking





