

Philippines Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans, and Landscapes (SIBOL) Project

PROJECT SUMMARY

Objective: To improve the natural resource governance of biodiversity, oceans, and landscapes in the Philippines.

Approach: We work with the Philippine government to strengthen informed decision-making, enhance economic incentives, stimulate public and private sector investments, and reduce environmental crimes.

Impact: By supporting greater ecosystem stability and inclusive green growth, we protect the Philippines' rich biodiversity, while improving the livelihoods of those who depend on these resources.



The SIBOL Project is a five-year, PHP 1.1-billion natural resources management and biodiversity conservation project in the Philippines. It works with the Philippine government to introduce and scale up high-impact environmental interventions that support the sustainable management and governance of key natural resources, and reduce environmental crimes and unsustainable practices for terrestrial and marine ecosystems. To achieve the project's objectives, USAID and RTI International partnered with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR).

Across the Philippine archipelago of more than 7,500 islands, millions of people rely on agriculture, forestry, and fisheries for their livelihoods. Yet, these vital natural resources are under threat from exploitation, overuse, population growth, natural disasters, and climate change. A resilient Philippines is one in which communities, the private sector, and government collaborate to protect the country's environment.

In July 2020, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the five-year Philippines Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans, and Landscapes (SIBOL) Project.

RTI International, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization, leads the implementation of the SIBOL project. This is being done in partnership with Center for Conservation Innovations, Forest Foundation Philippines, Zoological Society of London, and the Resources, Environment, and Economics Center for Studies.

In addition to its national-level work, The SIBOL Project has set up four sites in key protected areas:

- 1 ZAMBALES**
Masinloc-Oyon Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape:
 A coastal area supporting thousands of fishers and coastal communities; threatened by mining, overfishing, and population growth.
- 2 PALAWAN**
Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park and Cleopatra's Needle Forest Reserve:
 Forest areas of the ecologically-important Palawan province that are significant habitats for biodiversity.
- 3**
Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape:
 A forest area that is home to abundant biodiversity and more than 12,000 indigenous people; threatened by logging and mining pressures.
- 4 SURIGAO DEL NORTE**
Siargao Island Protected Landscape and Seascape:
 A marine protected area surrounded by the country's largest contiguous mangrove area; threatened by overfishing and the exploitation of other natural resources.

The SIBOL Project follows a Planetary Health Approach, using cutting-edge science, coordinated and inclusive governance strategies, and powerful economic incentives to protect both biodiversity and the communities in and around targeted areas.

FOREST FOUNDATION PHILIPPINES: GRANTMAKING FOR THE SIBOL PROJECT

Forest Foundation Philippines contributes to the overall project goals by supporting scenario-based, innovative, and landscape-responsive grants. The Foundation also strengthens its intended contributions through proactive monitoring and evaluation methodologies that highlight successes on landscape and project levels, as well as learning insights. At the end of the project, the Foundation intends to come up with documentations of grantmaking experiences that highlight good practices, lessons learned, and unexplored facets of grantmaking.

THE SIBOL PROJECT: THREE-PRONGED STRATEGY



STRENGTHEN SCIENCE-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

This strategy intends to help improve natural resources governance both at the national and local levels. The SIBOL Project is developing an institutional capacity-building program for science-driven decision making that includes effective application of conservation science tools.

The intended result is enhanced conservation science systems, where natural resource governance actors adopt the tools, and apply them appropriately, consistently, and effectively in participatory decision-making processes.

The SIBOL Project also strengthens land and coastal resource management by supporting effective participation of communities and other underrepresented groups in governance structures, as well as by developing cutting-edge decision-making tools to improve biodiversity and socio-economic monitoring and analysis.



IMPROVE ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

Ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions compete with equally ambitious infrastructure investments in the Philippines. To address this challenge, The SIBOL Project promotes economic incentives anchored on economic valuation results and sustainable supply chain studies. With this at hand, the intended outcome is to influence better informed decision-making that can increase private sector and local community engagement for sustainable landscape and national activities.



STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT

Biodiversity in the Philippines is threatened by many factors, and one of the most pressing concerns is the prevalence of environmental crimes. The SIBOL Project engages the enforcement community and relevant stakeholders to detect, record, analyze, and respond to environmental law violations. The goal is to steer law enforcement to preventive approaches, and work with the prosecution service and judiciary to find solutions for resolving cases more efficiently.

At the site level, The SIBOL Project strengthens enforcement structures against marine and terrestrial law violations, and illegal wildlife trade.

Lastly, the project improves the use of responsive technologies and evidence-based approaches to reduce environmental crimes through capacity building and collaboration, and, at the same time, enhancing the policies that support environmental enforcement.

These three integrative approaches ensure that the SIBOL Project supports USAID's journey to self-reliance. The project is committed to meaningfully engage multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at conserving Philippine biodiversity, and protecting landscapes and seascapes for generations to come.

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