



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# USAID Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes

Newsletter #3 (April-June 2022)

## USAID SIBOL trains gov't partners in coral reef CSI and law enforcement



The Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes (SIBOL) project of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and RTI International held on June 18-25 in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu a week-long coral reef crime scene investigation and law enforcement training with government partners.

Twenty-seven representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, Philippine National Police Maritime Group, Philippine Coast Guard, Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park and the Dapa Municipal Government of Surigao del Norte participated in the training.

The training featured a comprehensive coverage of law enforcement topics, including coral reef crime scene investigation; marine wildlife crime forensics; Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna; hazardous materials; underwater crime scene photography; oil spills; vessel grounding; and marine and coastal pollution, among others. Instructors from the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network, a volunteer coalition of experts focused on science-based sea turtle management and conservation programs, led the activity.

*(continued)*





**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



*(USAID SIBOL trains...)*

Aside from the lectures, attendees also participated directly in the hands-on workshop which involved diving sessions that simulated responses to environmental crime scenarios, such as destruction of coral reefs due to vessel grounding, illegal fishing and poaching.

“By sharing knowledge drawn from international experts, we are helping our partners improve their capacity in dealing with various environmental threats, which will benefit all of us,” Acting Director John Piggott of the USAID Philippine Office of the Environment said.

The workshop was in support of the implementation of the country’s Wildlife Law Enforcement Action Plan 2018-2028, which serves as the Philippines’ roadmap in addressing wildlife crimes.

“This workshop is just one among the many USAID activities that we aim to conduct together with our law enforcement partners to address numerous threats to Philippine conservation and biodiversity. Crimes against the environment, including those that happen in our waters, is a threat that should concern all of us, as it destroys our biodiversity and depletes our natural resources. By working closely with our partners, we recognize the gravity of these threats, and the necessity to collaborate on finding common solutions,” Piggott added.

According to a joint report by USAID and BFAR published last year, illegal fishing amounted to 27% to 40% of fish caught in 2019 in the Philippines, which amounts to roughly P62 billion (\$1.3 billion) annually. At least 30,000 municipal vessels or about 30% of the fishing fleet remain unregistered, and commercial fishers do not report up to 422,000 metric tons of fish each year. Municipal fishing vessels are vessels operating within municipal waters weighing 3 gross tons or less.

SIBOL works with its government, private sector and civil society partners to strengthen science-driven decision making, improve economic incentives for investments in the environment, and improve environmental law enforcement.





**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## USAID goes to Siargao and Palawan for monitoring visit



In April, USAID visited the SIBOL sites in Siargao and Palawan as part of its project monitoring visits. Agreement Officer Representative Grace Tena led the USAID delegation while the SIBOL management and site teams led the visits.

The monitoring team first visited Siargao on April 5-8. They met with Protected Area Superintendent Selsa Escudero who provided a brief background and update on the status of the Siargao Island Protected Landscape and Seascape. This included the challenges faced by the protected area before and during the pandemic, and the damage caused by Typhoon Odette. The Protected Area Management Office and the Biodiversity Management Bureau were also present during the meeting.

The team also went to San Isidro municipality to check the extent of damage of the typhoon and examine the lumber from the felled coconut trees. In response to the typhoon's devastation and impact on the local community, SIBOL implemented cash-for-work log-clearing activities in collaboration with Lokal Lab, a community-based non-government organization. Felled trees were processed into lumbers that were distributed to the locals free of charge to help in rebuilding structures.

*(continued)*







**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



*(USAID goes to...)*



On April 19-22, the monitoring team went to Palawan and presented the project's implementation to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development and the Protected Area Management Office of the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park.

The team also visited Roxas municipality to observe the conduct of an aerial ground truthing survey led by SIBOL researchers, which looked at areas damaged at the Cleopatra's Needle Forest Reserve. Drones are used for verifying data gathered from satellite images by providing high-resolution photos of remote forest areas that are difficult to navigate by foot. These high-quality images can then be used by natural resource managers to come up with appropriate policies and interventions related to environmental protection and conservation.

To aid in the recovery of the community-based sustainable tourism groups in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, SIBOL also funded the cash-for-work log-clearing operations in six sites, namely: Hundred Caves, Isla Filomena, Jungle Trail, Mangrove Paddle Boat, Sabang Falls, and Ugong Rock. The log clearing activity in Palawan was conducted on June 17-27, 2022.





**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## SIBOL signs MoU with Fortuna Cools and Polymer Products, Inc.



SIBOL, represented by RTI International, signed on April 4 two memoranda of understanding (MoU) with Fortuna Cools and Polymer Products, Inc. to design industry standards that promote green supply chains, especially in the packaging process, and build the capacity of local fishing communities to produce fiberglass boats, respectively.

SIBOL signed the agreements as part of Blueprints for a Greener Future: SIBOL Private Sector Night at the Mind Museum in Bonifacio Global City.

Fifty-three partners representing 12 private sector entities attended the event. These organizations work on five key themes that align with SIBOL's objectives: greening supply chains and biodiversity safeguards in voluntary industry standards; developing a landscape approach; smarter enforcement of environmental rules and regulation, and disseminating information; education; communication campaigns regarding conservation practices and sustainability efforts.

## MIND S-COOL Season 4 launched



As part of the National Environment Month (June), World Environment Day (June 5), and World Ocean's Day (June 8), SIBOL also launched on June 8, 2022 the fourth season of MIND S-COOL at The Mind Museum in Taguig City. MIND S-COOL is a family-oriented program produced by BAFI that teaches scientific concepts to young viewers and adults alike.

Following the biodiversity theme of Season 3 which SIBOL also co-presented, MIND S-COOL Season 4 features stories that will raise awareness on various biodiversity threats and propose solutions on how we can invest in our environment. Season 4 of MIND S-COOL premiered on June 26, 2022 on YouTube and Cignal TV.







**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## SIBOL trains DENR, LGU partners in aerial ground truthing of Odette-hit areas



On June 20-24, SIBOL trained 22 staff from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Regional Offices 6, 7, 8, 10 and 13; the nine municipalities in Siargao Island; and the protected area management offices and boards in Surigao del Norte on remote sensing and aerial ground truthing methods.

The training aimed to support the government in identifying forest change and land cover classification, which, in turn, allows differentiation of ecosystem assets, especially those affected by Typhoon Odette late last year.

The activity is in line with SIBOL's goal of improving natural resources management by building the capacity of government partners in accurately assessing the impact of catastrophes as part of the process to rehabilitate areas devastated by natural disasters.

## SIBOL joins DENR in launching marine turtle nesting site in Masinloc-Oyon Bay



In celebration of World Environment Day and National Environment Month, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and USAID launched on June 3 a marine turtle nesting site in Magalawa Island in Palauig, Zambales to raise awareness on the importance of conserving marine resources in the protected area.

According to DENR, the island, located within the more than 7,000-hectare Masinloc and Oyon Bay Protected Seascape and Landscape, is an important nesting site for olive ridley and green sea turtles.

Magalawa Island is part of the Masinloc-Oyon Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape, one of several protected areas in the country where USAID works with government, private sector and civil society partners to improve natural resources management and biodiversity conservation.





**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## SIBOL celebrates Earth Day in Palawan



In celebration of Earth Day, SIBOL joined the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in conducting a community women's forum in Barangay Cabayugan, Puerto Princesa City and launching an online wildlife protection tool at Robinson's Place Palawan.

Around 250 participants joined the community event on April 21, which included a climate change book-giving drive and science experiments for children and distribution of hygiene kits to women; a discussion on community-based disaster risk reduction and management; and a mental health and psycho-social support session.

On April 22, partners from DENR and the local government of Palawan also publicly launched EarthRanger, a tool that will be used by the province's natural resource managers and citizen science volunteers in reporting, detecting and responding to wildlife crimes.



### SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

1. [Science education show 'Mind S-Cool TV' rebounds from pandemic with 4th season \(Philippine Star\).](#)
2. [Devastated by a typhoon, community foresters in the Philippines find little support \(Mongabay\).](#)
3. [DENR launches pawikan nesting site in celebration of environment month \(SunStar\).](#)
4. [PH unveils year of protected areas, vows protection of nat'l parks \(Philippine News Agency\).](#)





**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## ABOUT SIBOL

*Launched in 2020, the Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans, and Landscapes (SIBOL) is a P1.1-billion natural resources management and biodiversity conservation project of the United States Agency for International Development in partnership with RTI International. SIBOL works closely with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development. The Center for Conservation Innovations, Forest Foundation Philippines, Zoological Society of London, and the Resources, Environment and Economics Center for Studies, comprise the consortium partnering with RTI.*

## USAID CONTACT

### **Ryan Washburn**

Mission Director  
USAID Philippines  
U.S. Embassy, Annex 2 Building 1201  
Roxas Boulevard, Ermita, Manila,  
Philippines 1000  
+63 2 3016000  
infoph@usaid.gov  
www.usaid.gov/philippines

## RTI CONTACT

### **Dr. Ernesto Guiang**

Chief of Party  
RTI International  
Unit 401 CTC Building, No. 2232 Roxas  
Boulevard, Pasay, Metro Manila,  
Philippines 1300  
eguiang@ph-sibol.org

