



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

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No. 29

Series of 2021

SUBJECT : IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OCTOPUS NATIONAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN (OCT-NMFP) 2022-2026

WHEREAS, Republic Act 10654 (An Act to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) provides as state policy the adoption of the Precautionary Principle and Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries Management of the country's fishery and aquatic resources;

WHEREAS, Fisheries Administrative Order No. 263 (FAO 263) on the Establishment of Fisheries Management Areas for the Conservation and Management of Fisheries in Philippine Waters provides for a governance mechanism that is science-based, participatory and transparent with the goal of sustaining utilization of fisheries resources while ensuring equitable benefit of coastal communities;

WHEREAS, with octopus being one of the country's major fishery exports, the Government of the Philippines strives to be at par with international standards on product quality and food safety through policy interventions such as Fisheries Administrative Order NO. 210 series of 2001 and Fisheries Administrative Order NO. 227 Series of 2008 which, to comply with international standards, provide rules and regulations on export of fish and aquatic products for human consumption of any form (i.e. fresh, chilled, frozen or cooked) to any country in the world;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a major producer of octopus, thus, generating livelihoods for rural municipal or artisanal fishermen and consolidators, and providing viable business enterprise for octopus processors and export companies;

WHEREAS, the Philippine octopus is an important but data-deficient commodity that faces several problems and management issues, including: unregulated fishing efforts, declining catch rates, juvenile catches, and potentially destructive methods practiced by octopus gatherers in certain areas;

WHEREAS, given the economic and biodiversity significance of octopus and the threats that this marine commodity is currently facing, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Department of Agriculture has taken the lead on the development of the Octopus National Management Framework Plan (OCT-NMFP) to serve as a roadmap and to provide directions for the proper management and sustainable use of this commodity;



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WHEREAS, the Global Marine Commodities (GMC) Project, a collaborative project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and BFAR with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), was aimed at mainstreaming sustainability in the value chain of important marine commodities from developing countries, including blue swimming crabs and commercially important octopuses that are traded and export commodities of the Philippines;

WHEREAS, the GMC Project in the Philippines strengthened the national capacities for the management of blue swimming crabs and octopuses including the updating of the BSC-NMP and development of the OCT-NMFP;

WHEREAS, the OCT-NMFP integrates the principles of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) that seeks to balance resources, environmental and socio-economic concerns through improved governance;

WHEREAS, the OCT-NMFP is aligned with the strategies and actions as stipulated in the Comprehensive National Fisheries Industry Development Plan (CNFIDP) Medium Term Plan 2016-2020 of the Philippines, as well as with the Eight Paradigms of the Department of Agriculture that characterize the “new thinking” for Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries. More importantly, the development of this Plan has been carefully guided by the provisions of the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

WHEREAS, OCT-NMFP was framed through a participatory and inclusive process that optimizes the involvement of multiple sectors in various stages of the planning process including the conduct of series of stakeholders’ consultations for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao;

WHEREAS, the Octopus Technical Working Group (OCT-TWG), comprising of representatives from BFAR, fishers, traders, consolidators, processors, exporters and other key stakeholders, was established in 2018 and was tasked to lead in the process of formulation of the OCT-NMFP;

WHEREAS, the National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (NFARMC) has deliberated, provided inputs and recommendations and endorsed the OCT-NMFP in its 2021 3rd Quarter Meeting on September 23, 2021. The inputs and recommendations of the NFARMC had been incorporated in the Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM D. DAR, Ph.D., the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, by the power vested in me by law, hereby issue this Memorandum Circular to provide the Department of Agriculture direction to implement the OCT-NMFP.

- 1) Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and its Regional Field Offices to incorporate into their plans the actions identified in the OCT-NMFP;
- 2) All stakeholders in the octopus value chain, including fishers, buyers, traders, processors, exporters to support the implementation of the OCT-NMFP, including co-financing fishery improvement and sustainability projects;



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- 3) BFAR and stakeholders to institutionalize participative commodity platforms for the sustainable management of the octopus; and
- 4) The Octopus Technical Working Group and stakeholders to conduct a mid-term review on the implementation of the OCT-NMFP and implement adaptive actions as may be necessary.

Similarly, I also call on the Local Government Units (LGUs), and other relevant International development Organizations/Programs, National Government Agencies (NGAs), and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to take on their equally important roles in the successful implementation of the OCT-NMFP.

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

Done this 29th day of December 2021.


WILLIAM D. DAR, Ph.D.
Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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