

## EMBARGO UNTIL NOON, FEBRUARY 20, 2014

### **Timor Leste wins the first-ever STOP IUU FISHING AWARD**

**On February 20, 2014, the winners of the 2014 STOP IUU FISHING AWARDS were officially announced at the 4th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop (GFETW) being held in San Jose, Costa Rica. The project, “A Community-Based IUU Reporting System”, sent in by Timor Leste, was selected as the winning entry from a global field.**

**Michele Kuruc, Acting Senior Vice-President of Marine Conservation of the World Wildlife Fund and Cephas Ralph, Chairman of the International MCS Network, on behalf of the organizers, presented the award to Pedro Rodriguez, Fisheries Inspector, on behalf of Timor Leste.**

**Projects sent in by two organizations, the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) and Stop Illegal Fishing have been awarded the second and third prize, respectively.**

*Michele Kuruc stated: “One of the objectives of the Contest is to showcase the winning entries as an example and inspiration to other countries and organizations to combat IUU fishing. This successful project carried out by Timor Leste shows that there are low cost solutions which can support both the long-term interests of fishermen in combatting IUU activities which undermine sustainable harvests of marine living resources and improve safety out on the water in an environment which can sometimes be deadly. “*

From more than 20 entries, a Committee of Judges, all experts in MCS, selected the project of Timor Leste as the first-prize winner. The entry “A Community-Based IUU Reporting System”, is based on an innovative and collaborative working relationship between artisanal fishermen and government agencies and, the deployment of available and easy to use technology. The government of Timor Leste entrusted the fishermen with personal GPS locators through special loans. The locators are equipped with two buttons, one for emergency situations and the other allowed fishermen to identify IUU fishing activities anonymously (see attached).

In July 2012, the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Network launched the first-ever Stop IUU Fishing Award Contest to promote the efforts of the International Community to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. A capacity development phase will follow to expand the winning entries’ potential for replication across fishing communities/regions/nations, facilitating the implementation of pilot projects and immediate help to MCS efforts. The Network was joined by additional contest sponsors, the FAO and the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation. The extent of capacity building will depend on funding.

Losses from IUU fishing activity are estimated worldwide in a range of USD \$10-23 billion annually. IUU fishing activities result in unsustainable exploitation of living marine resources, destruction of aquatic habitats, loss of income and employment of legitimate fishermen and distortion of markets for fishery products.

The International MCS Network works to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of fisheries-related MCS activities through enhanced cooperation, coordination, information collection and exchange among national organizations and institutions responsible for fisheries-related monitoring, control and surveillance. Beyond the bi-annual GFETW, the International MCS Network keeps a register of MCS experts participating in trainings and capacity building activities of its member governments, publishes a Network Newsletter, and produces analytical pieces on IUU trends and new MCS technologies.

## Timor Leste

### General information

Timor Leste became the first new sovereign state of the 21st century on May 20, 2002, following the United Nations-sponsored act of self-determination. Population: 1,172,390. Official Languages: Portuguese and Tetun. The country has more than 27 different ethno-linguistic groups.

Socio economic indicators: Timor Leste is a least developed country ranking 150th out of 177 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI). About 37.4% of the country's population lives with less than U.S. \$1.25 per day– and about 50% of the population is illiterate. More than two-third of the total population lives in rural areas, of which more than two-third is engaged in some form of farming. Along with poverty, malnutrition is one of the main challenges.

GDP (nominal): \$4.073 billion or per capita \$3,641. The national economy, dependent on oil and gas, remains volatile with widespread unemployment and increasing rural to urban inequality.

Timor Leste has a coast line of around 750 km and an EEZ 72000 square kilometer

Number of fishers: Timor Leste has 4,723 registered sea fishers who operate in 3,016 boats. This data does not consider fish traders and other fish workers, such as fish processors, inshore fishers and reef gleaners.

The fishing fleet: Most of the fishing fleet (62.4%) is comprised of small non-motorized wooden canoes powered by sail and paddles. Motorized boats comprise the remainder, most of which are dugout canoes powered by an outboard engine.

### Fisheries Governance

The Fisheries Administration: Coastal and marine affairs fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, specifically the Secretariat of State for Fisheries and Aquaculture, which is responsible for the National Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (NDFA).

The NDFA employs 113 permanently employed officials. In 2011, 33 of 113 (29.2 percent) NDFA staff were university graduates, while 2 of 113 (1.7 percent) have a Master's degree. 12 of 113 (10.6 percent) have 3 years' study or a Diploma III (studies in Indonesia at the "Fishery School" or similar) and 60 of 113 (53.1 percent) have Primary or Secondary school education from Timor Leste. 86.7 percent of the staff are men, and 13.3 percent are women, who mostly occupy secretarial type positions supporting Unit Heads. Of the 113 officials 81 staff work in the headquarters' office in the capital Dili, 26 are allocated in the districts and 6 in the fishing port. The fisheries administration faces huge challenges to fulfil its enforcement, planning and management roles over the coastal and marine environments given the continuous shortages of resources that it faces (in terms of economic and human capital).

## Winning project “Community-Based IUU Reporting System”

The National Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (Department of General Fisheries Inspection) implemented the Community-Based IUU Reporting System. The Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme for South and Southeast Asia, executed by FAO and funded by Spain, provided technical support.

Brief description of the innovation: The innovation consists of building a working relationship between artisanal fishers and government agencies: the government loaned personal GPS locator beacons to artisanal fishers to improve their safety at sea and in exchange fishermen use the devices to report anonymously, in real time to the relevant Government Agencies any illegal fishing activities in the area where he is operating.

Origin: This project was originally piloted in Aceh as a project within a larger strategy to rebuild fisheries damaged by the tsunami on December 26, 2004, and was then for the first time transformed into a national programme.

The devices: The SPOT© tracker is a personal GPS locator beacon widely available in the consumer electronics market. These devices are usually marketed to outdoor enthusiasts such as hikers or adventurers for their families to monitor their progress and so the hikers have the means to call for help should they get into trouble. It consists of a hand-held tracking device that automatically transmits its position every 15 minutes, in near to real time, via satellite. A history of reported positions can be viewed, through a web application, by those back home.

The SPOT© tracker used in the project has two buttons: a “911 button” and a button which function has been repurposed to report on illegal fishing (the so-called “illegal fishing” button). When the “911 button” is pressed, an emergency distress signal is sent out with the boat’s exact location through the same network as the EPIRB emergency systems used by large vessels; subsequently, the international monitoring center sends SMS messages to the cellular phones of the head of the Maritime Police and the head of the Fisheries Inspection Department. When the “illegal fishing button” is pressed, the system immediately alerts the head of the Maritime Police and the head of the Fisheries Inspection Department. The reporting by the “illegal fishing button” is anonymously. Once received by a password-protected web application, Fisheries Inspection staff can see the IUU report displayed on a map. The Timorese authorities then decide how they will respond; whether to send a boat, a plane, etc.

### Summary of benefits for fishermen:

- Solution in the event of emergency.
- Family back home can track the vessel when unsure what is happening.
- IUU fishing activities undermine sustainable exploitation of resources in Timor Leste waters.
- When arrested in waters of neighboring countries, tracking data serve as evidence for fishing location.

### Summary of achievements up to date:

- Saves time, fuel and money for inspection vessels as well as for search and rescue whilst increasing tracking information of all vessels at very little cost.
- First database on illegal reports and hot spots of IUU fishing activities.
- First database on the fishing patterns of local fishermen.
- Relationship between fishermen and science improved and was built on trust so that when fisheries management plans are implemented there is greater buy-in by fishers.
- Improved communications between the fishermen and Government agencies.
- Better cooperation and coordination between Government agencies (Navy, Maritime Police, Port Authority and NDFA) First lessons learned when a vessel captain in an emergency pushed the wrong button. The occurrence made the relevant institutions discuss lines of communication and more effective operational practices in cases of emergency. An agreement was reached at the technical level on the most effective communication lines and the most appropriate ways of coordination in emergency cases. As a direct response to these challenges and based on the experience gained during the pilot phase, an agreement was reached on 19th April 2012 between representatives of the F-FDTL (Timor-Leste army), Port Authority, Maritime Police, NDFA-Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and other Ministries involved to create an inter-ministerial body that would deal with issues of illegal fishing and search and rescue (SAR) at sea in country.