



OCEAN CENTRES

PUTTING SAFETY AT THE HEART OF SUSTAINABILITY

*Fostering a safe and sustainable
ocean economy in the Philippines*

HOSTED BY



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FOREWORDS

Navigating a Safe and Sustainable Archipelago

The Philippines, an archipelago of 7,641 islands, is defined by its relationship with the sea. Within this vast blue economy, the maritime sector serves as the nation's essential economic and social artery, providing the connectivity necessary for livelihoods, food security, trade, and national resilience. Yet this vital network is under increasing strain, challenged by an aging domestic fleet, infrastructure gaps, climate risks, and mounting pressures on marine ecosystems.

Ocean Centres Philippines (OCPH) operates on a fundamental principle: sustainability is incomplete without safety. In the Philippine context, connectivity forms a critical third pillar, linking people, communities, and opportunities across our islands. Together, safety, sustainability, and connectivity provide a framework through which marine biodiversity conservation, climate action, and inclusive economic development can advance as mutually reinforcing priorities rather than competing objectives. True transformation, as reflected in the Global Compact's Theory of Change, requires moving beyond policies and regulations toward lasting shifts in systems, incentives, and behaviors.

Drawing from the collective intelligence of more than 270 participants across eight national workshops, this report highlights a persistent

culture of tolerance for non-compliance, alongside broader systemic challenges ranging from fisher safety and workforce welfare to fragmented governance and uneven access to maritime services. These challenges are deeply interconnected and require equally integrated solutions.

Yet the layag, or journey, toward a safer, more sustainable, and more resilient maritime future is already underway. By positioning safety not merely as a compliance requirement but as a foundational enabler of sustainability, resilience, and regeneration, Ocean Centres Philippines can help chart a new course for the blue economy. This report serves as a shared roadmap for that journey, one where healthy oceans, thriving coastal communities, responsible maritime industries, and sustainable economic growth move forward together, ensuring that no one is left behind.



Glen de Castro
Executive Director
Global Compact
Network Philippines

FOREWORDS

“Bahala na si Batman”

Or so the popular Filipino saying goes, loosely translated as “come what may”.

This adage, an ethnolinguistic adaptation of the traditional expression “Bahala na,” reflects the Filipino tendency to surrender the unknown to a higher power, expressing both faith and acceptance in the face of uncertainty.

However, in contemporary usage, this disposition may at times be interpreted as complacency, indifference, or a lack of concern for potential consequences.

And that’s what we examined in the Ocean Centres Philippines. Over the course of the past 12 months of workshops and side events, we looked at how safety is embedded into our upbringing and how it shows up in the way we do business across the four key priority areas. We gathered high-level executive leaders, all the way to the community’s artisanal fishers, with a question: how can safety and sustainability be seamlessly knotted in your daily operations?

In the next few pages, we will share with you the distilled and concise version of our findings: the challenges we uncovered from our attendees, the opportunities that they wish to come to fruition, and the framework that will operationalize our goal from hefty ambition to doable, solution-driven actions.

As you browse through dizzying data, graphs, case studies and lived stories, we invite you to reflect that the true heroes we must rely on are neither Batman nor Superman; you are the hero with the power to transform and shape a better society.



Yrhen Bernard Balinis
Country Lead
Ocean Centres
Philippines

WHY PUT SAFETY AT THE HEART OF SUSTAINABILITY

1. Safety makes sustainable growth possible. A sustainable ocean economy depends on the safety of ocean workers and coastal communities whose lives and livelihoods rely on it.

In the strategic discourse of the blue economy, sustainability is fundamentally incomplete without safety. The nation leverages its maritime domains to drive value across multiple sectors. In 2025, approximately 589,000 Filipino seafarers deployed globally generated ₱1.06 trillion in total economic impact^{1,2}. Philippine Port Authority-managed container ports served 8.57 million

twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), while the fishing and aquaculture sector contributes consistently around 0.96% to the national GDP^{3,4}. Concurrently, the strategic push for renewable energy aims to decentralize power generation, reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels, and build climate resilience for off-grid coastal communities⁵.

2. Safe operations and resilient infrastructure protect people and help reduce environmental risks, supporting healthier ocean ecosystems.

However, without a secure environment for maritime workers and the end-users of the ocean industries (e.g. passengers, shipowners, and coastal communities), this immense blue economy potential remains a fragile construct. We must, therefore, move away from a mere

reactive crisis management into proactive leadership. Safety must be institutionalized, evolving from compliance checks into a fundamental human right and a critical economic safeguard.

3. A safer, more responsible ocean industry reduces risk, builds investor confidence, and helps unlock sustainable blue finance and long-term growth.

The “So What?” factor is undeniable: The operational and human costs of the status quo are alarming: 205 marine accidents/ incidents were reported in 2025 with 127 cases classified as serious involving fire, explosion, grounding, contact, heavy weather damage, structural damage, pollution, breakdown towage, or shore assistance. Despite a significant drop from the

253 cases reported in 2024, preventable failures such as ship grounding (100 vs 70 cases) and engine failures (44 vs 42 cases)⁶ remains the top two accidents types in both years. The Philippines faces systemic economic fragility and should synergize a whole of society approach to ensure safety remains the unshakeable heartbeat of a sustainable blue economy.

THE OCEAN CENTRES INITIATIVE

The **Ocean Centres initiative** is hosted by the UN Global Compact, the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, and supported by Lloyd's Register Foundation, a global charity dedicated to engineering a safer world.

For the Ocean Centres initiative, safety and sustainability cannot be addressed separately. Safety is not only a matter of compliance or risk response; it is an enabling condition for sustainable development, climate resilience, investment and long-term prosperity. In this context, climate adaptation is also a safety strategy: by reducing exposure to hazards, strengthening resilience and enabling systems to cope with changing conditions, it helps prevent harm to people, infrastructure and communities. There is no blue economy without blue economy workers - fishers, port workers, seafarers - delivering their challenging jobs safely, supported by adequate standards, equipment and skills.

This safety-sustainability nexus is also increasingly relevant for unlocking finance and investment. As financial institutions, insurers and investors integrate operational, social, governance and reputational risks into their assessments, safety-related considerations are becoming more important within due diligence, ESG and investment decision-making processes.

Creating a **Safe and Sustainable Ocean Economy** is therefore not only a social imperative, but also an economic one. By helping stakeholders understand these interconnected risks and opportunities, the Ocean Centres seek to strengthen investor confidence, reduce barriers to finance and support investment in sustainable ocean development.

The Ocean Centres were set up in seven countries: Brazil, Ghana, Kenya, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines. The programme focuses on four key Action Areas:



The Ocean Centres initiative was officially launched during the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France, on June 2025. Following the global launch, each participating country organised its own national launch and initiated a series of eight multi-stakeholder workshops, convening organisations from government, industry, the financial sector, academia, trade unions and civil society.

These dialogues were designed to identify and address the priorities, challenges, solutions, and opportunities shaping each country's transition towards a **Safe and Sustainable Ocean Economy**, including those related to climate change, the energy transition, emerging technologies and digitalisation.

This report forms part of a broader body of knowledge developed through the Ocean Centres initiative across the seven countries listed above. Together, the seven national reports

and the accompanying Global Report capture the key priorities, challenges, opportunities and recommendations emerging from locally led, multi-stakeholder engagement.

Each report was co-created through a series of in-person and online dialogues, reflecting the knowledge, experiences and perspectives voluntarily shared by participants in each country. Drafts were subsequently reviewed by Ocean Centres members and the respective National Safety Committee, whose feedback helped strengthen the accuracy, relevance and contextual grounding of the final report.

We invite readers to explore the full collection of reports and join us in advancing knowledge, partnerships and investment, implementing the recommendations, and working collaboratively towards safer and more sustainable ocean economies.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

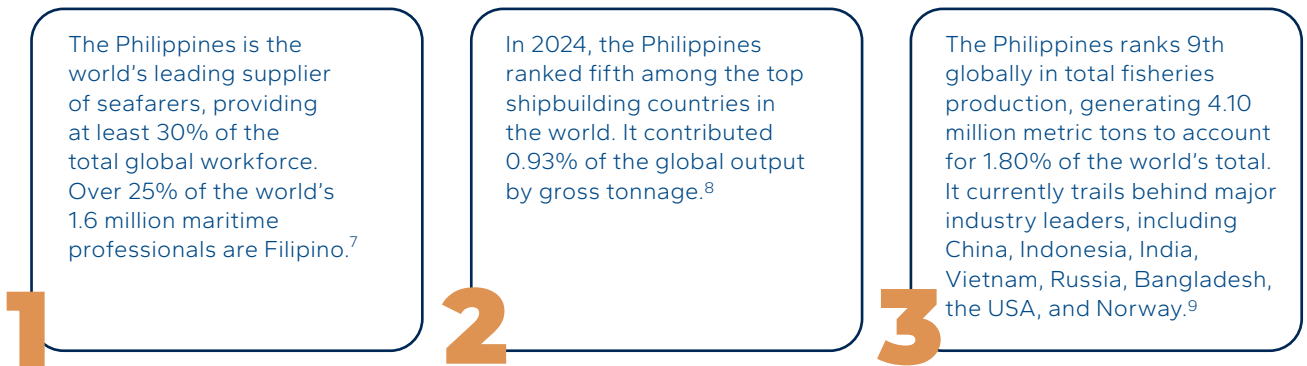
This report synthesizes the collective intelligence of the Philippine maritime ecosystem to provide a strategic roadmap for sectoral transformation from the eight national workshops conducted from August 2025 to March 2026. The findings advocate for a shift from reactive crisis management to proactive, institutionalized leadership. The Ocean Centres

Philippines proposes the institutionalization of safety as a mandatory key performance indicator (KPI) for board-level reporting. By tying safety performance to bankability and global environment, social, governance (ESG) benchmarks, we ensure that blue growth is both resilient and ethical.

Ocean Centres Philippines by the Numbers



Three Things you Need to Know About the Philippines



SEE FOOTNOTES

Cross-cutting Findings from the Blue Safety Wheels Presented in the “Outputs” Chapter



Opportunities for Safe Blue Growth

- Shipping:** Prioritizing human development, digitalization and emerging technologies strengthens workforce capabilities, enhances regulatory compliance and builds more resilient maritime systems.
- Ports:** Modernizing ports through nature-based infrastructure, increasing gender inclusion and supporting regional transport plans strengthens port resilience, expands economic opportunities and accelerates the transition to green shipping.
- Fishing:** Strengthening institutional coordination, international commitments and sustainable financing enhance safety, improves compliance and protects vulnerable small-scale fishers.
- Aquaculture:** Promoting technological innovation, sustainable cultivation practices and developing traceable markets de-risk seaweed cultivation, enhance climate resilience, and attract higher-value investments.
- Offshore Renewables:** Strengthening specialized training, local workforce development and environmental safeguards will build the skilled workforce needed to support responsible offshore renewable energy development.

Finance and Investment Implications of Safety Challenges

- Shipping:** Strengthening governance, enhancing maritime security and safeguarding marine ecosystems will build investor confidence and support a more resilient shipping sector.
- Ports:** Leveraging capital for infrastructure, equalizing investments for local ports, and accelerating search and rescue procurement will accelerate the development of safer, more resilient and environmentally compliant hubs.
- Fishing:** Investing in health and insurance coverage for fishers, digital safety systems and implementation of international safety standards will strengthen resilience across the fisheries sector.
- Aquaculture:** Improving access to finance, investing in research and innovation, and strengthening traceable value chains will build a more resilient, competitive and market-ready aquaculture sector.
- Offshore Renewables:** Allocating structured capital for workforce development, deploying locally adapted technologies and financing environmental impact compliance will strengthen national capacity and accelerate sustainable offshore renewable energy development.

SEE FOOTNOTES

A CALL TO ACTION: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

The recommendations below highlight the priority actions emerging from the findings of this report. They provide an at-a-glance overview for the business, government and finance sectors, while the complete set of recommendations is presented in the chapter A Call to Action: Recommendations by Action Area.



Business

- Encourage re-training for ocean workforces to address competency gaps, reduce human error, and increase gender diversity in seafaring, port, fishing and energy sectors.
- Adopt a persistent culture of safety where regulations are followed consistently, not just during inspections.
- Implement digital tools for fuel monitoring, incident reporting, and work-rest monitoring to optimize operations.



Government

- Streamline and codify all existing regulations to create a single, clear, and cohesive set of rules in alignment with the Maritime Industry Authority's (MARINA) MIDP, and AmBisyon 2040.
- Accelerate ratification of international laws.
- Develop science-based marine spatial plans (MSP).



Finance

- Establish a government-backed maritime development fund.
- Support programs working for a sustainable and safe ocean economy.
- Develop affordable, tailored insurance products for municipal and small-scale fisherfolks.



Credits: Gelene Lamarroza

A full-page background image featuring a wind turbine on a beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and blue, with a bright light source on the left creating a lens flare effect. The ocean is calm, and the wind turbine stands prominently in the foreground.

“ Safety is a precondition of all sustainable business practices, and the role of UN Global Compact is to provide business and governments with clear guidance on how to embrace safety in their sustainability journey ”

Erik Giercksky

Head, Ocean Stewardship Coalition
United Nations Global Compact

INTRODUCTION

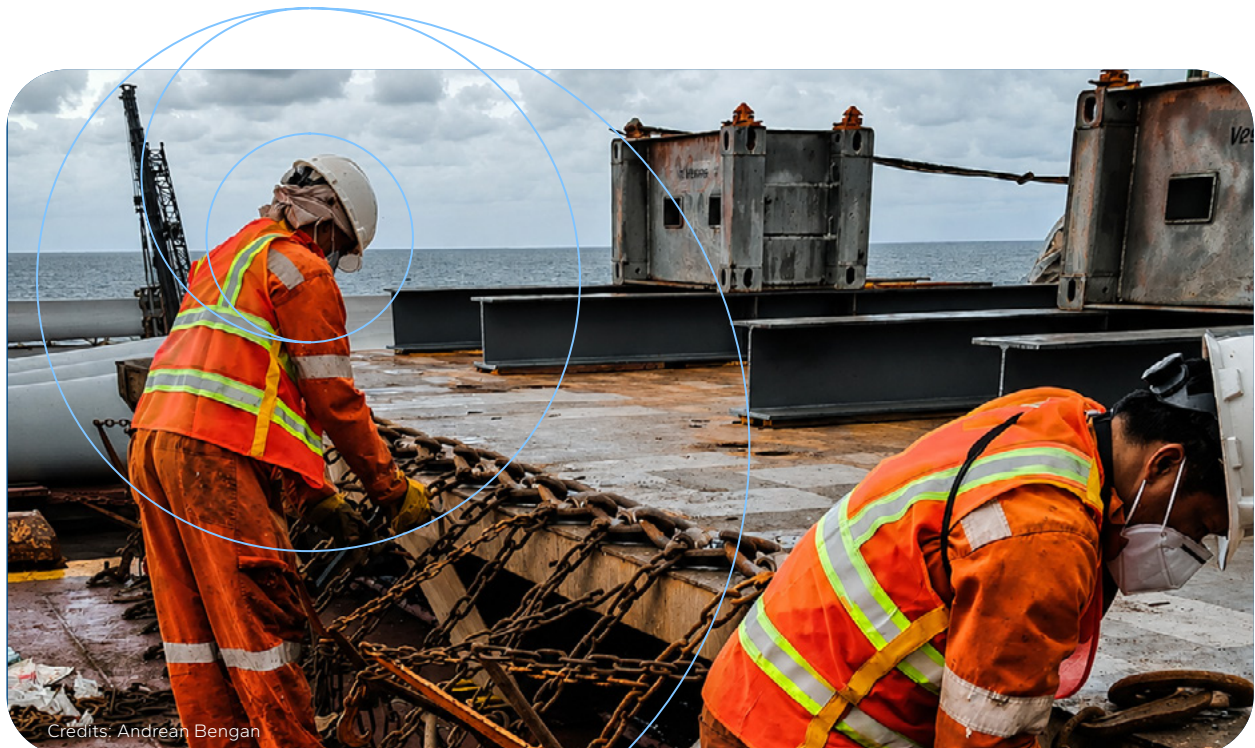
About this Report

The maritime sector is the economic and social artery of the Philippines, providing the connectivity essential for an archipelago of 7,641 islands. However, the Ocean Centres Philippines findings reveal a sector under strain. The domestic fleet consists of vessels, many of which are poorly maintained and non-compliant with safety standards and regulations. Infrastructure is equally lagging; the lack of port reception facilities (PRF) across major port management offices directly impedes MARPOL compliance and the Green Shipping agenda. This fragmentation—both in physical assets and governance—requires an immediate, coordinated overhaul to prevent systemic failure.

Despite these hurdles, vast opportunities also exist. A thriving seaweed industry accounts for 68% of the Philippines' total aquaculture production, totalling 1.62 million metric tons.

Furthermore, being situated at the apex of the Coral Triangle, the nation leverages its rich marine biodiversity as an engine for national and regional food security and sustaining coastal livelihoods from economic fragility. Concurrently, the country is undergoing a fundamental transformation toward renewable energy to meet national climate goals. National studies are evaluating the feasibility of a green corridor connecting ports to international partners via zero-emission maritime routes.

Leveraging this collective intelligence in the maritime ecosystem, a total of 288 civil servants, private sector employees, local fishers, intergovernmental sector and youth leaders participated in the workshops from Metro Manila, Camarines Sur, Mindoro, and Palawan. An online platform was also made available to enable wider reach and participation.



Credits: Andrian Bengan

Who is this Report for?

1 Philippine government and policy makers.

These agencies are responsible for shaping the country's maritime, fisheries, and financial landscapes. The report highlights a critical need to overcome fragmented governance, overlapping mandates, and sluggish bureaucratic processes.

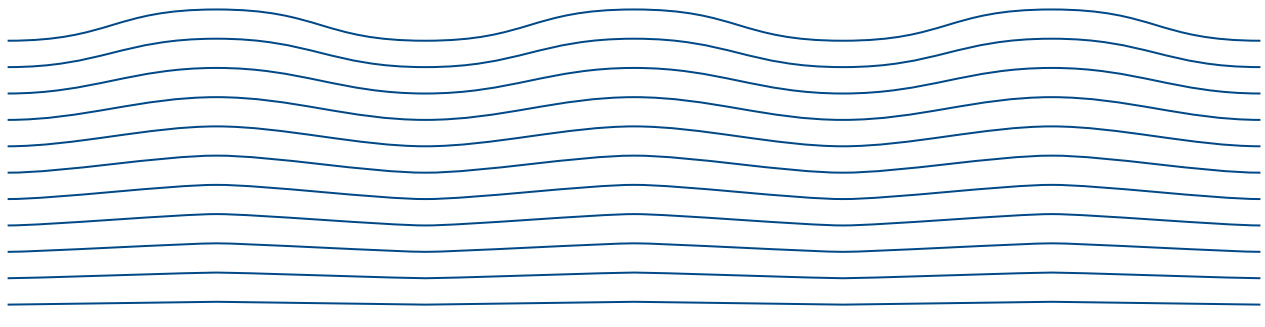
2 Businesses and private organizations.

The report finds that commercial decisions often outweigh proper regulations, leading to a dangerous culture of tolerance toward safety practices. Drawing on the influence of the Global Compact Network Philippines (GCNP) with its 81 participants¹³ spanning sectors, private entities (e.g. shipping operators, crewing agencies, and financial institutions) are therefore essential for unlocking private capital, adopting green technologies, and integrating mandatory safety KPIs.

3 Local communities including Indigenous communities.

These groups, which include fishers, seaweed farmers, and youth, are on the front lines of climate-related hazards, geopolitical tensions in the West Philippine Sea, and the physical impacts of industrial expansion such as offshore wind farms. The report aims to protect these vulnerable populations by advocating for direct safety nets, community revenue sharing, and the integration of Indigenous, traditional, and local knowledge (ITLK) into climate-resilient early warning systems.

4 Individuals with interest in the advancement of the Philippine blue economy.



Our Two Priority Areas

The Philippines leverages its marine resources and maritime transport as a bedrock of national security and economic resilience. To achieve the goals of AmBisyon 2040 within the Blue Economy, this report synergizes our strategic focus around two foundational sectors:



While the Philippines is a celebrated global maritime hub and a leading supplier of seafaring professionals, our domestic operations require urgent modernization. Obsolete port infrastructures remain highly vulnerable to severe typhoons.

Currently, 33% of registered domestic ships still rely on aging wooden hulls¹⁴. On the upside, the 24, 278 Philippine-registered domestic ships are younger at 15.7 years old versus the global fleet's 22.2 average age by number¹⁵.



As a cornerstone of national food security and a top global seafood export, the sector sustains millions of coastal livelihoods. However, it also faces deep structural challenges and severe ecological stress, with around 88% of assessed fish stocks fully or over-exploited¹⁶, alongside marine degradation driven by unregulated practices, weak enforcement, and fragmented value chains.

For this paper, the Ocean Centres Philippines primarily engaged with municipal fisherfolks or those sailing on fishing vessels 3 gross tonnage and below as defined by the Republic Act 8550¹⁷, as amended by RA 10654¹⁸. Furthermore, seaweed farming is the focus of the aquaculture key priority area.

BACKGROUND

Why does Ocean Centres Philippines exist?

The Ocean Centres Philippines acknowledges the important role that oceans play in the socio-cultural, politico-legal, and economic imperatives of the country. True to its core of putting safety

at the heart of sustainability, it envisions to be a knowledge-sharing platform designed to support the transition towards a safer and more sustainable ocean economy, specifically:

1 Mainstreaming and integrating safety into the national agenda.

It strategically positions itself as a driver in steering the maritime sector from reactive crisis management to proactive, institutionalized leadership where safety is embedded in the national priorities of both government and business operations.

2 Educational transformation and behavior change through multi-stakeholder engagement.

By engaging in bilateral dialogues and international discussions, the OCPH aims to leverage the collective intelligence of stakeholders across the ocean ecosystem to address systemic failure.

3 Unlocking safe blue growth through safety benchmarking.

It identifies the needs and solutions that promote responsible business practices and the adoption of enforceable standards and regulations, tying safety performance to bankability and global ESG benchmarks.

Why a multistakeholder collaborative platform?

The concept of a multistakeholder collaborative platform acknowledges that all actors in the ocean economy hold underexplored and unheard ideas. The Ocean Centres Philippines fosters a whole-of-government-and-society approach that bridges trust and accountability gaps by bringing together government, shipping companies, small-scale fishers, NGOs, trade unions, academia,

grassroots organizations, MSMEs, and financial institutions. With this method, the traditionally overlooked and marginalized voices are given a seat at the negotiating table. Finally, it creates alignment of interests among various groups to influence new standards and policies in the Philippines and across the other seven Ocean Centres.



Why Locally Led?

The Philippines' coastline stretches 36,289 kilometers ranking fifth in the world's longest coastlines¹⁹. The country is also home to eight major languages and 184 living languages²⁰ spoken by approximately 116,800,000 Filipinos (2025)²¹. Drawing from its country's diverse background, OCPH serves as a catalyst for locally led solutions tailored to address specific regional safety challenges while remaining culturally

relevant. The core mission of the OCPH is to co-create solutions with the communities most affected, ensuring that local voices drive both national and global change. This approach will build local ownership and trust while ensuring that initiatives are context-specific and that policies work for the benefit of the local society they are meant to serve.

Why Long-term?

The idea behind having the Ocean Centres Philippines as a long-term initiative is to address deep-seated systemic issues and ensure safety is not treated as a temporary priority. A core goal of the initiative is to shift the country's ocean economy away from reactive crisis management towards proactive and institutionalized leadership. The Ocean Centres Philippines

recognizes that to build a true and lasting culture of safety, it requires sustained, intentional effort instead of occasional inspections. Through targeted safety literacy campaigns, capacity development programs, and innovation hubs, the OCPH secures the Philippines as a resilient, ethical, and transformative maritime center for future generations.



SEE FOOTNOTES

OCEAN CENTRES PHILIPPINES: JOURNEY TO DATE

This national report is the product of the eight workshops conducted between August 2025 and March 2026. These workshops followed the co-designing principle enshrined in the UNESCO

“Co-designing the science we need for the ocean we want: Guidance and recommendations for collaborative approaches to designing & implementing decade actions”²².

Governance Structure

Ocean Centres operates through a collaborative governance model that combines global strategic coordination with country-level leadership, ensuring methodological consistency across the seven participating countries while empowering

locally led implementation. In addition to supporting Ocean Centres with funding, Lloyd’s Register Foundation facilitates access to relevant knowledge and networks.

Global Board

- **Lloyd’s Register Foundation**
 - Olivia Swift, Head of Maritime Systems
 - Caitlin Vaughan, Project and Stakeholder Engagement Manager
 - Dagmara Karbowska, Programme Manager
- **United Nations Global Compact**
 - Erik Giercksky, Head of Ocean Stewardship Coalition
 - Jean-Stéphane Naas, Project Manager, Ocean Stewardship Coalition Ocean Centres
 - Patricia Furtado de Mendonça, Global Lead, Ocean Centres
 - Nycolas Carvalho, Project Coordinator, Ocean Centres

Country Implementors

- **Global Compact Network Philippines**
 - Glen de Castro, Executive Director
 - Edward Gacusana, Institutional Partnership Manager
- **Ocean Centres Philippines**
 - Yrhen Bernard Balinis, Country Lead
 - Engr. Ithan Jessemar Dollente, Focal Point
 - OCPH safety experts
 - OCPH members and ally partners



Stakeholder Engagement

Believing that meeting people where they are is the principal tenet of an effective stakeholder engagement, the Ocean Centres Philippines conducted all eight workshops in-person at various locations nationwide. Online provisions were also made available to encourage wider audience participation for those residing away from the forum venue. The strategic selection of locations allowed synergy with local expertise, with specific thematic priority areas:

- **Metro Manila and CALABARZON:**

Hubs for maritime transport and governance, focusing on **Shipping and Ports**, specifically addressing the modernization of ageing fleets, port infrastructure gaps, and leveraging **Finance and Investment** for the transition to Blue Finance.

- **Palawan & Mindoro:**

Deep-dive sessions attended by coastal communities, focusing on the intersection of **Fishing and Aquaculture** with climate resilience.

- **Camarines Sur:**

Served as a critical focal point for **Offshore Renewables**, highlighting the necessity of balancing national renewable energy targets with the safety, exclusion zones, and livelihoods of local fisherfolk.

All workshops were strategically divided into three-part peer learning sessions to gather both experts' presentations and participants' lived experiences:

PART 1

Opening remarks and high-level messages

PART 2

Technical discussions related to the key priority area in focus

PART 3

Hands-on breakout groups moderated by each working group



Workshops

Several IMO Conventions were also discussed during the side events. For instance, aquatic invasive species and the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention were the topics of discussion in a side event in Palawan with the Ocean Centres Philippines members and government agency partners.

In-country workshops

LAUNCH

Date: July 10, 2025, Makati City, Hybrid

Topic: LAYAG: #Ocean CentresPH tungo sa ligtas at likas-kayang karagatan [translated: #Ocean CentresPH towards a safe and sustainable ocean.]

Priority Area: All Action Areas

WORKSHOP 1

Date: Aug 08, 2025, Manila, In-person

Topic: OVERHAUL: Roundtable with Philippine Domestic Fleet Operators and Policy Think-Tanks

Priority Area: Shipping and Ports

WORKSHOP 2

Date: Sep 02, 2025, Manila City, In-person

Topic: PAN PAN: Workshop on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) and Human Rights at Sea Forum

Priority Area: Shipping and Ports

WORKSHOP 3

Date: Oct 24, 2025, Puerto Princesa City, Hybrid

Topic: PAG-ANI: Harnessing Seaweed for Sustainable Futures in the Philippines

Priority Area: Fishing and Aquaculture

WORKSHOP 4

Date: Nov 13, 2025, Manila City, Hybrid

Topic: GIYA: Capacity development workshop for the PHL maritime industries

Priority Area: Shipping and Ports

WORKSHOP 5

Date: Dec 05, 2025, Laguna, In-person

Topic: PATULOY SA PAGLAYAG: Charting the Course Together for a Safe and Sustainable Blue Economy

Priority Area: All Action Areas

WORKSHOP 6

Date: Jan 22, 2026, Calapan City, In-person

Topic: HULL: Philippine Fishers' Forum Strengthening Safety, Livelihoods, and Ocean Stewardship in Mindoro

Priority Area: Fishing and Aquaculture

WORKSHOP 7

Date: Feb 20, 2026, Canaman, In-person

Topic: DUROS: First Stakeholder Consultation and Solutions-Based Workshop on Offshore Windfarms

Priority Area: Fishing and Aquaculture; Offshore Renewable

WORKSHOP 8

Date: Mar 26, 2026, Taguig City, In-person

Topic: HALAGÁ: The value of blue finance in the Philippines' safe and sustainable ocean economy

Priority Area: Finance and Investment

Cross-country Workshops

UNLOCKING BLUE FINANCE IN ASIA

Date: 03 December 2025, Online

Philippines' Representative: Ms. Jo Ann Eala, Vice President and Head of Sustainability Office, Bank of the Philippine Islands

TOWARDS MARITIME DECARBONISATION IN ASIA

Date: 21 May 2026, Online

Philippines' Representative: Captain Pol Winston Haboc, Vice President, PHILCAMSAT

Capacity Building

Throughout this journey, Ocean Centres Philippines also saw bilateral discussions, partnerships on side-events and attendance at international and high-level events.

The Ocean Centres Philippines' solidified its foothold as a knowledge sharing-hub for safety and sustainability by establishing its presence at key high-level conferences like the International Conference on Seafarers' Human Rights, Safety, and Well-being²³, the 11th International Search and Rescue (ISAR) Conference & Exhibition, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Regional forum on the effective implementation of the STCW Convention and Code.

The Ocean Centres Philippines also joined the annual celebration of the Maritime Archipelagic Nation Awareness Month, National Seafarers' Day, and World Maritime Day by hosting a virtual webinar focusing on meaningful youth engagement.

A full list of its stakeholder engagement is in [Annex I: Visioning Workshop Stakeholder Engagement and Gallery of Photos](#).

The Methodological Innovation

The Ocean Centres Philippines employed the co-designing and co-creation within its delivery of work, including:

- **Analytical frameworks:** Using problem-solving methodologies, including PESTLE analysis, root cause analysis, and case study reviews, the workshops pinpointed specific challenges and opportunities.
- **Launch of a "Call for Abstract":** To break down research barriers and encourage inter-college sharing, the Ocean Centres Philippines launched a call for abstracts for its Workshop No. 4 related to maritime education and training.
- **Use of digital innovation tools:** The use of Mentimeter and Slido in select workshops was employed during the question and answer.
- **Milestone framing:** The methodology for Workshop No. 5 embedded visioning tree and newspaper headline exercises to create a collective vision for 2030.
- **Modified Delphi Process:** In engaging with the safety experts, a series of virtual reviews was initiated through online teleconferencing, which culminated in a face-to-face writeshop and draft report readthrough.

An aerial photograph of a coastline. The land is green with some brown patches, possibly agricultural fields or urban areas. The ocean is a deep blue, with a large, swirling eddy or vortex of lighter blue water in the center. The coastline is irregular, with a prominent peninsula or headland in the lower right.

“ Ocean Centres Philippines can bring stakeholders together to frame safety and sustainability as smart economics, and attract vital investment. It can elevate maritime safety into a powerful driver of human dignity, ecological preservation, and enduring economic prosperity ”

Hon. Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan
Senator of the Republic of the Philippines

OUTPUTS

Blue Safety Wheel

The Blue Safety Wheel is the common analytical framework adopted throughout this report to assess safety challenges across the ocean economy. It examines safety through five complementary dimensions, as you can see below, providing a structured approach to analyzing safety across sectors. The following challenges were consolidated from diagnostic exercises, stakeholder engagement processes, and workshop discussions, and represent systemic vulnerabilities affecting shipping, ports, fishing, aquaculture, and offshore renewable.





1: Inadequate training for mooring and stevedoring workers; sparse conduct and reporting of emergency drills; low women representation; lack of safety protection for ancillary services (tug, towage, pilotage) workers.

2: Limited aids to navigation (AtoN); intermittent connectivity in remote areas; unsuitable channels and fairways; unreliable charts; cybersecurity threats.

3: Sea level change; insufficient air and water quality monitoring for pollution impacts; energy inefficiency; lack of electrification innovation.

4: Multiple decentralized port systems; vague delineation of government mandates; absence of national digital port data ecosystem.

5: Uneven financial investment distribution between national and local ports; underinvestment in infrastructure; financial constraints and delayed fund disbursement for SAR asset acquisition.



1: Inconsistent accident data monitoring; low turnout of fishers and boat registrations; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF); ineffective training; lack of medical first aid kit.

2: Nonmandatory carriage of SAR equipment; pervasive encroachment; technological and knowledge gap.

3: Lack of protected area management plans; sea dredging; ineffective MPA zoning; siltation from illegal logging; mangrove destruction; pollution, including aquatic invasive species; threats of tsunamis, storm surges, and coastal erosion.

4: Lack of interoperable accident data repository; lagging ratification of international agreements on safety; insufficient implementation of statutory safety standards.

5: Land-based focused financing models; inaccessible and unavailable insurance and health coverage; expensive cost to set-up cooperatives.



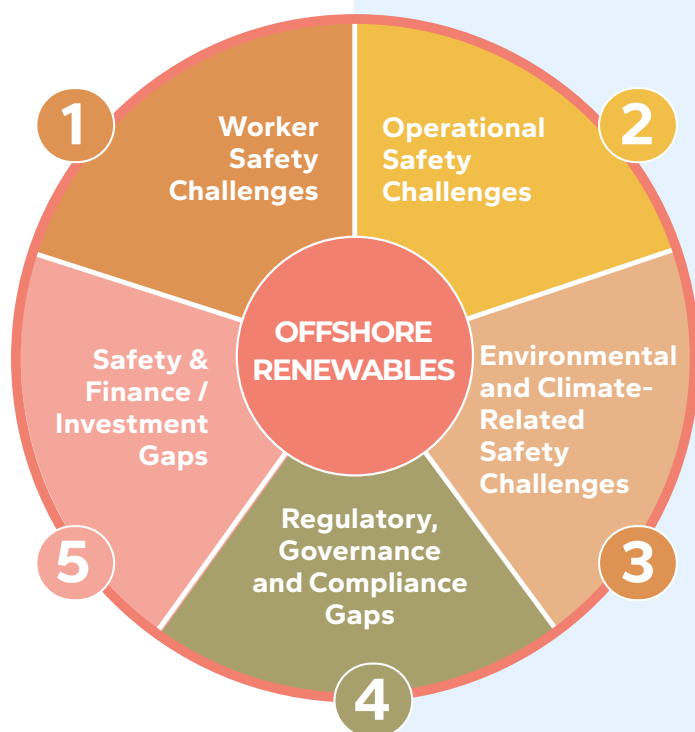
1: Gender-biased policies; risks of dehydration and water-borne diseases; lack of access to technical training and traceability systems; heightened exposure to chemicals.

2: Lack of proper drying and storage facilities; dependence on inconsistent propagule supply; insufficient water quality tests; lacking site suitability matching.

3: Rising sea water temperature; fluctuating salinity; pervasive ice-ice growth and epiphyte outbreaks.

4: Failure to treat the sector as socio-ecological value network; insufficient site suitability matching; complicated approval process for novel and high value applications.

5: Institutional risk-aversion and credit skepticism; constrained innovation pathways; limited market accessibility.



1: Limited training centres for worker certification; inadequate certificated local specialists; dependence on foreign technical experts.

2: Heightened risk of vessel collisions and allisions; increased hydrodynamic forces; hindering connectivity and signal in project site vicinity; underwater radiated noise.

3: Proximity to fault line; oncoming super typhoons; threat of pollution; damage to key biodiversity areas (KBA).

4: Lack of dedicated Code of Practice for offshore wind industry; bureaucracy prompts red tape.

5: Informal payout promises; market capitalization; inadequate revenue share for affected fisherfolks and communities.

National Cross-Cutting Safety Challenges Across Ocean Industries

The Blue Safety Wheels presented in the previous section provide a sector-specific assessment of safety challenges across the five ocean industries. Building on these findings, the following matrix consolidates the main cross-cutting challenges identified across sectors and organizes them using four thematic areas of the UN Global Compact framework: Human Rights, Labor, Environment and Anti-Corruption. Together, they provide an integrated evidence base to support policy development, investment priorities and safety-focused capacity-building efforts.

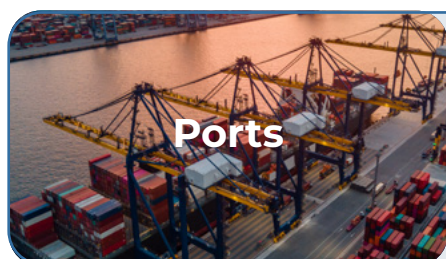
HUMAN RIGHTS	LABOUR
Shipping: Formal and non-formal education lags against the demands of seafaring and allied professions; crew welfare is viewed as an operational expense. Ports: Inadequate training for port workers; lack of suitable SAR equipment delays ability to render assistance. Fishing: Ineffective training; lack of needs assessment; inadequate health and insurance coverage. Aquaculture: Nonparticipation to technical training and traceability systems; limited market accessibility. Offshore renewable energy: Limited local training pathways; impact on food security in affected coastal areas.	Shipping: Low wages, substandard working conditions, and gender bias proliferate on board domestic ships. Ports: Labour and OSH standards for tug and tow crew, and pilots are underdeveloped. Fishing: Nonratification of international conventions delays protection for fisherfolks. Aquaculture: Prevalent child labour in the fishing and aquaculture sectors. Offshore renewable energy: Gaps on current regulations dedicated to offshore wind energy.
ENVIRONMENT	ANTI-CORRUPTION
Shipping: Scaling a national maritime decarbonization requires competent seafarers, massive capital, and integration with the National Action Plan. Ports: Extreme weather affects safe anchorage, pilotage, and berthing. Fishing: Unsustainable practices push fisherfolk to sail farther from shore. Aquaculture: Overuse of inorganic fertilizers in seaweed farming results in the widespread growth of green algae. Offshore renewable energy: Underwater radiated noise affects breeding areas of marine life, and windblades affect birds' migration patterns.	Shipping: Backer system launches seafaring careers and/or gains undue advantage. Ports: Perpetuation of political patronage causes uneven distribution of financial investment. Fishing: The expensive and complex registration process spurs red tape. Aquaculture: Lack of open and accessible data on drowning and other marine casualties. Offshore renewable energy: Bureaucracy in obtaining clearances increases risk of bribery, and extortion.

Opportunities for Safe Blue Growth

Across all ocean industries, stronger safety systems create major opportunities for safe blue growth. Improved safety reduces operational risks, increases investor confidence, and enhances the bankability of projects — unlocking new flows of public and private finance. Modern, climate-resilient, and safety-aligned operations boost productivity, reduce losses, improve worker well-being, and expand access to global markets and certifications. In this way, safety becomes a growth enabler: accelerating digitalization, green innovation, blended-finance partnerships, and the development of a resilient and sustainable ocean value chain.



- Prioritizing human development; addressing skills gaps; minimizing competency mismatch.
- Consolidating maritime data, certificates and regulations into a cyber-secure repository.
- Leveraging emerging technology for data processing and scaling best practices.



- Modernizing port infrastructure; tracking climate resilience through targeted KPIs.
- Increasing women's participation in port operations, ICT, engineering, and pilotage.
- Supporting the MIDP, the ASEAN Transport Sectoral Plan 2026-2030 and the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework.



- Strengthening government-academe-industry; facilitating compliance with vessel monitoring measures.
- Accelerating ratification of ILO and IMO Conventions; ensuring long-term equitable safeguards.
- Developing an integrated roadmap with sustainable financing embedded through a safety lens.
- Developing multi-revenue streams for fisherfolks.



- Deploying remote sensing for site suitability mapping.
- Supporting market innovation.
- Utilizing sustainable bio-stimulants and bio-fertilizers.



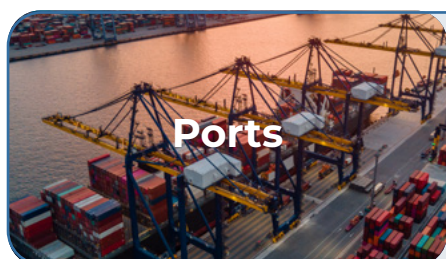
- Establishing training centres; certifying offshore renewable technicians, operators, and specialists.
- Integrating sustainable blue tourism including artificial reef engineering.
- Revising the DOE offshore wind guidance.

Finance and Investment Implications of Safety Challenges Across Ocean Industries

Across all ocean industries, safety challenges have direct financial implications: they increase perceived risk, raise insurance and reinsurance costs, reduce investor confidence, limit access to affordable capital, and constrain the bankability of modernization, digitalization, and climate-resilient projects. Strengthening safety systems, therefore, acts as a risk-reduction lever, enabling blended finance, concessional instruments, and private investment to flow more easily into shipping, ports, fishing, aquaculture, and offshore renewables.



- Incoherent laws and policies, and uncertainties in governance structures undermine investor confidence.
- Geopolitical conflicts increased the cost of insurance and seafarers wages in the form of hazard pay for those sailing in high-risk areas.
- The benefits of protecting marine life offsets the cost of utilizing port reception facilities.



- Upgrading national ports requires leveraging financing to cover the capital expense needed to retrofit key ports into high-efficiency, environmentally compliant hubs.
- Lengthy procurement procedures and setbacks in releasing funds delays the availability of essential search and rescue assets.
- Limited investment funds are available to modernize LGU-operated ports compared to those provided for major national ports.



- Insufficient funding support hinders centralized monitoring and data collection of fisher registration and accident reporting.
- Ratification to the ILO C188, IMO Cape Town Agreement, and STCW for Fishers will require significant investment for facilities, equipment and training.
- Inadequate health and insurance coverage leaves fishers and their families vulnerable.



- Financial institutions perceive aquaculture as a high-risk and low-collateral sector.
- Underinvestment in research budgets hinders development of climate-resilient and disease-resistant seaweed cultivars.
- Global demand requires fully traceable value chains.



- Non-compliance to international and national safety standards will trigger penalties or total project halt.
- Structured capital allocation enables a future-ready offshore renewable energy workforce.
- Fortifying port areas, use of dredging vessels, and compliance to environmental impact assessment contribute to high upfront capital costs.

A CALL TO ACTION: RECOMMENDATIONS BY ACTION AREA

Based on the findings of this report, the following recommendations provide a practical roadmap for action across each Ocean Centres Action Area. While they emerged from a broad multi-stakeholder dialogue involving government, industry, the financial sector, academia, trade unions and civil society, they are primarily directed to businesses, governments and the finance sector, recognizing their capacity to shape policy, mobilize investment and drive implementation at scale. Their successful implementation, however, will depend on the continued collaboration of all sectors of society engaged in the Ocean Centres initiative.

To support implementation, the recommendations are organized into two indicative time horizons according to their expected level of complexity, coordination and investment requirements. While some actions can be initiated immediately using existing capacities, others require longer-term planning, institutional strengthening and broader collaboration.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (UP TO ONE YEAR)

Actions that can be initiated in the near term using existing resources and institutional capacities.

MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM ACTIONS (BEYOND ONE YEAR)

Actions requiring broader coordination, policy reform, institutional strengthening or sustained investment over time.



Credits: Yrhen Bernard Balinis/ Youth in Maritime Organization (YIMO)

Shipping and Ports

Short Term Recommendations

BUSINESS

- Collaborate with schools and training institutions to enhance curricula; upskill instructors in digital literacy and simulator-based learning.
- Implement nationwide safety campaigns; enhance onboard safety video requirements.
- Review the policy on Local Classification Societies (LCS) to focus on competence, capability, and accountability.
- Partner with private entities to mainstream the Maritime Just Transition Framework.
- Review baseline emissions monitoring and reporting systems for domestic fleets.
- Cascade the safety campaign materials to the top commercial ports in the country.

GOVERNMENT

- Create an updated Maritime Information Center to serve as a comprehensive repository and clearinghouse for all maritime-related information.
- Partner with local communities and academe for maritime data collection.
- Assess shipyard capacity in constructing SAR assets and re-structured ships.
- Review the implementation of the Revised National Safety Management Code for Ships and related directives.
- Mainstream training modules that promote gender equality and mental health for seafarers and port workers.

FINANCE

- Establish a National Blue Finance Framework aligned with the MIDP 2028 to mobilize sustainable ocean investments.
- Allocate budget for public awareness campaigns featuring women in SAR.
- Partner with organizations to leverage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts.
- Fund a nationwide skills gap assessment for port workers and stevedores.

Medium-Long Term Recommendations

BUSINESS

- Improve the Philippine ship registry regime to ensure that only seaworthy vessels are allowed to ply in domestic waters.
- Develop a mobile application that could monitor seafarer wellbeing with added features for health monitoring and teleconsultation.
- Modernize the ports' infrastructure incorporating nature-based solutions and climate adaptation plans.
- Align electronic and paper navigational charts to international hydrographic standards.

GOVERNMENT

- Streamline and codify all existing regulations.
- Ensure strict adherence to RA 12021 a.k.a. Magna Carta for Filipino Seafarers.
- Formulate a national maritime agenda.
- Scale up SAR training modules in the National Service Training Program (NSTP) for maritime schools.
- Strengthen labor and OSH standards for tug and tow crew and pilots.
- Improve operational oversight in major ports.
- Launch a centralized National Port Safety and SAR Information System.

FINANCE

- Develop a government-backed maritime development fund.
- Invest in the research, development, and application of renewable energy and circular economy models within maritime operations.
- Allocate funding for the construction and upgrade of Philippine Coast Guard training centers.

Fishing and Aquaculture

Short Term Recommendations

BUSINESS

- Leverage public-private partnerships to strengthen vessel monitoring measures implementation.
- Support fishing cooperatives in establishing internal rules to self-police and inspect their own boats through Train the Trainers session.
- Partner with organizations in conducting a fish and aquaculture stock assessment.
- Launch training programs on Good Aquaculture Practices (GAqP).
- Promote use of appropriate technologies in aquaculture production and post-harvest.
- Collaborate with LGUs and the private sector to eliminate single-use plastic.

GOVERNMENT

- Develop localization programs that will facilitate information dissemination at the community level.
- Embed minimum onboard safety equipment requirements into vessel registration.
- Propose to study and develop relevant IMO Model Courses to catalyze STCW-F ratification.
- Integrate the aquaculture industry as a priority sector within the national Blue Economy framework.
- Communicate processor quality requirements.
- Encourage innovation through creation of regulatory pathways for aquaculture and seaweed-based products.

FINANCE

- Invest in the creation of culturally relevant and localized training and safety materials.
- Provide access to capital, micro-loans, insurance and financial mentorship.
- Establish tiered financial and in-kind support mechanisms.
- Partner with academic institutions to fund practical research that directly addresses safety and sustainability challenges in the industry.
- Re-invest in shared multipurpose seafood processing and post-harvest hubs.

Medium-Long Term Recommendations

BUSINESS

- Facilitate stronger integration between fishing cooperatives and processors.
- Expand the scope of regular inspection to include vessels less than 24 meters.
- Create a network of community-based or regional nurseries.
- Invest in shared, well-designed communal drying and storage facilities.
- Utilize technology to de-risk farming and optimize production.

GOVERNMENT

- Develop and enforce science-based marine spatial plans (MSP).
- Accelerate ratification of ILO C188, IMO Cape Town Agreement, and the STCW F Convention.
- Engage local and international financing.
- Establish a dedicated Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.
- Partner with LGUs and national agencies to develop a tiered registration approach.
- Mandate and monitor compliance with the Philippine National Standard (PNS).
- Implement fully traceable value chains.
- Support non-fertilizer-based mitigation methods for ice-ice disease.
- Develop a Philippine-aligned tiered standards framework for small-scale fisheries and aquaculture.

FINANCE

- Strengthen livelihood diversification for fishers and expand access to social protection schemes.
- Mobilize private sector investment and expertise to support inclusive livelihood diversification.
- Encourage large cooperatives to facilitate access to social protection coverage for their fisherfolk-members.
- Promote GEDSI-responsive support.
- Invest in climate-resilient coastal infrastructure incorporating early warning systems (EWS) while respecting the Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge (ITLK).
- Invest in institutions developing climate-resilient and disease-resistant seaweed cultivars.
- Mobilize State Universities and Colleges and the private sector to support research on non-fertilizer-based approaches.



Offshore Renewables

Short Term Recommendations

BUSINESS

- Review the DOE wind guidance to reflect provisions for international specialists to train local personnel.
- Strengthen community dialogue to increase stakeholder trust and community buy-in at the proposed projects sites.

GOVERNMENT AND REGULATORS

- Guarantee that offshore renewable energy project sites do not harm key biodiversity areas.
- Ensure that the locations of proposed offshore wind installations are timely reflected in Notices to Mariners and nautical charts.

FINANCE

- Ensure transparent economic displacement package for the affected coastal communities.
- Utilize funds for marine projects like mangrove reforestation and modernizing fish landing sites to offset livelihood displacement and environmental consequences.

Medium-Long Term Recommendations

BUSINESS

- Establish school-to-employment scholarship programs.
- Provide rescue patrols, first aid kits, and capacity building for affected coastal barangays.
- Establish a thriving alumni network of certificated specialized workers.

GOVERNMENT AND REGULATORS

- Institutionalize a citizen-led multi-partite monitoring team.
- Ensure removal of waste through a government-developer collaboration.
- Incorporate cumulative environmental impact monitoring and adaptive management throughout project life cycles including buffer zones and turbidity studies.

FINANCE

- Finance the construction of Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) and dehydrating plants.
- Institutionalize an upfront Decommissioning Bond before construction to guarantee end-of-life cleanup and steel removal.
- Support community benefit-sharing mechanisms and livelihood transition programs.



Finance and Investment



Short Term Recommendations

BUSINESS

- Study how insurance can be designed to include risk assessments related to safety.
- Launch campaigns encouraging businesses to extend beyond standard sustainability reporting.

GOVERNMENT AND REGULATORS

- Discuss with concerned agencies how safety can be embedded as a criterion to access blue bonds.
- Examine how the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) can support fisheries and maritime development.

FINANCE

- Support programs and initiatives geared towards a sustainable and safe ocean economy.
- Collaborate with finance institutions to design financing instruments and grant programs.

Medium-Long Term Recommendations

BUSINESS

- Allocate ocean renewable energy co-benefit sharing funds across Ocean Centres Philippines key priority areas.
- Support the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework, the ASEAN Transport Sectoral Plan 2026-2030, and the Philippines' Maritime Industry Development Plan.

GOVERNMENT AND REGULATORS

- Strengthen the implementation of the IMO Fund Convention, and the Civil Liabilities Convention (CLC).
- Develop incentives for investments that improve safety, reduce pollution, and support climate resilience.
- Increase Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) audit frequency for blue economy compliance.
- Institutionalize blue economy financing standards within the Manual of Regulations for Banks (MORB).

FINANCE

- Co-develop standardized occupational safety indicators in the Philippines' blue economy.
- Prioritize financing for projects that demonstrate measurable environmental and social co-benefits alongside safety improvements.
- Reward businesses and government that successfully integrated safety in their sustainability effort.



CASE STUDIES

These case studies provide operational blueprints for Ocean Centres Philippines' two Priority Areas. Selected for measurable impacts on mitigating systemic risks, job creation, and sustainability, they offer replicable models for the Philippine Blue Economy.

To move beyond theory, these stories were built on direct site visits, interviews, and operational observations, integrating insights from national and international agencies. They map the multi-sector partnerships that turn complex challenges into viable solutions.

By examining both large-scale infrastructure and grassroots cooperatives, these studies illustrate how to operationalize the triple bottom line of growth, decarbonization, and social equity. Ultimately, they serve as bankable templates for aligning technological and environmental transitions with the welfare of maritime workers and coastal communities.

1 CASE STUDY FOR SHIPPING: Enabling a Just Transition for Filipino Seafarers

As vessels shift to alternative fuels and green technology, a DNV study projects that up to 800,000 seafarers worldwide will require education and training for advanced skills by 2050. For the PTC Group - a diversified conglomerate with 47 years of maritime heritage - this is a human challenge at the heart of their mission to provide world-class professionals that build the nation.

PTC responded to this challenge not with piecemeal programs, but with institutional architecture. The Group established one of the Philippines' first Maritime Just Transition teams, and through its training arm PHILCAMSAT, developed the recalibrated Cornerstone and Capstone (2C) Program. This structured upskilling initiative ensures Filipino maritime professionals remain future-ready through continuous learning in emerging areas like LNG, alternative fuels, and safety training for offshore renewable energy. PHILCAMSAT has produced 16 sustainability training modules and trained over 6,500 seafarers, building a demonstrable pipeline of green-skilled professionals for the decarbonized fleet. Their inclusion in the UN Global Compact's Maritime Just Transition discussions further amplified this work, improving equitable access to green jobs and clear education-to-employment pathways.

Beyond training delivery, PTC led discussions for the development of a tripartite national skills council on a just transition in maritime. Working alongside government agencies, PTC lays the institutional foundations for an equitable national transition framework: one that places equal emphasis on economic opportunity, skills readiness, ocean stewardship, and social well-being.

The PTC Group's journey demonstrates the importance of upskilling and building the social infrastructure that surrounds it. PTC's approach offers a replicable model for the Philippine maritime sector, affirming critical insight: the transition to maritime decarbonization must be anchored on the welfare of the workers who make it possible.



2 CASE STUDY FOR PORTS: Cargo and Care

Towering cranes swing containers with precision, reefer units hum at near-full capacity, trucks roll seamlessly through automated gates, and workers move with confidence born of safety. This was the scene when the Ocean Centres Philippines team visited the flagship Manila International Container Terminal (MICT) of International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI) in January 2026.

ICTSI, a Philippine-based multinational, operates, manages, and develops more than 30 port terminals across 20 countries on six continents. Before 2025 closed, MICT shattered records by processing over 3 million TEUs—a milestone that speaks not only to efficiency but to a new vision for the Philippine Blue Economy.

For decades, container terminals were high-stakes environments where efficiency often eclipsed safety and sustainability. ICTSI is rewriting that narrative. As an active member of Ocean Centres Philippines and the Global Compact Network Philippines, the company demonstrates that growth and responsibility can move in lockstep.

Technology anchors this transformation. Automated gate systems now separate foot traffic from multi-ton machinery, dramatically reducing accidents. Hybrid rubber-tired gantry cranes and LED lighting cut emissions, charting a path toward a 26% carbon intensity reduction by 2030. Suppliers are held to rigorous standards through ICTSI's Supplier Quality Awards, ensuring strict compliance before entering the yard.

Beyond the gates, initiatives like "Clean Ports, Clean Oceans" highlight ICTSI's commitment to communities and coastlines. The addition of the South Luzon Container Terminal in Batangas further eases congestion in Manila while

securing deep-berth access for larger ships. By embedding stewardship into infrastructure management, ICTSI proves sustainability is not a burden—it is a catalyst for resilience and global competitiveness.

The message is clear: the future of Philippine ports is not just about moving cargo faster, but moving forward smarter, safer, and greener.



3

CASE STUDY FOR FISHING: SAMAKA sa Katatagan

For generations, the municipality of Sablayan thrived on the abundant yellowfin tuna fisheries of the Mindoro Strait. Yet, local fishers and their families often faced economic uncertainty due to seasonal income shifts and post-harvest losses. While fishers braved about the seas, their wives carried the weight of financial instability, revealing a vital gap in the value chain and community resilience.

But hope rose from within. Thirty-two women, mostly fishers' wives and indigenous community members, came together to form the Samahan ng Mangingisdang Kababaihan ng Sablayan Producers Cooperative (SAMAKA). With determination, they partnered with the DA-NFRDI to rehabilitate a local processing plant and embed food safety practices. WWF-Philippines' Project Buhay introduced climate-resilient, solar-powered cold-chain technology, while the Department of Trade and Industry provided essential manufacturing supplies. When regulatory challenges appeared, local governance agencies stepped in, guiding SAMAKA toward full commercial registration.

The results have been inspiring. SAMAKA transformed surplus catch into premium Yellowfin Bottled Tuna, turning what was once wasted into opportunity. Household incomes nearly doubled, and women who were once seen only as homemakers emerged as empowered "agripreneurs". Their flagship product even won 2nd Runner-Up at the provincial One Town – One Product (OTOP) competition, a testament to their innovation and resilience.

SAMAKA's journey shows that when communities unite, resilience is not just possible—it becomes a legacy. Looking ahead, the path is bright. Businesses can strengthen localized supply chains, ensuring traceability and sustainability. The government can streamline regulatory

processes, making it easier for coastal enterprises to flourish. Financial institutions, in synergy with NGOs, can fuel continuous investments for the blue economy.

Their story is proof that with collaboration, innovation, and courage, coastal families can rise above vulnerability and build a future filled with hope, dignity, and prosperity.



4

CASE STUDY FOR AQUACULTURE: Cherishing the Tides of Change

In the coastal village of Sitio Balintang, Quezon, Palawan, the melody of the 1984 pop hit “Cherish” by Kool & the Gang means more than just a catchy tune. For the women of the Cherish Fisherfolk Cooperative, it is a philosophy: to protect and care for the sea that sustains them.

For years, coastal families have endured economic fragility driven by volatile raw material prices and climate shocks. Warming oceans triggered the destructive “Ice-ice” disease in seaweed crops, while severe typhoons battered their shores. Women, historically sidelined in this male dominated sector, bore the brunt of poverty and limited adaptive capacity.

Nearly a decade ago, Mardy Montaño gathered 80 women to plant the seeds of a seaweed farming revolution. By 2022, they had formally transformed into a cooperative, gaining the democratic leverage to bypass exploitative middle traders. Partnering with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), they institutionalized climate resilient strategies, shifting cultivation lines to cooler, deeper waters and upcycling raw seaweed into high value foods like crispy chips, pasta, and *atsara*.

By mastering the entire production pipeline, these resilient women became empowered entrepreneurs. Their steady profits, locally celebrated as harvesting “diplomas,” now fund their children’s education.

Their success offers a blueprint for the Philippine Blue Economy: businesses can integrate aquaculture products into national retail networks, the government can institutionalize marine spatial planning for deep-sea cultivation, and financial institutions.

can deploy “Blue Finance” to support climate-adaptive seedstocks and resilient infrastructure. Together, these strategies show how grassroots empowerment, environmental stewardship, and women’s leadership can transform vulnerability into resilience, and resilience into hope.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1** Supported gender equality advocacy at the 18th Women in Maritime Philippines Anniversary.
- 2** Participated in the International Search and Rescue Conference (iSAR) in Cebu.
- 3** Discussed the Ocean Centres initiative, and GCNP efforts during the International Conference on Seafarers' Human Rights, Safety and Well-being.
- 4** Engaged youth in local ocean governance during the OCPH's inaugural webinar.
- 5** Partnered with stakeholders from Palawan Provincial Agricultural Office (PAgo), the Seaweeds Industry Association of the Philippines, and Coast4C to advance sustainable seaweed aquaculture initiatives.
- 6** Hosted a cross-sector event with Sinaya Seafood and CCA Manila driving collaboration for the blue economy.
- 7** Advocated for collaborative safety and sustainability at the GCNP Sustainability Summit.
- 8** Moderated climate finance working groups for methane reduction projects during the roundtable hosted by International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).
- 9** Convened multisectoral leaders to advance collective ocean sustainability action during Global Lead of Ocean Centres' mission to the Philippines.
- 10** Represented OCPH at the ASEAN Climate Action Dialogue ensuring that the views of farmers, fishers, and aquaculture communities are heard.
- 11** Moderated a panel discussion during the IMO Regional Forum on the Effective Implementation of STCW.
- 12** Featured in the Lloyd's Register Foundation blog post emphasizing that collective, local action is key to driving change in the region.
- 13** Continued the offshore renewable energy consultation during the Duros 2 workshop.
- 14** Presented at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Asia and the Pacific Transport Forum 2026 bringing the national workshops into actionable calls to action.



CONCLUSIONS

The Philippine maritime sector is at a defining moment of opportunity. As highlighted in this national report, the key is through proactive and institutionalized leadership to bridge the critical gap between global policy ideals and domestic operational reality. The cohesive, whole-of-society approach championed by integrated frameworks shows that all ocean sectors can transform and boost the national economy while creating positive ripples throughout the global ocean economy.

By modernizing domestic fleets, strengthening climate-resilient infrastructure, and elevating seafarer training and welfare, we can harness opportunities in our shipping and port ecosystems. In our fishing and aquaculture sectors, equipping communities with essential safety tools, building resilience against climate-induced challenges, and ensuring transparent value chains will empower coastal livelihoods

and secure food systems. Finally, as the country continues to transition to offshore renewables, robust, transparent, and inclusive marine spatial planning, deliberately designed to protect the safety, security, and prosperity of our traditional fisherfolk and marine habitats, will accelerate a just and truly sustainable maritime future.

Financing these transformations is possible through innovative Blue Finance mechanisms. By mobilizing Blue Bonds and Blue Loans, we can channel capital into climate resilient, safety oriented maritime infrastructure that benefits both people and the planet. The mandate is clear: to unite government, business, and finance in forging a resilient maritime future. By championing these recommendations together, the Philippines can emerge not only as a participant but as a global leader, poised to sail confidently into a future both resilient and sustainable.



Credits: Ray-an Llaguno

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Global Compact Network Philippines and Ocean Centres Philippines express their profound gratitude to their members, ally partners, workshop speakers, and attendees, without whom this report would not have been possible.

Our deepest appreciation goes to the coastal communities, municipal fishers, and maritime workers across the Philippines and abroad. Their stories, lived experiences, and insights form the foundational truth upon which Ocean Centres Philippines is built. Their courage in sharing both day-to-day challenges and ground-level solutions continually fuels our mission.

We recognize the safety committee members who shared their expertise in validating and editing the input contained in this report: Mr. Aechylus Grekxy Acob, Ms. Denise Alampay, Ms. Jo Ann Eala, Mr. Juan Miguel Gonzales, Ms. Janice Pamonag, Atty. Brenda Pimentel, Assoc. Prof. Albaris Tahiluddin, 2E Jhundel Ropa, Ms. Dhang Tecson, Prof. Chona Camille VinceCruz-Abeledo, and Captain Orly Wong PCG.

Finally, we value the vital support of our partners from the United Nations Global Compact and the Lloyd's Register Foundation. Their strategic trust and investment in a locally-led initiative have been absolutely crucial in turning this vision into reality.

As we advance towards a more resilient maritime future, we remain steadfast in our commitment to **putting safety at the heart of sustainability** now and in the generations to come: for our seafarers, fishers, farmers and #FortheYouthinMaritime.

EDITORIAL TEAM

- Glen de Castro, GCNP Executive Director.
- Edward Gacusana, GCNP Institutional Partnership Manager
- Engr. Ithan Jessemar Dollente, Ocean Centres Philippines Focal Point
- Yrhen Bernard Balinis, Ocean Centres Philippines Country Lead
- Patricia Furtado de Mendonça, Global Lead, Ocean Centres



TESTIMONIALS



Safety is the baseline for survival, food security, and economic adaptability. Vulnerabilities are systemic: unsafe vessels, severe weather exposure, and weak search-and-rescue infrastructure; habitat destruction and poor water quality management; and deficits in ports, cold chains, and laboratories. Compromising safety compromises sustainability and market competitiveness.

High in the ocean economy's value chain, it is positioned to transform these fragmented vulnerabilities into a unified strength. It can bring stakeholders together to frame safety and sustainability as smart economics, and attract vital investment. It can elevate maritime safety into a powerful driver of human dignity, ecological preservation, and enduring economic prosperity.

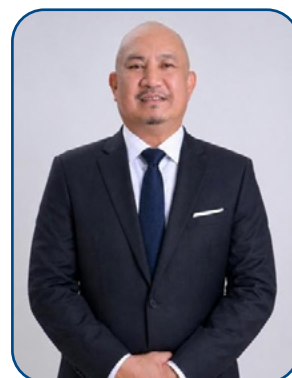
Hon. Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan

Senator
Republic of the Philippines

Ocean Centres Philippines can make a lasting contribution to a safer, more productive, and sustainable blue economy for future generations by catalyzing safer, more resilient maritime operations through the promotion of practical safety training, international best practices, and collaboration among government, industry, and coastal stakeholders.

Mr. Juan Miguel Gonzales

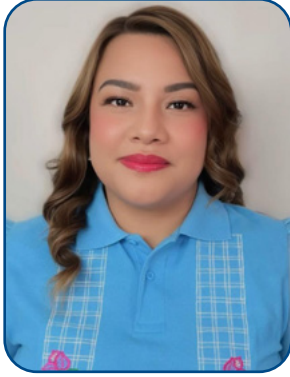
Executive Director
Philippine Association of Coastal
and Inland Water Ferries, Inc. (PACIWFI)



The Ocean Centres Philippines (OCPH) can significantly advance safety and sustainability by bringing together key stakeholders across its four pillars. As a collaborative platform, OCPH enables financial institutions, regulators, and industry players to align on safety standards, risk preparedness, and long-term sustainability strategies. This includes strengthening financial and operational resilience, enhancing compliance with global standards, and promoting insurance solutions.

Ms. Jo Ann Eala

Vice President and Head of Sustainability Office
Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI)



I envision Ocean Centres Philippines as beacons for a safer, more inclusive, and regenerative ocean future—advancing safety, innovation, and collaboration while empowering communities to lead ocean stewardship. By investing in people and oceans together, we can build a future where thriving coastal communities, healthy marine ecosystems, and shared prosperity endure for generations to come.

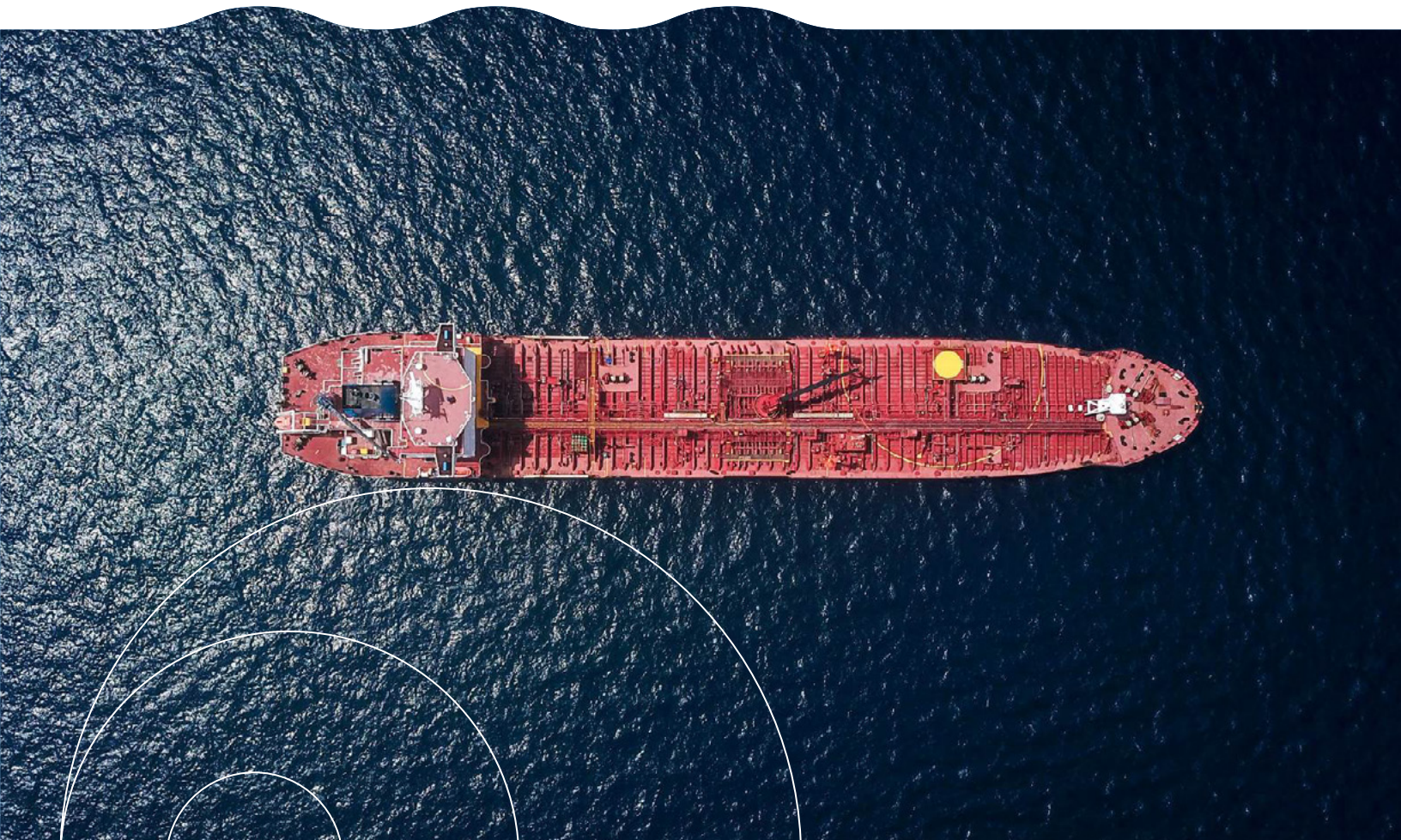
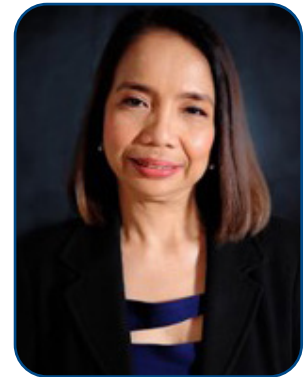
Ms. Dhang Tecson

Founder and Chief Executive Mermaid
Sinaya Seafood

As a network of like-minded groups bound by its commitment to develop and promote the Philippines ocean-based economy, Ocean Centres PHLs can serve as a catalyst to muster initiatives of stakeholders on research, innovation and multi disciplinary and stakeholders' collaboration. Our development strategy needs to shift towards this direction with aggressive efforts directed towards shipping, ports, fisheries, coastal tourism and renewable energy.

Ms. Merle Jimenez- San Pedro

President
Mariners' Polytechnic Colleges Foundation
of Legaspi City (Albay) Inc.

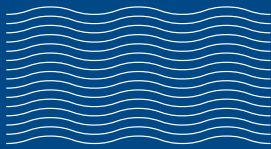


ANNEXES

To ensure that the main report remains concise and accessible, these Annexes provide supplementary information and supporting materials for readers wishing to explore specific topics in greater depth

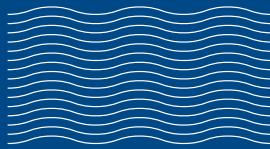
Annex I:

Visioning Workshop
Stakeholder
Engagement and
Gallery of Photos



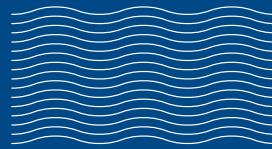
Annex II:

Challenges and
Implications



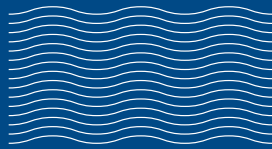
Annex III:

Opportunities and
Actions for Safe
Blue Growth in the
Philippines



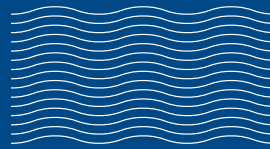
Annex IV:

Contributors,
References and
List of Abbreviations



Annex V:

Official Members



Footnotes

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