

BFPI Background: Snapper and grouper are commercially valuable species caught in a mixed species deepwater handline fishery based out of La Gi, Binh Thuan province, Vietnam. On March 27th, 2012 Sea Delight signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with WWF-Vietnam (WWF-VN) and WWF-Coral Triangle Network Initiative (WWF-CTNI) to officially establish a better fishing practices initiative (BFPI) for this regionally based fishery. BFPI is a term created by Sea Delight to describe fishery improvement or fishery research activities prior to conducting a MSC pre-assessment and the establishment of a fishery improvement project or FIP. The MOU focuses on capturing baseline for the fishery, charting high seas fishing grounds, and developing a catch documentation system. WWF-CTNI describes target actions of the BFPI as:

1. Collecting stock information;
2. Creating catch profiles from observer trips;
3. Collecting data on non-target species;
4. Determining impacts of the fishery on ETP species;
5. Collecting information on fishing grounds and characteristics of fishing trips; and
6. Collect biological samples from reproductive organs to get an idea of stock status, health, and age distribution.

After conducting approximately a year and a half of improvement work under the terms of the MOU, on December 4, 2014 Sea Delight, WWF CTNI and the Sub-Department of Capture Fisheries and Resource Protection (DECAFIREP) of Binh Thuan Province met to officially close the BFPI and begin exploration of a possible full FIP for the fishery. In the meantime, all BFPI related activities would be ceased with the exception of a EU-based logbook data collection program pertaining to 5% of the vessels. Longer-term improvement goals for the La Gi deepwater handline fishery include a MSC pre-assessment and MSC certification. While a MSC pre-assessment has not yet been conducted, likely areas for fishery improvement may include:

1. Governance and management;
2. Institutional frameworks;
3. Research on stock status, fleet composition, harvest strategies, bycatch; and
4. Regulatory compliance.

Sea Delight's Membership and Contribution: Sea Delight, LLC engages its supply chain in improvement activities specifically for handline caught snapper and grouper from the fishery based out of La Gi, Binh Thuan province, Vietnam. In 2011 Sea Delight implemented a traceability system with their supplier prior to the development of the MOU and later added additional improvement efforts in 2012 under the MOU with WWF. Sea Delight was awarded a certificate for its leadership role in implementing environmentally-responsible business practices, specifically in working with the public, private and non-governmental sectors, to help ensure the long-term health of the Coral Triangle's marine resources. This award was announced at the 3rd Coral Triangle Regional Business Forum in Bali, Indonesia last March 24-26, 2013. While Sea Delight was the

only company involved in the BFPI, other exporters also source product from the same stocks of fish and may benefit from the work that Sea Delight is conducting to improve the fishery. All Sea Delight BFPI activities for the La Gi snapper and grouper fishery are described below.

Sea Delight Activities:

1. **Observer coverage** - Sea Delight trained five Binh Thuan community members as onboard observers on June 26-27, 2013 with the first observer trip completed on August 8, 2013. Two additional observer trips were conducted on Sept 15, 2013 and Oct 3, 2013 respectively, with the 3rd trip cut short due to bad weather. The onboard fishery observers collected length and weight data from individual snapper and grouper, while complete landings data regarding the total number and weight for each species was collected upon landing.
 - a. ***BFPI Action Supported:*** The collection of these data fulfills the MOU activity of collecting information on fishing grounds and descriptive characteristics of fishing trips, informing the creation of catch profiles. *See Page 1 for reference.*
 - b. ***Importance:*** Catch profiles provide data and descriptive information needed to help establish a fishery baseline to guide fishery improvements.

2. **Scientific Data Collection** – Processor quality control technicians were trained on July 5-6, 2013 to begin the collection of sex and state of sexual maturity data from a subset of the total catch. This activity successfully determined the data collection methodology and protocol used in the activity would be a viable option for future management activities.
 - a. ***BFPI Action Supported:*** The collection of these data fulfills the MOU activity of collecting stock information and collecting biological samples from fish reproductive organs.
 - b. ***Importance:*** Biological data from catch provides information on the stock status and age distribution that is necessary for effective management.

3. **Traceability** – In June 2011 Sea Delight implemented the Trace Register traceability system with their supplier in Vietnam to trace products from this fishery through the supply chain - from vessel to market - through the use of tail tags. Additional traceability efforts were conducted in 2013 to create a process for connecting data from vessel catch logbooks to the data collection logbooks used by the processor for use in future management efforts.
 - a. ***BFPI Action Supported:*** Although not included in Sea Delight’s MOU with WWF, traceability is a mandatory component of MSC certification.
 - b. ***Importance:*** The traceability of products helps ensure that Sea Delight is credible to its customers, that BFPI products remain within Sea Delight’s supply chain, and that the benefits from improvements accrue to the fishermen that implement them.

4. **Government Meetings** - In June 2012 Sea Delight representatives met with local officials from the Department of Capture Fisheries and Resource Protection (DECAFIREP) in Binh Thuan to plan stakeholder meetings and social surveys to ascertain the economic and educational status of handline fisher families in Binh Thuan. Provincial government representatives later completed the surveys and the results will be used in guiding fishing community improvement efforts.
 - a. ***BFPI Action Supported:*** Although not included in Sea Delight’s MOU with WWF, Sea Delight’s work with government representatives strengthens the working relationship between the two entities.

- b. **Importance:** The goal of the BFPI is to move the fishery towards becoming a credible FIP, which will require continued cooperation with the government. It is essential that Sea Delight develop a harmonious working relationship with government officials prior to initiating a FIP.

5. **Stakeholder meetings** - On June 18-20, 2012 Sea Delight representatives attended the second Coral Triangle Fishers Forum alongside Vietnamese longline fishermen and national government representatives. The Forum focused on illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing and the use of traceability measures to combat this issue. Sea Delight presented important lessons learned from their work in Indonesia's regional snapper and grouper FIP to the attendees.

- a. **BFPI Action Supported:** Although not included in Sea Delight's MOU with WWF, participation in stakeholder meetings can lead to improved working relationships between all fishery stakeholders.
- b. **Importance:** Strengthening relationships with fishermen and government entities helps facilitate improvement work conducted as part of the BFPI. Additionally, combatting illegal fishing helps reduce market competition from fishermen not complying with fishery regulations.

Next Steps: Although no formalized tracking system was implemented for activities conducted within the BFPI, Sea Delight anticipates drafting reports summarizing all progress achieved during the BFPI activities. Additionally, Sea Delight and WWF plan to work cooperatively in mapping out Sea Delight's next steps for implementing improvement efforts, including:

1. Continue data collection with the processor;
2. Compile and analyze data;
3. Meet with Sea Delight's supplier and other fishery stakeholders to work towards an agreement on financing a MSC pre-assessment; and
4. Establish a formalized FIP for the La Gi deepwater mixed bottomfish handline fishery.