



## NEWS BITS

### Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE) Project

#### ***USAID links Iloilo City milkfish growers with leading aquaculture processor to expand market access***



(Left photo) USAID/SURGE Component 3 Lead Celso Enriquez discusses the potential benefits from accessing export markets to milkfish (bangus) growers from the Iloilo Fish Producers Association (IFPA). (Right photo) Iloilo City Agriculture Division Head Romulo Pangantihon (leftmost, foreground) and Alsons Operations Manager Jaime Montalvo (rightmost, background) meet with interested members of IFPA, which is the largest industry association of bangus growers in Iloilo.

The Iloilo City Government and USAID's Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE) Project organized a market linkage forum on July 5, 2017, to enhance local market access and productivity of milkfish (bangus) in the city and nearby towns. Alsons Group, one of the country's leading aquaculture processors, encouraged milkfish growers of the Iloilo Fish Producers Association (IFPA) to participate in its existing supply chain to various local and export markets through supply of raw materials such as freshly harvested or chilled milkfish. Alsons intends to source out milkfish raw materials such as freshly harvested or chilled milkfish from Iloilo City and nearby towns to support its processing plants in the cities of Roxas and General Santos. The company also plans to position Iloilo City as a transshipment and distribution hub for its processed milkfish product lines for key domestic and international markets. Alsons, through its Sarangani Bay brand, currently exports an average of 270 metric tons of various processed milkfish monthly to international markets, and is the biggest supplier of processed milkfish in Visayas and Mindanao. Follow through meetings will be held with IFPA member-producers in the coming weeks to finalize supply arrangements. The market linkage forum is part of the SURGE Project's efforts to enhance urban-rural connectivity between Iloilo City and nearby areas by facilitating market access between producers from rural areas and buyers or processors operating in the city.