

**INCHING THEIR WAY UP: THE SMOKED SKIPJACK TUNA (*INAGUNAN*)
PRODUCERS OF THE COASTAL COMMUNITY OF NATO,
SAGNAY, CAMARINES SUR, PHILIPPINES**

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Skipjack processing has been in operation in the village of Nato, Municipality of Sagñay, Camarines Sur, Philippines, for decades already but information concerning it is very limited. This study attempted to describe the socio-economics and marketing of smoked Skipjack tuna (or in local term called "*Inagunan*"). Specifically, it aimed to: map the *Inagunan* producers in Sagñay; describe the socio-economic characteristics of households engaged in producing *Inagunan*; describe their handling and processing practices; estimate the cost and benefit of processing *Inagunan*; identify problems encountered by *Inagunan* producers in processing; describe marketing activities related to *Inagunan*; and recommend ways to enhance its processing and profitability.

This study adopted quantitative and qualitative approaches employing face-to-face interview and focus group discussions, key informant interviews, photo documentations and literature review as data gathering techniques, respectively. Data from the face-to-face interviews were encoded and processed using excel. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. Information from qualitative data gathering techniques was consolidated and recurring patterns and themes were identified. Results revealed 14 *Inagunan* producers located relatively close to each other, and living below the national poverty threshold. It also showed the tedious, traditional smoking fish process which was made more difficult with the absence of storage facility, safe and organized processing facility, use of scrap and improvised materials and others. Cost and benefits analysis showed that smoked Skipjack was highly profitable. Marketing which followed short distribution channel could still be expanded with increased production provided that some problems such as limited sources of income, low income, lack of capitalization and others are addressed. Recommendations to address these problems are provided.