



# Conservation at the Heart of the Philippines: MPIF Brings Shore It Up! to Marinduque and the Verde Island Passage

Shore It Up! Volunteers during the coastal clean-up at Barangay Maligaya Beach



**M**etro Pacific Investments Foundation (MPIF), the corporate social responsibility arm of Metro Pacific Investments Corporation (MPIC), officially launched its flagship environmental program, Shore It Up! (SIU), in the island province of Marinduque, with a three-day series of activities dedicated to marine protection, conservation, and community engagement.

Known as the heart-shaped island of the Philippines, Marinduque is surrounded by Tayabas Bay, Mongpong Pass, Sibuyan Sea, and Mindoro. The province is abundant in marine life, rich in culture, and steadily recognized for its strong tourism potential.

## Launch of Shore It Up! Marinduque

The weekend opened with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MPIF and the Provincial Government of Marinduque (PGOM), represented by Vice Governor Romulo Bacorro, Jr.

Under the agreement, MPIF and PGOM will implement the Marine Protection, Inspection, and Conservation (MPIC) Guardians program across key coastal barangays. A total of 12 Marine Guardians will be trained and deployed to safeguard marine ecosystems and support coastal law enforcement, equipped with training, uniforms, gear, and a monthly allowance to carry out their role.

The partnership also covers the long-term protection of mangrove ecosystems, vital as natural barriers against storm surges and as nurseries for marine life. To sustain the initiative, PGOM committed to backing the program with ordinances, monitoring systems, and coordination with government agencies.

Vice Governor Bacorro expressed gratitude for the initiative and its impact on the province, saying: "It is truly an honor for us



From left to right: Vice President of MarSu, Marvin Plata; Executive Director of Kaluppa Foundation, Rafael Seño; President of MPIF, Melody del Rosario; Vice Governor of the Province of Marinduque, Hon. Romulo Bacorro, Jr.; President of MarSu, Dr. Diosdado V. Zulueta present rashguards specially made for Shore It Up! Marinduque

To complement the activity, mWell, MPIC's digital healthcare platform, rolled-out a two-day tele-consultation program, providing free medical consultations and basic medicines to local residents, promoting both environmental sustainability and community well-being.

## Building Knowledge and Guardianship

Training sessions brought together participants from coastal municipalities to learn practical approaches to conservation. Topics and discussions included the value of biodiversity, the role of coastal protection in strengthening climate resilience, and the potential of eco-tourism in sustainable livelihoods while safeguarding natural resources. Participants were also introduced to stewardship perspec-



tives on protecting the environment as an integral part of caring for the common home.

As a long-term program in Marinduque, SIU will also begin preparing for the training of the MPIC Guardians who will be deployed across coastal barangays. These Guardians will be equipped with technical skills, program objectives, and performance targets tailored to the province's most pressing coastal challenges — laying the groundwork for stronger community-based marine protection in the future.

## Inspiring the Next Generation

The weekend also placed a spotlight on the youth through the Junior Environmental Scouts (JES) program, where more than 200 Grade 2 to 4 students took part in an interactive learning session through the story of "Ang Kwento ni Jes." The activity showed how young people can meaningfully contrib-



Dr. Wilfredo Licuanan, Principal Investigator, SHORE Center, DLS. Speaks on Biodiversity, Climate Resilience, and Eco-Tourism: Protecting Our Seas for Sustainable Futures

ute to coastal care in their own communities. Students were also given school supplies, JES workbooks, and joined a poster-making contest to encourage creativity while reinforcing lessons on environmental stewardship.

## Commitment to Marinduque

Reflecting on the launch and partnership, MPIF President Melody del Rosario emphasized the Foundation's mission of community empowerment:

"Shore It Up! has always been about enabling communities to protect the marine resources that sustain them. By launching SIU in Marinduque, we are uniting local government, experts, and communities to work hand in hand for conservation," she said.

She added, "This initiative shows how collective action can create lasting change: From coastal and underwater clean-ups to engaging the youth in raising environmental awareness. This weekend highlighted the power of collaboration in creating lasting change. With Marinduque now part of the Shore It Up! network of Marine Guardians working to protect the Verde Island Passage, we are committed to supporting the province every step of the way in safeguarding its future."



SIU Junior Environmental Scouts with Pawi the Pawikan

## A Lasting Impact

With the launch of Shore It Up! in Marinduque, MPIF and PGOM are laying a strong foundation for marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. By investing and working closely with local communities and partner organizations, the Foundation through SIU continues to advance its mission of protecting the Verde Island Passage — recognized as the global center of Marine biodiversity — while empowering Filipinos to become stewards of their shared natural heritage.



Underwater Assessment Cleanup



SIU volunteers weigh plastic bottles collected during the coastal cleanup