



PHILIPPINES

Volcanoes, Typhoons and Pandemics:

Digital Solutions Improve Disaster Response and Social Protection in the Philippines



SAVING
LIVES
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Providing food and cash assistance to populations affected by largescale shocks is an important but challenging part of disaster response and shock-responsive social protection programmes.

Identifying and documenting beneficiaries, and ensuring they receive the necessary assistance as quickly and efficiently as possible, raises major logistical hurdles. This is especially true for a disaster-prone country like the Philippines.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has responded to this challenge with [SCOPE](#), a cloud-based beneficiary identity management system used by WFP around the world. SCOPE is a flexible and powerful digital tool that enables WFP to store and manage beneficiary information and ensure its assistance is as effective as possible. Once this information is in the system, WFP is able to immediately generate payment lists and distribute assistance. SCOPE

informs WFP who the relevant beneficiaries are for a particular programme, what they are entitled to and whether they have received the correct assistance, among other services. The tool also has offline registration capabilities that allow the registration of beneficiaries in remote locations and their inclusion in assistance programmes.

In 2018, WFP was invited to work with the Philippines' Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to improve the Government's beneficiary data management and enhance its social protection delivery systems and programmes. This case study follows this collaboration from initial discussions and workshops, through to the use of SCOPE in various disaster responses in the Philippines, and to WFP's local government capacity strengthening and its ongoing role helping the Government develop its own beneficiary management system.



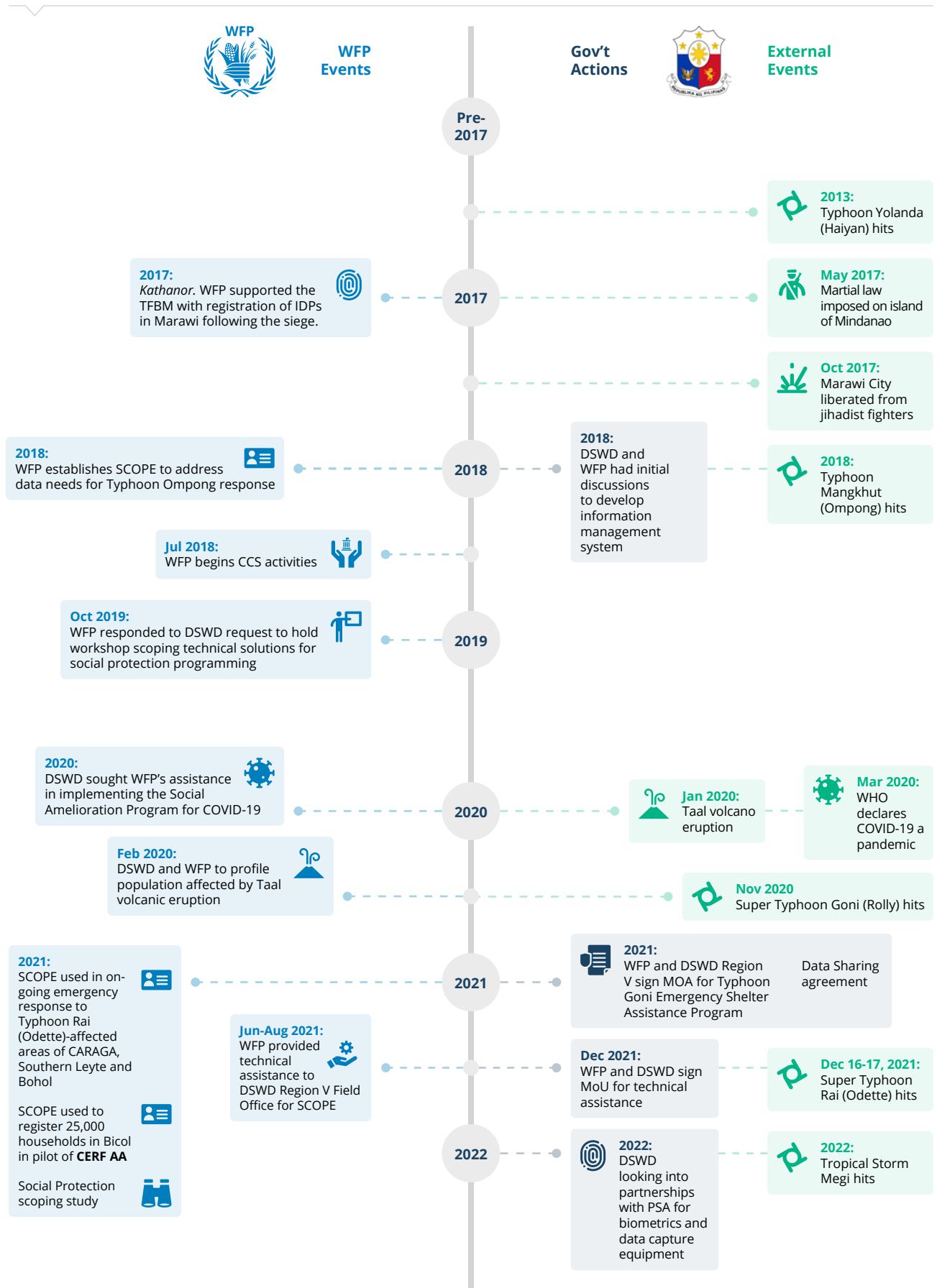
1 Using SCOPE to improve government beneficiary data management

Plans to develop an information management system in collaboration with DSWD began in 2018. In October 2019, at DSWD's request, WFP hosted a workshop to explore technical solutions to social protection programming. These consultations identified ways to enhance government capacity to address issues related to the inclusion of funding, the need for interoperable IT equipment and infrastructure, and the need for the Department's various beneficiary registration systems

to be connected. These solutions aimed to improve the ability of DSWD to register beneficiaries quickly and efficiently, especially in the aftermath of disasters.

Following these discussions, DSWD studied SCOPE to enhance their own information and communication systems and to improve their beneficiary management systems to ensure shock responsiveness.

Figure 1: Timeline of WFP's digital advisory and solution services to the Philippines Department of Social Welfare and Development (2017-2022).





2 SCOPE to the rescue

WFP had first used SCOPE in the Philippines in 2018, in response to the arrival of [Typhoon Mangkhut](#) in September that year. The [eruption of Taal Volcano](#) in January 2020, and the resulting displacement of thousands of families from the surrounding area, provided another urgent opportunity for WFP to demonstrate the use of SCOPE in the field. In February that year, WFP was asked by DSWD to profile the affected population. Profiling began in March 2020 but had to be postponed after only two weeks due to the Luzon-wide quarantine triggered by the COVID-19 cases reported by the Department of Health.

As the pandemic resulted in widespread and long-lasting social restrictions in the Philippines, the Government launched a [Social Amelioration Program for COVID-19](#) to respond to the social and economic impacts of the disease. In 2020, DSWD sought WFP's technical assistance

in implementing this programme, the largest of its kind in the country's history.

WFP also used SCOPE in several emergency operations to register and distribute food and cash assistance to affected households. From late 2020 to early 2021 it was employed to provide cash assistance to victims of typhoons Goni and Vamco. Following the arrival of Typhoon Rai in December 2021, WFP uploaded thousands of profiles to SCOPE and helped deliver food and cash assistance to more than 330,000 beneficiaries in the provinces of Southern Leyte and Bohol as well as the Caraga Administrative Region. SCOPE has also been used to pre-register and enhance data for 45,000 households, representing 225,000 people, in Bicol and Eastern Visayas, allowing them to receive WFP assistance in advance of forecasted category 3, 4 or 5 typhoons.

Figure 2: SCOPE by the numbers.





3 From national response to local capacity strengthening

In addition to assisting emergency response operations, the ultimate aim of this collaboration between DSWD and WFP has been to improve the Government's beneficiary data management and strengthen its capacity to deliver shock-responsive social protection programmes. This is in line with the Philippine Development Plan (2023–2028), which aims to make the country's social protection systems more efficient through improved targeting and digitalized processes that respond more quickly to the needs of its vulnerable citizens. As part of this capacity strengthening, in 2020–2021 SCOPE was directly coordinated and implemented in Bicol through the DSWD regional office. During this time, the profiles of 49,000 Emergency Shelter Assistance beneficiary families in Bicol were imported into SCOPE, of which 7,500 profiles were eventually enhanced. WFP also trained approximately 300 DSWD staff and local government employees in Bicol to use SCOPE to carry out data enhancement of the region's Emergency Shelter Assistance beneficiary database.

Further technical assistance was provided in December 2021, when DSWD and WFP signed a memorandum of agreement marking the resumption of a partnership for WFP to provide technical assistance to DSWD. Among other goals, this partnership aims to strengthen the following with DSWD:



These are needed to support the timely registration of beneficiaries and delivery of assistance during a disaster.



4 SCOPE inspires a national beneficiary database for the Philippines

Based on the technical assistance it has received through its collaboration with WFP, DSWD is now developing its own nationally coordinated beneficiary database, similar to SCOPE, specifically for disaster response. Data that has been collected in SCOPE since 2018 will be migrated to this new, in-house system once data sharing conditions are established. Ownership of this data will similarly be transferred from WFP to DSWD after data sharing agreement is signed.

Challenges remain in ensuring that the Philippines continues to improve its disaster response and shock-responsive social protection programmes. The long-term sustainability of the DSWD's in-house beneficiary management system is contingent on IT equipment and related infrastructure as well as predictable funding. Recognizing these limitations, together with lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippine Development Plan (2023–2028) includes investments in early warning systems, efficient social protection programmes, effective resilience-building strategies, research and development, digital technology and innovation as part of the country's plan for economic transformation.



WFP will continue to support DSWD to achieve its goal through technical assistance at the national and local level to improve systematic data management, including collection and verification. A re-scoping exercise between the Government and WFP – building on the findings of a [2021 social protection scoping exercise](#) – will help identify capacity gaps, as well as assess more generally the Philippines' needs for digital solutions and services from WFP.

This case study was developed under the 2022 Decentralised Evaluation on Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) Activities in the Philippines. To access the full report [click here](#) or contact wfp.philippines@wfp.org