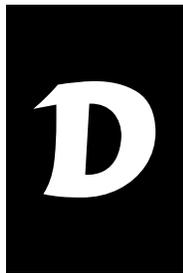


# **Chapter 1**

## ***INTRODUCTION***

### **BACKGROUND**



Development of coastal areas is increasing all over the world, and this is no less true in the Philippines. With this development, there is increased pressure on marine resources and habitats. Many areas in the Philippines are struggling with the simultaneous needs for development and protection of their resources. This increasing pressure on the marine environment requires that effective and sustainable management be adopted in order to preserve and restore the habitats and resources for current and future generations.

The province of Negros Oriental, located in central Philippines, is endowed with vast marine resources that now, due to various pressures, are overexploited. The impact of such overexploitation is extensive in the coastal area. Most families there depend upon fisheries for their livelihood and a greater number supplement their diet with protein from the catch of part-time fishing or the gleaning of shallows at low tide. In addition, siltation, lack of wastewater treatment facilities and destructive fishing methods are degrading the marine habitats which support the marine resources.

In an effort to stem the tide of resource overexploitation and habitat destruction, Negros Oriental, with the help of the Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP), is implementing integrated coastal management (ICM). Through the ICM process, community members, local government units (LGUs), resource users, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and others participate in a process that will address these problems and improve conditions in the coastal area. Negros Oriental has a long history of involvement in CRM and therefore provides a strong foundation from which to begin the ICM process, which is a more comprehensive approach to CRM.

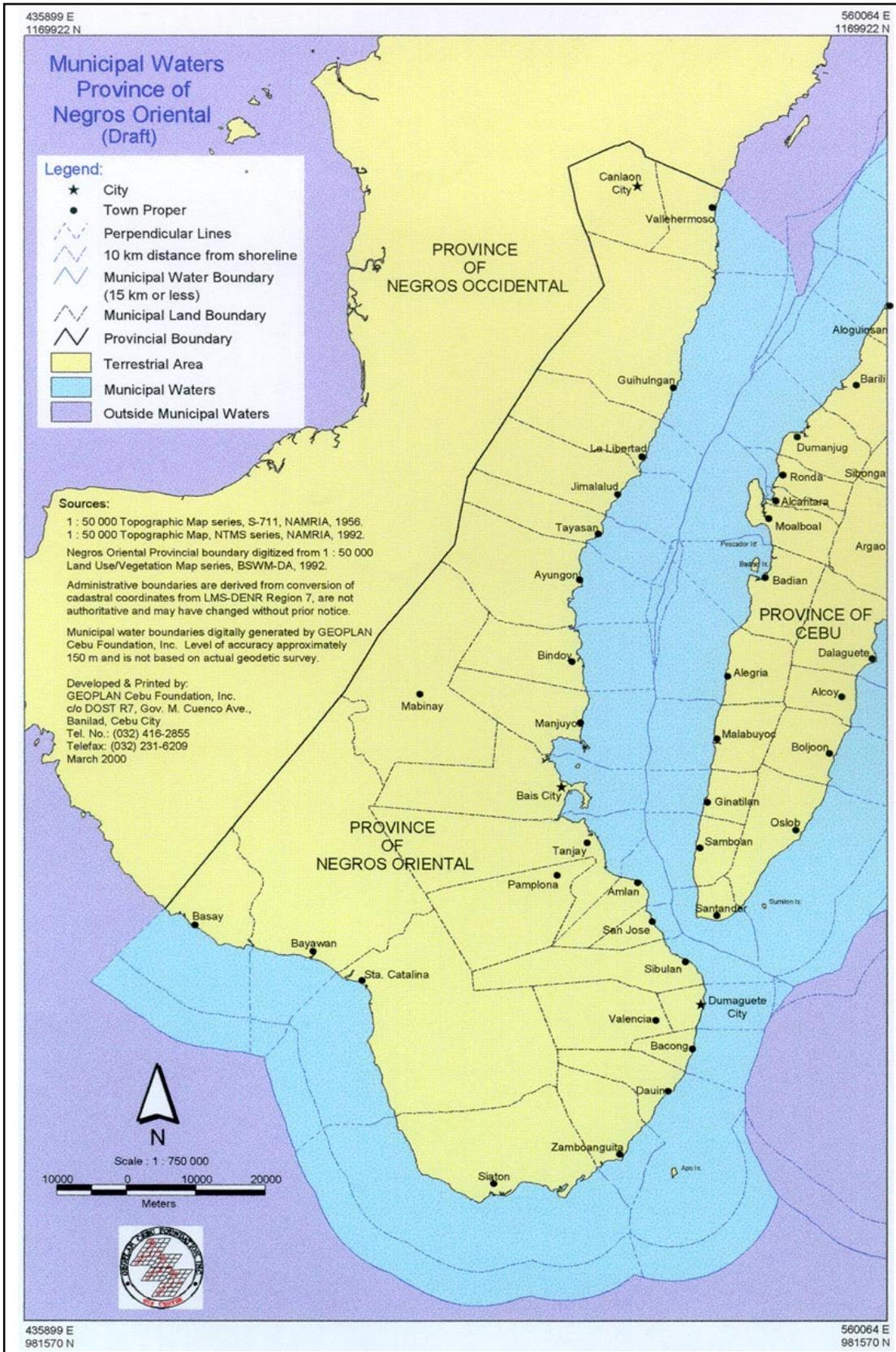


Figure 1.1. Municipal water boundaries of Negros Oriental (unofficial map).

The profile area in Negros Oriental covers 6 coastal municipalities and 3 cities, and 72 coastal *barangays*, including 3 islands. These 6 municipalities and 3 cities have a total land area of 1,592.5 km<sup>2</sup> and the 72 coastal *barangays* have a total population of 139,750 (NSO 1995). The profile area coastline covers 162 km. The northernmost municipality in the profile area is Manjuyod and the southernmost municipality is Siaton (Figure 1.1).

The municipality of Siaton was added to the profile area as an expansion site. It has a total area of 335.4 km<sup>2</sup> and covers a coastline of 51 km. The municipality comprises 14 coastal *barangays* with a population of 39,858 (NSO 1995).

### SUMMARY OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Community-based organizations, LGUs and community members themselves have identified many environmental issues and concerns that face the province of Negros Oriental. These prevailing issues and problems can be grouped into 3 categories: environmental, socioeconomic, and institutional and legal. The most pressing issues affecting the coastal area are:

- habitat destruction and degradation of coastal environment;
- depletion of resources and overfishing;
- destructive and illegal fishing practices;
- population pressure;
- lack of waste disposal facilities and pollution problems; and
- lack of planning and weakness in institutional capacities.

### OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROFILE

This profile is an initial step in identifying different management issues and concerns to be addressed by the local communities, planners, and government agencies. This profile contains physical, geographical, biological, and socioeconomic characteristics of the profile area which provide a common starting point for management planning and establish baseline data for subsequent monitoring. The overall aim is to promote an integrated CRM for Negros Oriental that centers on sustainable resource use and management of the coastal resources.

The specific objectives are to:

- provide a source of information on the ecosystems, resources, and socioeconomic conditions of the area for planners, managers, researchers, communities, and government agencies;
- provide baseline data for subsequent monitoring and assessment, and identify critical gaps in data and information which may have to be filled through new research;
- identify key resource management issues, constraints, and opportunities for management and development of coastal resources; and

- provide a management tool for decision-making and implementation of integrated and community-based CRM.

The information used and compiled in this profile is based on both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data come from municipal and provincial profiles, reports, maps, government files, and research data. Primary data sources include firsthand interviews and surveys with local resource users, government units, and community members.