

Enabling Local Government Units to Exercise Their Regulatory Powers for Coastal Management

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Current and past coastal area management programs in the Philippines have pointed out that institutional weaknesses and unclear jurisdictional mandates are major problems in sustainable coastal resource management (CRM). The issue stems from the open access policy in Philippine fisheries and the sectoral and largely fragmented approaches of government agencies in addressing cross-cutting issues in sustainable development of the coastal area.

Institutional reform, mainly geared towards local autonomy over the management of coastal resources, started through the passage of the Local Government Code. Subsequently, the implementation of the Code should result in streamlining of development agency participation in local resources management programs which should now be jurisdictionally “owned” and holistically orchestrated by the local governments. Indeed, through the formulation and implementation of an integrated coastal resource management plan, a coastal municipality can take the lead role in improving national government agency (NGA) coordination and sharing in the conduct of sectoral work on resource management. In this case, a Local Government Unit (LGU) would serve like a conductor that cues in various musicians with his baton. Nevertheless, because the local

government code is not “self-operating”, an LGU needs to establish a strong legal framework from which local ordinances on resource management can be effectively legislated.

Unfortunately, experiences from past CRM projects revealed that majority of LGUs are unaware of their roles in CRM as much as they are about the roles of government institutions that have been tasked to assist them. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that jurisdictional directives and legal acts are historically issued on a sectoral focus.

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Village meeting in Palawan.

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TAMBULLI—A NEWSLETTER FOR COASTAL MANAGEMENT PRACTITIONERS, is taking off. Our first issue received many supportive reviews and we have been inundated with requests for subscription. Most respondents have asked for more of the same which indicates you liked our first issue. In our efforts to bring a new focus and refreshing ideas to coastal management, you have an action packed and informative issue at hand.

In our first issue, you read about the declining status of coastal environments in the Philippines and gained some insights learned from past projects. Although lessons from the past are important guides, we must also be forward looking and creative in our thinking to solve the problems we are facing. CRMP would like to use this column to offer suggestions about how we might be more active in switching to a new paradigm for coastal management for the Philippines.

Several articles in this issue raise the question about how to encourage stewardship at the local level for managing resources. This question arises in relation to scale of fishing operations (small scale vs. commercial) and the use of space within municipal waters as discussed by Abad in the Fisheries Sector Program and McManus in Bolinao. Also, the review of laws by Francisco highlights the need for clarity in responsibility so that local resource managers can be effective. In our view:

- We should not wait any longer to ban commercial fishing boats from municipal waters (with a few exceptions) so that there is a clear incentive for LGUs to manage their own fishery resources; and,
- We should clarify national policies to minimize confusion (thinking globally) while supporting local field actions which are well articulated to make the difference in resource management (acting locally).

On a recent trip to Tubbataha Reefs (see page 26) with national media persons, it became obvious that more people should be encouraged to visit the reef so that appreciation and awareness of such a spectacular resource will be enhanced. This will certainly, in the long term, contribute to the protection of the park. Then, just recently, we heard a rumor that the Department of Tourism was thinking of banning all tourists from visiting Tubbataha. What is the logic to this proposed ban, if it is true, given that:

- Most of the damage to the reef at Tubbataha has been inflicted by destructive fishing methods. It is well known that the illegal fishers stay away from Tubbataha during the tourism season of March through May;
- The only sustainable source of revenue for managing the park is from tourism which is being shown to be a viable financing mechanism in many such parks around the world; and,

editorial

- The expense to protect these remote reefs is beyond what the national government can afford in the long term. Almost all financial assistance, to date, for the park has been from private (some tourism) sources.

Thus, in our planning with an eye for using sustainable mechanisms, why not let the international and national visitors to the park pay fees which will help defray the cost of park management. Some of the strongest supporters of coral reef conservation in the country and elsewhere are among this group.

This is what we mean by being forward looking in setting policies for coastal management in the Philippines which will achieve results. We need to use economic tools and allow private industry to help us pay for the cost of resource management. We must experiment with stewardship at a scale which makes a difference and is sustainable by removing the large scale fishing operations from municipal waters. We must clarify laws and policies in meaningful ways so that responsible agencies and individuals have a clear mandate to perform their duties.

- These opinions may raise some questions. If so, we would love to hear from you, our readers, and get your ideas. The success of the newsletter and network depends solely upon your participation. As members, you can contribute by submitting:
- ✓ Substantive articles on your experiences and research.
 - ✓ Examples of leadership in coastal management activities.
 - ✓ Short news articles on your field and work projects.
 - ✓ Publication which can be made known in the newsletter.
 - ✓ Letters or comments for publication.
 - ✓ Suggestions on how to make the newsletter and network more effective.

Finally, please note that if you receive this issue of **TAMBULLI**, it does not mean you will continue to receive it without communicating with us. Please fill in the blank membership form (if you have not done so previously) to confirm your address and interest in the newsletter. This will ensure that you are current in the address database of the CRMP and that you will continue to receive the newsletter. We would also appreciate it if you would photocopy the membership form and share it with others.

Happy reading and we look forward to your contributions!

Editor

Enabling from page 1

Recognizing the interrelationships between laws and conflicting resource use practices becomes even more difficult for LGUs in the absence of relative information. In view of this, the Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP) made a compilation of all significant laws affecting CRM. It also consulted with the appropriate NGAs regarding their proper interpretation. Designed for use by local governments, the CRMP's Legal and Jurisdictional Guidebook for Coastal Resource Management in the Philippines will be an essential tool in shaping and reshaping local policies on CRM. Following are some of the more important legal and jurisdictional facts that would hopefully enable LGUs to more efficiently exercise their regulatory powers over the management of their coastal resources.

- Act 4003, enacted in 1935, already made unlawful the use of explosives and electricity in fishing, the catching of fish fry and gathering of fish eggs, and the pollution of waters by any substance deleterious to fish life. Under the same law, the establishment of closed seasons in fishing became the basic strategy for fisheries conservation (please see Box No. 1).
- In 1972, Presidential Decree (PD) No. 43, otherwise known as the Fishery Industry Development Decree, was promulgated to “accelerate the development of the fishing industry in order to achieve self-sufficiency in the supply of fish.” Accordingly, investments in fisheries were classified as pioneering ventures under the Board of Investments. Three years after PD 43, PD 704 was issued to revise and consoli-

date all laws and decrees affecting fisheries and further reiterating the State’s policy of integrated and accelerated development of the sector. In 1991, the Local Government Code expressly repealed Sections 2, 16 and 29 of PD 704. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) maintains, however, that the rest of the provisions of PD 704 which are not in conflict with the Code are still in effect and should be reflected in applicable LGU legislative agenda on fisheries management.

- Republic Act (RA) 7160 and Executive Order (EO) No. 116 effectively delimit the jurisdiction of BFAR to waters outside of the 15 km. municipal territorial boundary and to management of commercial fisheries and Fish-pond Lease Agreement (FLA) areas. Outside municipal waters,

BOX 1		
The Transformation of Fisheries Management Policies: A Comparison of Act 4003 and PD 704		
MANAGEMENT ASPECT	ACT 4003 (1932)	PD 704 (1974)
establishment of closed seasons	Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources may establish closed seasons for not more than 5 years ; applicable to whole country or parts thereof	“closed season” defined but not expressly provided ; PD 1015 (1976) revised Section 17 of PD 704 and provision for establishment of closed seasons was mentioned under commercial fishing boat license but not as detailed as that found in Act 4003
reserve fisheries and fish sanctuaries	under Act 4003, fisheries was divided into insular, municipal and reserve fisheries	under chapter V of PD 704, fish reserves and sanctuaries may be established by the Secretary upon recommendation of the BFAR Director through FAOs
prohibitive acts	use of explosives, poisonous substances, taking of fry and fish eggs, pollution of waters deleterious to fish life	renders unlawful both use and possession of explosives (as amended); use of poisonous substances; trawling in 7 or less fathoms deep; use of fine mesh nets; renders unlawful pollution of waters deleterious to fish life
protection of molluscs and sponges	provided penalties for unlawful taking of molluscs and sponges	provisions for marine molluscs and sponges were deleted
control of open access	not defined	not defined

BOX 2**Relevant Fishery Administrative Orders Still Enforceable Under the Local Government Code**

FAO No. 3	1935	regulations for the conservation of <i>dalag</i> (<i>Ophicephalus</i> sp.), <i>kanduli</i> (<i>Arius</i> sp.) and <i>banak</i> (<i>Mugil</i> sp.)
FAO No. 11	1935	rules and regulations for the protection of marine mollusca
FAO No. 24	1949	regulations governing the scientific examination of fish caught or carried by fishing boats
FAO No. 60	1960	regulations governing issuance of fishpond permits or leases on public forest lands
FAO No. 110	1973	establishing the Laguna de Bay Fish Sanctuary
FAO No. 118	1975	establishing the Taal Lake Fish Sanctuary
FAO No. 122	1977	prohibiting the use of <i>pantukos</i> (tuck seine) under certain fishing conditions
FAO No. 125	1979	rules and regulations governing conversion of ordinary fishpond permits to 25-year FLAs
FAO No. 126	1979	prohibiting importation/possession of live piranha
FAO No. 127	1980	prohibiting the use of motorized push nets to catch <i>tabios/sinarapan</i> (family Gobiidae) in Lakes Buhi and Bato
FAO No. 128	1980	establishing a fish sanctuary in Oslob, Cebu to be known as Sumilon Island Fish Sanctuary
FAO No. 129	1980	ban on the catching, selling, possession of <i>Sabalo</i> (adult milkfish)
FAO No. 144	1983	rules and regulations on commercial fishing
FAO No. 151	1986	establishing the Manila Bay Fish Sanctuary
FAO No. 152	1986	establishing the Lake Buhi Fish Sanctuary
FAO No. 153	1986	establishing the Lake Bato Fish Sanctuary
FAO No. 155	1986	regulating the use of fine mesh nets in fishing
FAO No. 156	1986	guidelines for the effective implementation of Letter of Instruction 1328
FAO No. 157	1986	rules and regulations on the gathering, taking, removing, or collecting of <i>kapis</i> of the species <i>Placuna placenta</i> (window pane shells)
FAO No. 158	1986	prohibiting the gathering, taking, collecting, selling, transporting, possession of mollusks belonging to the genera <i>Triton</i> or <i>Charonia</i> and <i>Cassia</i>
FAO No. 159	1986	suspension of FAO Nos. 107 and 107-1 prohibiting the exportation of eel fry and fingerlings
FAO No. 162	1986	rules and regulations governing issuance of permits for exportation of live mud crabs <i>Scylla serrata</i>
FAO No. 163	1986	prohibiting the operation of <i>muro-ami</i> and <i>kayakas</i> (drive-in nets) in all Philippine waters
FAO No. 164	1987	rules and regulations governing operation of <i>hulbot-hulbot</i> (Danish seine) in Philippine waters
FAO No. 168	1990	rules and regulations governing the gathering, culture, and exportation of shelled mollusks (Phylum Mollusca)
FAO No. 170	1990	prohibiting the operation of <i>sudsod</i> (scissor net) in Panguil Bay
FAO No. 173	1991	banning the exportation of <i>bangus</i> (milkfish) fingerlings
FAO No. 176	1991	establishing the Tambulig Fish Sanctuary in Zamboanga del Sur
FAO No. 177	1991	establishing the Calauag Fish Sanctuary in Quezon
FAO No. 178	1991	establishing the Capoocan Fish Sanctuary in Leyte
FAO No. 179	1991	establishing the Batbangon Fish Sanctuary in Calangawan Island, Leyte
FAO No. 180	1991	establishing the Barugo Fish Sanctuary in Jalaba Point, Barugo, Leyte
FAO No. 181	1991	establishing the Perez Fish Sanctuary in Perez, Quezon
FAO No. 182	1991	establishing the Loculan Shoal Fish Sanctuary/Marine Reserve in Clarin, Misamis Occidental
FAO No. 184	1992	guidelines on the experimental collection of precious and semi-precious corals
FAO No. 185	1993	ban on the taking or catching, selling, purchasing, possessing, transporting and exporting of dolphins
FAO No. 188	1993	regulations governing the operation of commercial fishing boats using tuna purse seine nets
FAO No. 189	1994	prohibiting the importation of live shrimp and prawn of all stages
FAO No. 190	1994	regulations governing <i>pa-aling</i> (modified <i>muro-ami</i>) fishing operation in Philippine waters

there are at least two other cabinet departments which have CRM in their mandates, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), by virtue of EO 292, and the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Marine and Aquatic Research and Development (PCMARD) through EO 128.

Both the Department of Agriculture (DA) and DENR are involved in the establishment of marine protected areas, community organizing and coastal rehabilitation. PCMARD is involved in similar activities. The seemingly plural efforts has now been sequestered under the local government code; apart from

devolving all such functions to the LGUs, Section 1-c of the Code requires all NGAs to consult and seek approval of an LGU before any project can be implemented within its jurisdiction. A typical application of this provision is that an LGU can now establish a marine reserve or sanctuary within its territorial waters without

seeking approval from the DA Secretary. On the other hand, if the BFAR or the DENR wants to establish a protected area in municipal waters, it has to seek approval of the concerned local government.

- The Secretary of Agriculture, through the recommendation of the Director of BFAR, has issued some 190 Fisheries Administrative Orders (FAO) ever since it acquired the jurisdictional authority to promulgate administrative orders in 1935. These FAOs involved mostly gear regulation, protective measures for certain species of fish and marine mammals, and the establishment of closed seasons, reserves and sanctuaries for certain species of fish or for specified fishing grounds. With the passage of the Local Government Code, BFAR states that only 50 of these FAOs subsist at present (the more relevant FAOs still enforceable in spite of the passage of the Local Government Code is presented in Box No. 2). Parallel laws, mostly for the establishment of protected areas exist through various Presidential Proclamations and more recently, through the DENR's National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS). These laws remain substantive and cannot be contradicted by local ordinances. For example, in issuing licenses for the harvesting of capiz shells, an LGU should impose the restrictions provided for in FAO 157 on the licensee's permit. In permitting the operation of set nets, the license should conform to the restrictions imposed by FAO 155 on the use of fine meshed nets.
- Accordingly, since it is now the function of the local governments to enforce fishery laws, it becomes incumbent that the LGU's law enforcement efforts

shall encompass both local ordinances, subsisting FAOs, and related DENR orders.

Policy directives and instruments emanating from the DENR mainly deal with mangrove management, coastal land use and the management of protected areas under the NIPAS. These come in the form of DENR Administrative Orders (DAO) which are essentially the implementing rules for PD 705 (Forestry Code) and the Philippine Environment Code. Some of the more relevant orders which are often used to address many issues on mangroves and coastal land uses are:

- DAO 15 (1990) contain the bulk of administrative orders about mangrove resources management. Among others, it issued a moratorium on the issuance of timber licenses covering areas outside FLAs; banned the cutting of trees within FLA areas; and prohibited further conversion of thickly vegetated mangrove areas into other land uses.
- DAO 85 (1990) is a typical application of the "polluter pays principle" as it imposes fees on mine tailings and wastes to compensate for damage to lands, agricultural crops, forest products, marine life, aquatic resources and the destruction of infrastructure which are privately owned. The principal legislative acts that broadly regulate the mining industry are RA 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and RA 7076 which created a small-scale mining program.
- The NIPAS which is being administered by the DENR-Parks and Wildlife Bureau was promulgated after RA 7160 and has not been superseded by the provisions of the latter law. In this regard, protected seascapes declared under NIPAS will continue to be under the jurisdiction of the DENR and role of the LGUs in

cases where the protected areas are located within a local government territory is limited to their representation in the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB).

The Philippine Environmental Impact Assessment system (EIA) was designed to serve as a forward-planning and precautionary mechanism in the implementation of development projects in any given area. The EIA was initiated through PD 1586 in 1978. Its implementing guidelines are found in DAO 21, s.1992 and a programmatic approach to EIA compliance was introduced through DAO 11, s. 1994. Under the system, projects requiring EIAs are classified as either environmentally critical or located in an environmentally critical area. The following are classified as environmentally critical projects:

- heavy industries; including non-ferrous metal industries, iron and steel mills, petroleum and petrochemical industries, smelting plants;
- resource extractive industries; including major mining and quarrying projects, forestry-based products (including extraction of mangrove products), fishpond development projects;
- infrastructure projects; including major dams, power plants, reclamation projects, major roads and bridges.

The following are classified as environmentally critical areas:

- all areas declared by laws as national parks, watershed reserves, wildlife reserves and sanctuaries;
- areas set aside for aesthetic purposes or as potential tourism areas;
- areas which constitute the habitat of any endangered species of flora and fauna;
- areas of unique historical, archeological or scientific interests;
- areas which are traditionally occupied by cultural minorities or indigenous tribes;
- areas frequently visited by and/or are hard-hit by natural calamities;

- areas with critical slopes or are classified as prime agricultural lands;
- recharged areas of aquifers;
- water bodies, mangrove areas, coral reefs.

All projects, whether government initiated or privately owned, that are classified either as environmentally critical or are to be located in an environmentally critical area shall be subjected to the EIA system.

The list of laws applicable to CRM are numerous and varied. There may be some ambiguities on some aspects but on the whole, they are potent tools for LGUs in the exercise of regulatory powers either directly or through the enactment of complementary ordinances. In short, there is at present, a sufficient policy framework for CRM legislation at the local level. Ironically, if we are to gauge from the present state of the fishery resources whether such a policy framework has been utilized successfully to sustain optimum productivity, there seems to be enough evidence that some very serious deficiencies exist either in the process of policy formulation or implementation, or both. In fact, the fisheries of the country has continued to lose its economic integrity, particularly during the last two decades. The difficult task of arresting degradation is the duty of LGUs as they are closest to resource use activities.

Many CRM practitioners argue, quite logically, that the sustainable management of the country's fisheries cannot be effectively addressed until the open access regime is reversed. The open access policy in both municipal and commercial fisheries was inherently applied in Act 4003 and continued to be the basic instrument for licensing of fishing effort in PD 704. In the Local Government Code, open access to municipal waters has not

been expressly inhibited but by invoking preferential use rights for local fishermen, the Code essentially promotes a limited entry regime. The transformation of open access fisheries is being advanced actively under the CRMP where the concept of maximum sustainable yield is being promoted as the basis for fishing effort regulation in numerous fishing grounds in the country. The approaches to this shift in management is a complex process, in the face of the pervasive poverty in coastal communities and the lack of alternative sources of income for small fishermen who ironically continue to grow in number despite decreasing returns. Nevertheless, there appears to be little alternative to the option of changing the open access fishery into one that is controlled and managed according to sustainable yields. And while there is no provision in PD 704 that clearly supports this management strategy, the autonomy granted to LGUs to manage their municipal territorial waters under the Local Government Code has been considered a sufficient legal instrument to back up such a regime. Moreover, controlled-entry fisheries is espoused in the various bills now pending in both legislative houses of the country, although they vary in the scope and degree of effort regulation.

Experience points out that the mere promulgation of policies and other legal instruments to control resource use practices cannot readily lead to sustainable management of fishery resources unless these are combined with an equally effective institutional enforcement mechanism and popular education to shore up acceptance. In the context of Philippine local governments, many other socio-political variables affect policy formulation and moreso, implementation. The complexity of these variables, their effect on the legal framework for CRM, and the seeming lack of jurisdictional

arrangements to carry out policy measures, presents a formidable task under CRMP's policy component. Although flaws in the process exist, there is a compelling need to find appropriate means to improve the policy climate.

CRMP began its policy related activities in November 1996 by collecting all laws relevant to coastal resources. Through workshops and technical working groups, laws were dissected to determine deficiencies and incongruities, either in terms of jurisdictional mandates or differences in legal interpretations. In less than three months, a substantial headway has been made in coming up with a set of jurisdictional guidelines for CRM that can be universally and confidently used by all practitioners of coastal resource management. CRMP recognizes, however, that the ultimate key to shoring up support to rules and regulations and ensuring compliance in the long run is CRM education. It is because of this important factor that the CRMP's policy component is building up its jurisdictional and legal approaches to CRM implementation in tandem with the project's information and education component.

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Community Organizing in the Fisheries Sector Program: Lessons Learned

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The Fisheries Sector Program (FSP), administered by the Department of Agriculture (DA) between 1990 and 1996 with loan funds from the Asian Development Bank, aimed to solve five most pressing problems of the fisheries sector in the Philippines, namely: (1) resource depletion in the coastal zone; (2) widespread environmental damage; (3) poverty among the fisherfolk; (4) low productivity of aquaculture; and (5) limited utilization of offshore and exclusive economic zone waters by Philippine commercial fishers. In line with this, one of its components, Coastal Resources Management (CRM), had the following socio-economic and environmental objectives: (1) alleviation of poverty in the coastal communities, particularly among sustenance fishers; (2) protection of the coastal environment; (3) rehabilitation of destroyed habitats; (3) regeneration of depleted resources; and (4) sustainable management of the coastal resources.

To support the FSP's CRM component, non-government organizations (NGO) such as the Economic Development Foundation (EDF) have been contracted by the DA. Their role was detailed in stated objectives, among which were: to assist the fishing communities and local government to develop the capability to plan and implement CRM that will rehabilitate the coastal fisheries; to conduct public education on CRM; to organize, train and institutionalize *barangay*

(village) and municipal CRM committees; and to organize and train fisherfolk cooperatives.

EDF was contracted between January 1993 and September 1997 to organize such committees and cooperatives in a total of 181 coastal barangays in 3 out of the 12 FSP-covered bays, Ormoc, San Pedro and Sogod Bays.

The **Barangay CRM Committee** (BCRMC) formulates a CRM plan based on the community profile. The barangay coastal resource profile was prepared by a research committee which consisted mainly of EDF's community development worker and barangay volunteer workers. After obtaining relevant data from secondary sources, surveys (socio-economic surveys of fishers, interviews of key barangay personnel and focus group interviews) were conducted to obtain primary data. Data were compiled, analyzed and presented to the barangay for validation. The coastal profile obtained through this process was used in the formulation of the CRM plan.

Included in the plan are suitable barangay and municipal ordinances (e.g., ban on various destructive fishing methods as well as the designation and protection of fish sanctuaries and marine reserves where appropriate) for promulgation by respective municipal councils and resource conservation and rehabilitation projects as recommendations to the Local

Government Units (LGU) for the protection and sustainable management of coastal resources. For habitat rehabilitation, the plan promotes mangrove reforestation and/or establishment of artificial reefs. The implementation of the plan is also monitored and evaluated by the BCRMC.

To become managers of coastal resources, fisherfolk in each barangay were guided to form an association which was eventually registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) as a **cooperative**. The process began with the formation of a core group which recruited more members and initiated the formulation of the association's articles of cooperation and by-laws. The expanded membership ratified the articles and by-laws and elected officers who, with EDF's assistance, prepared and submitted to CDA the required registration papers.

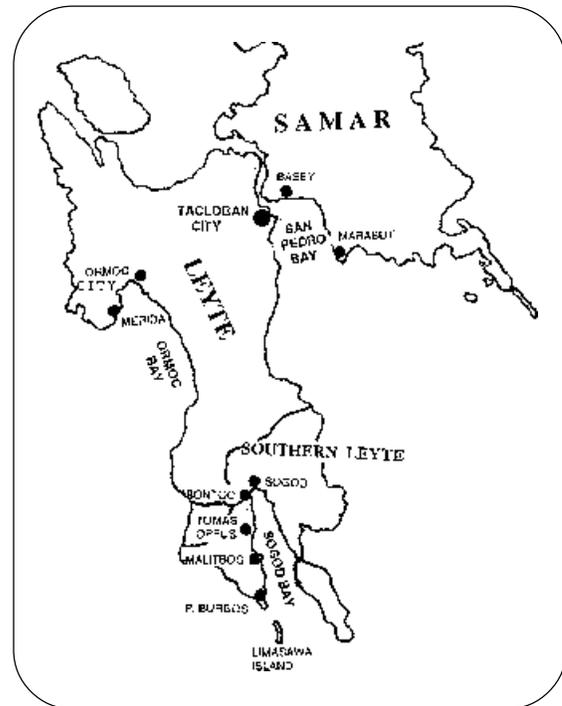
Training on the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for cooperative management included leadership, team-building and organizational skills; participatory development planning; simplified financial and accounting systems; project feasibility studies; and problem solving and decision making. Training in fisheries-related laws and ordinances and in the knowledge and skills for managing fish sanctuaries, mangroves and artificial reefs was also provided.

Self-help projects financed from the members' contributed funds were initiated by each association so members could experience cooperative benefits. Most barangay associations opted to establish a cooperative store. These stores provided on-the-job training and increased the fisherfolk's net incomes by reducing their expenditures on consumer items which they purchased from commercial centers at volume

discounts. Alternative livelihood projects were encouraged by the new cooperatives, partly to alleviate poverty and partly to relieve the fishing pressure on the bay.

Water-based projects were explored since research showed that fishers had practically no agricultural land. Small-scale aquaculture projects made affordable to the low-income fisherfolk were designed, e.g., seaweed farming, fish culture, crab fattening in small cages and oyster and mussel culture. Where a project was found suitable, the concerned fisherfolk association, with financing from its own members or EDF, started a demonstration farm to test the project's technical feasibility. Most project types were found to be technically feasible and their produce marketable. The main problem however, was financing. Since the fisherfolk had a hard time raising even a little capital needed for registering their association with CDA, much less could they raise sufficient funds to put into livelihood projects of a scale larger than for demonstration. They also could not avail of bank loans which required collateral.

Land-based livelihood projects were also considered by the various cooperatives organized under EDF's guidance. Among the small projects selected were: hog fattening, poultry broiler or egg production, cattle fattening, vegetable production, rice trading, rice mill, and motorized sea or land transportation. The fisherfolk had difficulty obtaining bank loans for these projects as well.



EDF PROJECT SITES IN REGION VIII.

Lessons Learned

In the course of EDF's technical assistance in the three Eastern Visayas bays, the above objectives and outputs were generally achieved. The lessons learned in this development process follow:

1 A CRM committee at the barangay level is, indeed, useful.

A CRM committee was organized in each barangay, consisting of two Barangay Development Council members and three fisherfolk representatives. Each committee was responsible for formulating a CRM plan for its barangay.

Organized before Executive Order No. 240 on 28 April 1995, the CRM committees could have easily evolved into the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Councils (FARMCs). The FARMCs—at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of whose regular members should be local

municipal fisherfolk—were to be created, “in all barangays, municipalities and cities abutting municipal waters” to “prepare and recommend fisheries and aquatic resources management policies and plans for integration into the Local Development Plan.” They can also recommend “guidelines on the development and implementation of projects, and issuance of permits and licenses for the appropriate use of fisheries and aquatic resources” to the local government units. The FARMC members shall also “be deputized as fish wardens, and environment and natural resources officers.” These functions are similar to those of the CRM committees.

A public information and education campaign on the FSP-CRM preceded the committees’ establishment. However, this campaign continued throughout EDF’s contract period through dialogues with community members, posters, billboards, T-shirt printing and song composition contests.

2 There is a need to form fisherfolk cooperatives and initiate livelihood projects.

The cooperative, organized by the fisherfolk, addresses the objectives of sustainable resource management and of poverty alleviation. A well-organized cooperative provides strong advocacy for fisheries ordinances and monitors their implementation. It can also develop livelihood projects to increase the net income of its members as well as reduce the fishing effort on the already depleted bays.

To learn cooperative management, each cooperative is encouraged to start a self-help project, often a store. EDF guided each cooperative to identify and

study sources of credit for an alternative livelihood project so that the fisherfolk would not rely solely on fish capture as a source of income. These barangay-level cooperatives were then assisted to form a municipal federation to further strengthen and unify them.

3 Getting the right personnel is important.

Only the best available in the region were hired as community development workers and administrative staff. They underwent formal training as well as constant supervision and on-the-job coaching in the various aspects of organizing and training communities for CRM.

4 There is a need for networking with the LGUs.

EDF’s community organizing strategy supports cooperative relations with LGUs. The project management team, when starting in a locality, pays courtesy calls to municipal mayors, barangay captains and respective councilors to inform them of the project and seek their support. The team periodically gives them updates on accomplishments. New cooperatives are also linked with their respective LGUs to build long term relationships between them to ensure sustainability of institutional support.

5 Delayed payments cause adverse impacts.

EDF submitted reports on schedule, but it took the DA several months to process payments. This resulted in the postponement of training activities and low morale, to the extent of resignation of trained staff in several cases.

6 The seeming inflexibility of lending policies may be a hindrance to project implementation.

A case in point was the hog fattening project of the Multi-purpose Development Cooperative in Padre Burgos (Southern Leyte). The cooperative applied for a loan at the Land Bank. Although, the loan amount needed—with the purchase price of piglets discounted at P1,500 per head and DA veterinary services provided free—had been evaluated, approved and endorsed by the Field Implementing Team as P2,500 per head, the Land Bank would not budge from its loan ceiling of only P2,000 per head. The cooperative therefore, opted not to avail of the loan.

Twenty-six other fisherfolk cooperatives from Basey and Marabut (Samar) and Merida (Leyte) submitted feasibility studies to the Land Bank, but as yet, have not received Land Bank’s approval nor comments.

Loan ceilings determined for particular types of projects may not be applicable for certain areas or at a later time if inflation occurs. Yet, the Land Bank applies them universally despite well-researched feasibility studies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Community organizing is a very effective strategy towards continued pursuit of project objectives and the sustainability of project effects. Towards this end in the FSP-CRM project, EDF endorses the organization of the Barangay CRM Councils and the fisherfolk cooperatives.

The *BCRMCs* (or *FARMCs*) were largely instrumental in assuring

the success of the FSP-CRM project as it focused on the responsibility of “thinking CRM” for a barangay, city or municipality. Although, it has no legislative nor executive authority, a BCRMC is a locality’s think-tank, spark-plug as well as eyes-and-ears for CRM. It thinks of barangay or municipal ordinances to be recommended for the protection of coastal resources as well as conceives of projects for the rehabilitation of damaged or destroyed resources. It monitors compliance with ordinances as well as the implementation of projects. It is the forerunner or nucleus of the FARMC.

Fisherfolk cooperatives are a very good medium for making resource managers out of resource users. Cooperatives mobilize primary users to manage the coastal resources. Made aware of the ill effects of destructive fishing methods, for instance, fishers renounce the use of such methods as well as prevent others from using them. Fishers also try to rehabilitate fish habitats through the reforestation of mangrove areas and the installation of artificial reefs.

The LGUs’ support is essential. During the NGO contract period, the LGU can either hinder achieving project objectives or give it full-hearted support. With support, the project can achieve results that are beyond expectations. More importantly, the LGU can sustain the positive impacts of the project.

Because of the importance of continued coordination with and support by the LGU, both at the barangay and municipal levels, EDF recently had an end-of-project

evaluation after about 30 months of community organizing in 38 coastal barangays of 4 municipalities. Representatives, comprised mostly of municipal committee chairpersons for agriculture and cooperatives of the LGUs and the chairperson of the “federation” of cooperatives from each of the municipality, participated at an evaluation workshop.



Checking the growth of groupers (Lapulapu) (Marabut, Samar, December 1994).

At the workshop, each municipal team, composed of the two community representatives and EDF’s community development workers and municipal coordinators, reviewed project accomplishments, especially the barangay CRM committee (BCRMC) and the fisherfolk cooperative; assessed their continued viability or sustainability after the expiration of the EDF contract; and formulated recommendations for future actions by respective LGUs and fisherfolk cooperatives. This evaluation workshop helped link the LGUs to the locally formed institutions for long term support and guidance.

The Land Bank’s revision of policy guidelines for loans to subsistence income-earners is strongly recommended. Otherwise, municipal fisherfolk will forever be barred from credit, even from government financial institutions

which are tasked to give them special assistance in credit.

Loan interest rates that are high and loan collateral requirements that are stringent are already tough barriers for marginal fisherfolk to hurdle in order to obtain a loan for a livelihood project. But loan amount ceilings that are unrealistic such as for the above-mentioned hog-fattening project are additional hurdles.

The Department of Agriculture’s **prompt payment for services** provided and reported by NGOs according to contract stipulations **are important for the project’s and program’s success.** Delayed DA payments have two major negative ripple effects on project implementation, i.e., postponed training and delayed salary payments.

[The FSP has provided a magnitude of lessons on CRM, not the least of which is that meaningful community development is essential to engender resource stewardship. FSP also shows the critical need to develop local economies less dependent on coastal resources. Editor]

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