



COASTAL
RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
PROJECT—
PHILIPPINES

SPECIAL MID-TERM REPORT



CRMP IN MID-STREAM:
ON COURSE TO A THRESHOLD OF SUSTAINED
COASTAL MANAGEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

IMPLEMENTED BY  DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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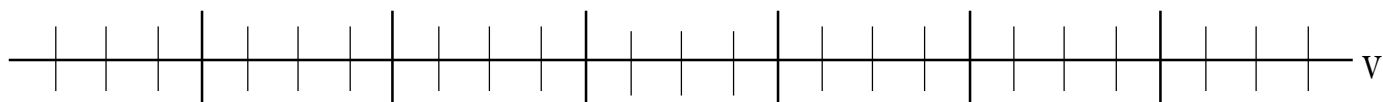
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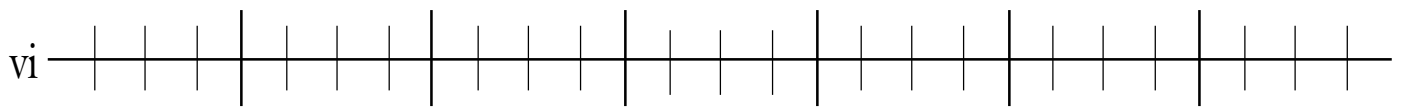
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preface

The Coastal Resource Management Project-Philippines is a seven-year (1996-2002) project which provides technical assistance and training to coastal communities, local government units, non-governmental organizations, and national government agencies to promote improved management of coastal resources in the Philippines.

It is funded by the United States Agency for International Development and implemented by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in partnership with the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Tourism, other national government agencies, local government units, non-governmental organizations, and people's organizations. Project management and technical support is provided by Tetra Tech EM Inc. and its team firms – Global Vision, Inc. (Glovis); Coastal Ocean, Reef and Island Advisors Ltd. (CORIAL); Helber, Hasters and Fee Planners; Mote Environmental Services, Inc. (MESI); Oceanic Institute; Pacific Management Resources, Inc. (PACMAR); Plan Pacific; University of Hawaii; Economic Development Foundation (EDF); Pacific Rim Innovation and Management Exponents, Inc. (PRIMEX); and Woodward-Clyde, Philippines (WWC).

Non-governmental organization and academic partners include the International Marinelife Alliance (IMA); Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas-World Wildlife Fund-Philippines (KKP-WWF); First Consolidated Bank Foundation, Inc. (FCBFI); Foundation for Sustainable Society, Inc. (FSSI); Visayas Central Fund (VICTO-VCF); US Peace Corps; Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication, Inc. (AIJC); Haribon Foundation, Inc.; Institute of Environmental Science for Social Change (IESSC); Institute for Small Farms and Industries, Inc. (ISFI); Rtn. Martin "Ting" Matiao Foundation, Inc. (TMF); Silliman University Center of Excellence in Coastal Resource Management; University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute (UPMSI); Mindanao State University-General Santos City; and the University of San Carlos.

This Special Mid-term Report chronicles the evolution of CRMP's activities, providing highlights of key challenges, successes and lessons learned over the first three-and-a-half years of implementation, and forecasts of future directions for the remaining life of the Project.

to our partners

At this mid-point in the Coastal Resource Management Project's implementation, we are pleased to share accomplishments and lessons learned with our partners – those local government units, national government agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, private sectors, coastal communities, and individuals committed to the recovery of the Philippine seas. We would like to state, clearly and unequivocally, that we can report these accomplishments only because of committed and willing partners. In the end, the Project will be considered successful only if the hardships, challenges, accomplishments and lessons learned are shared by a broad cross-section of coastal stakeholders.

For we all certainly face daunting and multifold challenges in the task we have set out to do. The condition of coastal resources in the Philippines is grim. Fisheries production has been in steady decline because of overfishing, a situation exacerbated by habitat destruction, which has left less than 5% of Philippine coral reefs in excellent condition and decimated some 60% of mangrove forests in just the last three decades. What is particularly disheartening is that, despite nearly 20 years of coastal resource management projects and initiatives supported by a variety of institutions and donors, the alarming pattern of destruction and decline has continued.

Commercial and municipal fisheries in the Philippines have more than exceeded their maximum sustainable yield as evidenced by the leveling off of growth in catch and the local decreases in some of the stocks (Dalzell *et al* 1987; Bernascek 1994; BFAR 1997). Commercial fishers are attempting to maintain or increase their catch by intruding on municipal fishing grounds. Moreover, policies have been focused on increasing fisheries production by encouraging investments in industrial-type fishing gears that have contributed to overfishing. Continued increases in fishing effort will only worsen the problem and lead to the continued decline of the fish stocks on which the Philippines relies.

This pattern is not unique to the Philippines; in fact, it reflects a global trend of fisheries decline and coastal habitat destruction. And unless effective solutions are applied, it can only get worse. About 75% of the world population – or about 11 billion people depending on certain world population growth scenarios – will live in the coastal zone by the year 2100. Our already overburdened coastal environment is bound to collapse under such enormous pressure. Even now, based on current trends of environmental degradation, we stand to lose 70% of the world's coral reefs in the next 40 years.

Fortunately, increasing awareness of the serious degradation of coastal and marine resources worldwide is shifting the focus of government and other programs from fisheries development to coastal management. Moreover, many countries now recognize that management can only be effective if it is carried out close to the resources used. They are thus devolving the responsibility for managing coastal areas and resources to the lowest level of government. Here we find the challenges and opportunities to transform new paradigms in coastal management to the successful recovery of the Philippine seas.

The Coastal Resource Management Project was designed to develop strategic and innovative approaches to address new paradigms in coastal management in the Philippines while building on previously tested approaches, in particular, those that are community-based. Its objective is to move beyond implementing pilot-scale community-based projects to effecting the spread of coastal management to a broad cross-section of coastal

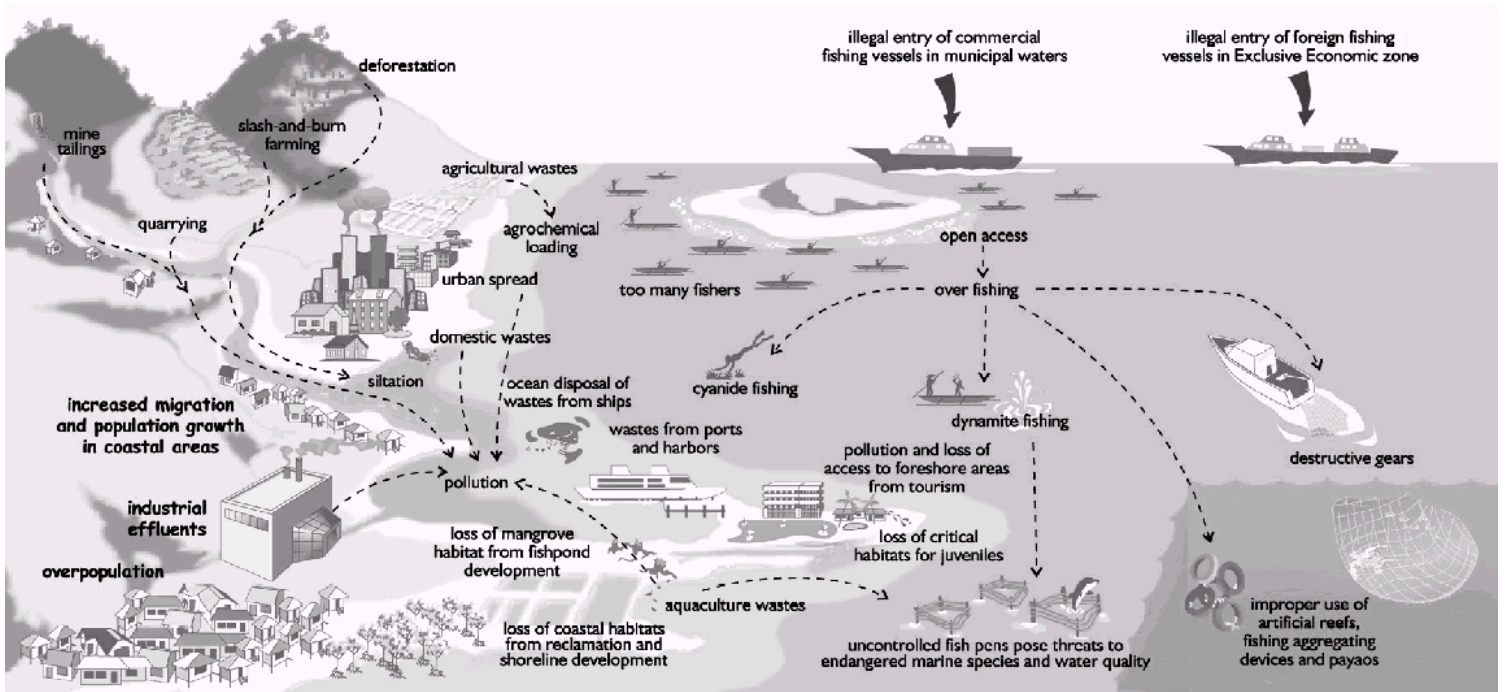


Fig. i. "The coasts are natural crossroads for human activity and the sea" (Weber, 1993)

stakeholders (USAID, 1995). This objective is echoed by our mission statement: "To catalyze coastal resource management in the Philippines to a threshold that will expand nationwide and be sustainable beyond the life of the Project."

Over the last three-and-a-half years, our journey has been one of evolution, adaptation and opportunism. For while we could envision the endgame of the Project and plan carefully to achieve that end, we could not foresee all the ruts or invaluable side roads that materialized before us without warning. Thanks to our clear mission, we have been able to maintain the flexibility to transform potential chaos into unique opportunities. This combination of methodological strategic planning and chaos theory has served the Project well, especially in the development and conduct of the high profile, high risk, and high return activities needed to set coastal management on the national social agenda.

Having said that, we must stress that there are, still, no easy solutions to the problems faced by coastal communities. Making the right decisions, such as reducing fishing pressure, stopping illegal fishing and coastal development activities, and preserving coastal habitats, are difficult and can be unpopular. We must therefore continue to be devoted to developing and strengthening that new breed of leaders willing to accept the Coastal Resource Leadership Challenge and make those difficult decisions while enlisting and enabling others to support a common vision for the recovery of the Philippine seas.

This Special Mid-term Report is a tribute to our partners and the many individuals who have already accepted the Coastal Resource Leadership Challenge, as well as a call to action to others who have yet to take on the Challenge. When we say "we" in this report, please remember that we also mean all of you who have joined and will join us in this great journey that we hope will take us, at the very least, to a threshold of sustained coastal management in the Philippines.