

STREAM



Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management

STREAM Journal

Learning and communicating about the livelihoods of fishers and farmers

The STREAM Initiative is supported by AusAID, DFID, FAO, NACA and VSO

Published by the STREAM Initiative, Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA), Suraswadi Building, Department of Fisheries Compound, Kasetsart University Campus, Ladyao, Jatujak, Bangkok, Thailand.

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Example citation for a *STREAM Journal* article:

Santos, R 2002 Learning from Each Other about Conflict. *STREAM Journal* 1(1), 1-2.

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Note

This is an all-Western Visayas number of the *STREAM Journal*, featuring our partner and host agency in the Philippines, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Office No 6. We are especially grateful to the Guest Editor of *SJ3(2)*, and the person who conceived it, Elizabeth (Bebet) M Gonzales, the *STREAM* Philippines Communications Hub Manager.

In the first article, Janice N Tronco introduces us to BFAR – its history, services, mission, setting and development efforts – and also to three regional commodities of the Western Visayas. She also writes about how BFAR is reaching out to fish-eating and fish-loving people. Fisherfolk organizations and mudcrab livelihood projects around Sapián Bay on Panay Island are Tee-Jay A San Diego's focus in the second article, in which he also explains about moving from culturing to fattening.

Bebet's own contribution, the third article, features the Barangay Learning Resource Centers of the Fisheries Resource Management Project, and highlights schoolchildren telling a story about a whale shark named "Lorkan". PhilFIS, the Philippines Fisheries Information Service, is described in the fourth article by Agnes C Solis, along with its database subsystems and implementation at municipal level. It is a look at how information and communications technologies (ICTs) are being brought ever closer to fisherfolk.

In the fifth article, by Rommel P Guarín on planning, monitoring and evaluation, we learn how partner-implementers are having a 'say' in bureau policy-making and about other ways in which communication can be improved among stakeholders. Finally, in the sixth article, Josephine P Savaris, of an NGO partner, writes about an alliance of local government units and how they are learning to work together to manage common fishing grounds and improve the lives of 'marginal' fishers.

Many thanks also to Sonia Seville, BFAR 6 Director and *STREAM* Philippines National Coordinator, and Erwin Pador, Assistant National Coordinator, for their continued support and enthusiasm.

Happy reading!

Graham Haylor, *STREAM* Director
William Savage, *STREAM Journal* Editor

BFAR Moves on in Region 6

Janice N Tronco

The Bureau and Its History

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Office No 6 is the Philippines government agency responsible for the development, management and conservation of the country's fisheries and aquatic resources in Western Visayas. It is under the direct supervision and control of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. Like any other government agency, BFAR has evolved and undergone many changes to address the dynamic development of the fisheries industry.



Harvested seaweed carried in styrofoam boxes by fishers of Barangay Tiabas, San Dionisio, in Iloilo

BFAR started out as the Division of Fisheries in the Bureau of Science in 1907. On 1 January 1943, it was made a part of the Fish and Game Administration under the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. It was organized as the Bureau of Fisheries on 1 July 1947 as provided by the Republic Act No 177. Republic Act No 3512 of 1963 re-organized the Bureau into the Philippine Fisheries Commission, which again reverted to bureau status when the Martial Law Re-organization Plan took effect in 1972. On 17 May 1974, the office was renamed as the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources under the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) by virtue of Presidential Decree No 461.

Executive Order No 967 transferred BFAR from the MNR to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, which was later renamed as the Department of Agriculture. On 25 February 1998, BFAR was reconstituted as a line bureau under the Department of Agriculture with the enactment of Republic Act 8550, otherwise known as the Philippine Fisheries Code.

Services, Mission and Setting

As a newly-reconstituted line agency, BFAR have been trying to answer the call of the times to strengthen its services, especially to fisherfolk and the clientele of the fisheries industry. The fisheries industry in the Philippines includes the three sectors of aquaculture, marine and post-harvest.

The core services of BFAR revolve around its mission: to have a modernized fishery, a diversified economy that is dynamic, technologically advanced and internationally competitive, and a transformation guided by the sound management practices of resources



Partially dried seaweed in sacks

sustainability, the principle of social justice and strong private sector participation. BFAR's vision is to help empower fishing communities and the private sector to produce enough, accessible and affordable food for every Filipino and to have a decent income for all.

BFAR in Region 6, or the Western Visayas, is lucky to have one of the richest fishing grounds in the country. The region's coastal waters of about 45,600 sq km are endowed with some of the most diverse aquatic resources in the Philippines. Its 1,300-km coastline encompasses a number of bays and coves.

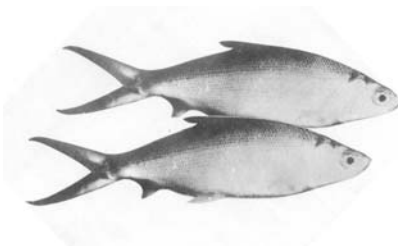
Development and Management

Currently, BFAR is implementing the “Ginintuang Masaganang Ani – Fisheries Program” to provide direction and a framework to develop and manage fisheries resources for food security and economic upliftment of subsistence fisherfolk. Development efforts emphasize the expansion and revitalization of productivity programs and provision of support activities (such as appropriate technology, research, extension and marketing assistance). Management efforts cover the conservation, protection and sustained management of fisheries resources.

These efforts will only be realized at the regional level by focusing on targets, continuously implementing projects regardless of changes in leadership, and coming up with innovative ways to supplement funds.

Three Commodities

BFAR 6 opted to accelerate the development of the three major aquaculture commodities in the region. To achieve the desired productivity, “road maps” were prepared for these three commodities (from left in the photos below): **Tilapia** (*O niloticus*) / **Genetically Enhanced Tilapia EXcellent strain that has Competitive advantage with other tilapia strains for Entrepreneurial Livelihood projects in support to aquaculture for rural development, or GET-EXCEL Tilapia**; **Seaweed** (*Kappaphycus sp* and *Gracilaria sp*); and **Milkfish** (*Chanos chanos*).



Expansion of coverage areas for fingerlings and seed, and grow-out production, of these commodities is provided region-wide through “Backyard Aquaculture Projects”. These are demonstration projects in a one-quarter-hectare area where fingerlings provided by BFAR are complemented by necessary technical assistance. Through its technology outreach stations, BFAR produces quality broodstock and fingerlings for distribution to fishpond operators and regularly replenishes depleted inland waters, bays and river systems through dispersal activities.

Reaching People

Western Visayas has 170 Fisheries Extension Officers under their respective Local Government Units. They work with BFAR 6 to implement fisheries programs, projects and activities in their municipalities. They also provide technical support services to clientele region-wide and help augment the manpower of a newly-reconstituted Bureau. BFAR is moving on to serve the interests of fish-eating and fish-loving people.



Extension staff conducting a seaweed culture seminar with fishers of Batan, Aklan

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Livelihoods Initiatives in Sapien Bay

Tee-Jay A San Diego

FRMP and Fisherfolk

Sapien Bay is the selected site of BFAR's Fisheries Resource Management Project (FRMP) in Western Visayas (Region 6). It is a small bay in the northern portion of Panay Island. The municipality of Batan in the province of Aklan and the municipalities of Sapien and Ivisan in Capiz Province share responsibility for the management and conservation of Sapien Bay's slowly-depleting resources.

The NGO Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA) was contracted by FRMP to conduct one-year community organizing in the fifteen barangays (villages) surrounding Sapien Bay. From this undertaking, fifteen fisherfolk organizations (one from each barangay) were formed and strengthened to engage in supplementary livelihood activities as a strategy to reduce fishing pressures in the bay. Capital Build-Up (CBU) campaigns and the value of internal savings generation were introduced and constantly emphasized. Trainings were also conducted on such topics as values formation, financial recording, and cooperative and association management.

Mudcrab Culture as a Livelihood Project

PhilDHRRA worked with the organizations to identify livelihood options for their specific localities. The FRMP Project Implementing Unit (PIU) considered pursuing these options during the transition period after the termination of PhilDHRRA's contract and before contracting for community organizing in the second year. One of the livelihood options identified was mudcrab culture and fattening. The South East Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) developed a mangrove-friendly technology on mudcrab culture (aquasilviculture) intended for municipal fishers. Based on the Participatory Coastal Resource Assessment (PCRA) conducted at the start of FRMP, conditions in several communities seemed to favor this livelihood: there are mangrove stands in the area and some fishers are already engaged in mudcrab collection.

The FRMP Income Diversification component – under the Fisheries Extension Training and Communication Division (FETCD) of BFAR 6 – looked into the potential of mudcrab culture in mangroves as a supplementary livelihood of people's organizations by studying the technology and preparing a business plan. We conducted a market survey in the different buying and selling stations and learned about the supply scarcity of – and high demand for – mudcrab in the region, as evidenced by its high price compared to other fisheries commodities. Given these considerations, mudcrab culture could be a good livelihood initiative to help fishers and provide them with an opportunity to manage an economic activity.

Orientation about the Technology and Site Evaluation

The first organization being considered is the *Nagkakaisang Mananagat sa Bilao* in Barangay Bilao, Sapien, Capiz, because a majority of the members are mudcrab collectors. There was a series of consultations and an orientation with the organization to assess their willingness. The rationale of the project, the background of the technology, and the possible arrangements between BFAR and the organization were presented. BFAR-FRMP would provide all materials for the pens (e.g., bamboo, nets and ropes), initial stock (2,000 crablets) and weighing scales. Training on the technology would be conducted for three days. The organization would be responsible for pen construction, daily operations and providing feed. The potential site was fully evaluated based on the site selection criteria of SEAFDEC.

Implemented Mudcrab Projects

The suitability of the sites, interest of the groups and approval of the business plans of the FRMP Project Management Office led to the implementation of mudcrab projects from June 2003 through June 2004 with these people's organizations (POs):

- Nagakakaisang Mananagat sa Bilao (NAMABIL) in Barangay Bilao, Sapián, Capiz
- Napti Multi-Purpose Cooperative (NMPC) in Barangay Napti, Batán, Aklan
- Camanci Small Fisherfolk Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CSF-MPC) in Barangay Camanci, Batán, Aklan
- Cabugao Small Fisherfolk Association (CSFA) in Barangay Cabugao, Ivisan, Capiz
- Maninang Fisherfolk Organization (MFO) in Barangay Maninang, Sapián, Capiz, and
- Lonoy Small Fisherfolk Association (LSFA) in Barangay, Lonoy, Sapián, Capiz.

The Training

The training consisted of a lecture and hands-on activities on the construction of the mudcrab pen. The importance of the mangrove ecosystem, biology and culture of mudcrab, formation of management committees, filling in of monitoring forms, and planning of activities were discussed during the lecture. Committees formed to take charge of the various responsibilities were: finance and administration, feeding, monitoring, marketing and inventory. Members were also divided into seven groups for daily monitoring and feeding. The members of the Finance and Administration Committee were trained on simple bookkeeping. It was observed that NMPC women participated actively in pen construction and that it was finished within three days.



NMPC women taking an active part in the construction of a mudcrab pen during the three-day training

Gains and Constraints

FRMP does its best to capacitate the POs to manage resource-based income-generating activities to ensure sustainability of these initiatives, developing them to eventually improve people's lives. Regular meetings with the groups were conducted to determine problems encountered, find solutions, and review feeding and pen management. Follow-up trainings on cost and return analysis and other profitability indicators were conducted to give the organizations tools to project their income prior to harvest and to emphasize the importance of survival rate, average body weight, market price and production cost or input, as these affect the revenue or net income. Despite these interventions, the projected sales were not achieved in the majority of the groups because of unforeseen problems. These included rat infestation that caused the escape of the stock (NAMABIL, CSF-MPC), shortage of feed (NMPC, CSF-MPC), and lack of member participation (CSF-MPC, CSFO, MFO).

The gains and constraints of the mudcrab projects provided valuable lessons and experiences in managing a livelihood project as a group. It tested their unity and cooperation in handling the problems encountered. It also opened other opportunities, such as the link-up of the mudcrab research project of SEAFDEC with BFAR and NMPC through a Memorandum of Agreement for their second culture. The CSFO is now into fattening because of a faster rate of return compared to 4-6 months for culture. Other POs are expected to follow suit, utilizing the lessons learned in the first culture attempt.

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Improving Access to Information through Barangay Learning Resource Centers

Elizabeth M Gonzales

FRMP, BFAR, LGU, CRM, IEC and BLRC

To reverse the trend of fisheries resource depletion in municipal¹ waters and to reduce poverty among municipal fishers, the Fisheries Resource Management Project (FRMP) was implemented in 1998. The Department of Agriculture is the executing agency; the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and Local Government Units (LGU) are the implementing arms. FRMP adopts a coastal resources management (CRM) approach in its implementation. Public education – a tool in CRM – is given importance by FRMP, with an Information, Education and Communications (IEC) group to support BFAR regional offices in their IEC needs. The establishment of Barangay Learning Resource Centers (BLRC) – conceptualized by the IEC unit of BFAR Region 6 – was one such strategy implemented by FRMP to improve access to information, education and communications services.

What is BLRC?

The BLRC is a communications hub in the barangay where information is made available to fishing communities. These resources could be in the form of reference materials, technology information, resource conservation and protection manuals, and other information materials that would be educational for all sectors of the community. The BLRC also serves as a resource base for activities such as livelihoods training, sustainable resource management seminars, and value formation, reorientation and strengthening. The BLRC is also a venue where dynamic exchanges of information could be undertaken between resource persons, fisherfolk, women, youth and other groups.

Operational Concept

The BLRC is established at a barangay where appropriate infrastructure could house a reading area with bookshelves, tables and chairs, and a small lecture-cum-training area. The FRMP gathers reading and information materials for the BLRC or asks for donations or contributions from benefactors. Posters and instructional materials such as tapes and disks are provided to the center. Donations for an audio-visual facility are actively pursued to enable the BLRC to schedule regular shows for children to develop necessary values, attitudes and appreciation for resource conservation and protection. Such shows can also inform fishers about sustainable development of resources, and other issues such as livelihoods, population and nutrition.



The Camanci Barangay Hall where the BLRC is housed

A responsible person from the barangay would be assigned to manage the BLRC, and fulfill librarian and custodian roles. The community is encouraged to be active in the management of the center while the LGU and BFAR, through FRMP, provide assistance through sourcing out materials and other needs to ensure that the information materials are kept current. The LGU handles updates on matters of local governance while BFAR-FRMP, in coordination with other government agencies, handles matters that are of concern to their respective agencies.

¹ A local government unit consisting of barangays (villages)

Criteria for Site Selection

In keeping with CRM principles, it is critical that the interest of having a BLRC in a barangay should come from the community. A pilot site was identified and some criteria were developed for its selection:

- Commitment and support of the fisheries technicians and local government officials towards the development of the area is noteworthy.
- Interest and genuine enthusiasm of local leaders in the barangay is apparent to institutionalize the establishment of the center in the area.
- The barangay has an existing strategically-placed secure structure that could host the BLRC and the library of materials that go with it as well as an activity area.
- The presence of an organized group such as a cooperative and the ease of gathering people in the area are viewed as a plus factor in the promotion of the different IEC activities for FRMP at this time and other interventions in the future.

Implementation Status and Launching Activities



Primary schoolchildren sharing stories they wrote about the environment

The BLRC was first piloted in Sapián Bay in Barangay Mambuquiao, Batán, Aklan. Three more BLRCs have been established in Sapián Bay, in Barangay Napti, Batán, Aklan, and Barangays Balaring and Cabugao, Ivisan, Capiz. The most recent one was launched with STREAM Philippines support in Barangay Camangi, Batán, Aklan, in September 2004. The program involved an opening speech from the Barangay Captain, a presentation on BLRCs by the BFAR IEC head of unit, hand-over of books and other materials to the municipal and barangay government representatives, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

School children and their teachers arranged for and participated in a showing of the film “Finding

Nemo”, storytelling by a BFAR-FRMP staff about a whale shark named “Lorkan”, a story reading of primary grade kids, a poster-making contest for intermediate grade kids, and a collage-making contest for secondary school students. Each activity ended up with the facilitator asking the kids about lessons they learned from the activity.

Future Plans

It is envisioned that the BLRCs would serve as a database for the status of coastal resources in Sapián Bay. Fishers could collect data through their day-to-day observations, discuss and process information, and make valuable management inputs into the sustainable development of Sapián Bay. The LGU could institutionalize support to the operations of the center through yearly appropriations. Experiences in this pilot BLRC project could be shared, improved and duplicated in other areas of Sapián Bay. This could make a difference in the lives of the fishing communities.



Schoolchildren in Camangi are “all ears” during the telling of the “Lorkan” story

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The Philippines Fisheries Information System

Agnes C Solis

Introduction

Through its Fisheries Resource Management Project (FRMP), the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) established the Philippine Fisheries Information System (PhilFIS). Currently housed at the BFAR Fisheries Information Management Center (FIMC), PhilFIS is designed to facilitate the collection, processing and timely delivery of relevant, accurate and reliable fisheries-related data and information to support and serve as a tool for effective and efficient fisheries planning, policy formulation and management.

What's in PhilFIS?

The main purpose of PhilFis is to gather fisheries data from different sources (database subsystems) and consolidate them into a national report which would help in managing Philippine fisheries, such as nearshore and offshore fisheries, and aquaculture in relation to sustainable resource use. PhilFIS currently comprises nine database subsystems:

1. Catch and Effort Database Subsystem includes the records of catches from landing sites, effort deployment, yield analysis and catch and effort report generation.
2. Map Database Subsystem is a computer-based compilation of geo-corrected thematic maps which allows analysis of geographic information. It accommodates data that describe both the location and physical conditions of a specific bay area.
3. Fisherfolk Registration Database Subsystem is designed to record the profiles of fishers in a community.
4. Municipal Fisheries Licensing Information Subsystem records and issues fishing licenses for fishers along with their gear and vessels.
5. Resource and Ecological Assessment Database Subsystem
6. Socioeconomic Assessment Database Subsystem, which together with the previous subsystem, contain data gathered by research institutions for the different bay areas in the Philippines. These two subsystems generate data and information to be used for developing coastal resource management (CRM) plans in each FRMP site. These data and information can also be used for monitoring the progress of fisheries resource management initiatives in the project sites after the conduct of the FRMP.
7. Document Database Subsystem consists of electronic compilations of different fisheries-related documents including those of the previously implemented Fisheries Sector Program.
8. Bibliographic Collection Database Subsystem augments the information needs of fisheries research as it contains references pertinent to fisheries studies in the Philippines, and
9. Data Synchronization and System Management Subsystem is designed to integrate data from different locations.

Currently being developed in the FIMC are five new database subsystems which would enhance the capability of the above-mentioned systems to support BFAR in performing its functions and serving its clients in line with the E-Commerce Act and Fisheries Code of the Philippines. The new subsystems will capture data ranging from maps, commercial fisheries, export commodities and resource status, and create an efficient means of processing documents. These are:

1. Commercial Fisheries Licensing Information Subsystem
2. Coastal Habitat Assessment Database Subsystem
3. Fisheries Export and Quality Control Database Subsystem
4. Document Workflow and Management Subsystem, and
5. Map Information Management Subsystem.

Data for PhilFIS are derived from various sources nationwide. Municipal data are provided by the Fisheries Management Units at municipalities implementing the project. These would then be uploaded and synchronized with regional databases, which are in turn uploaded and synchronized with the national repository. Hence, the data would be made available to other national offices that may require fisheries-related statistics.

PhilFIS Deployment in Coastal Municipalities

The system is initially implemented in FRMP sites which cover 100 municipalities in 18 bays throughout the country. In Region 6, the FRMP is being implemented in Sapien Bay which covers the municipalities of Batan, Ivisan and Sapien located in the provinces of Aklan and Capiz.

The project implementers went through a series of trainings on data management, ranging from the operation and maintenance of the system, and keeping organized, current and reliable information, to support development efforts of fisheries resources. Following this, the system was deployed in coastal municipalities

by providing computers, software and necessary training to effectively use and manage the system. The Fisheries Management Units at the municipalities were also encouraged to start populating the databases so that they would get used to the system and become proficient in its use and efficient in implementation of PhilFIS at the municipal level.



Training on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) with staff from BFAR Regional Offices and PhilFIS Coordinators

Status of PhilFIS Implementation

In the course of implementation, changes had to be made to fine-tune the system to make it more compatible with user and data requirements. It would also strengthen the database structural framework to handle numerous data inputs.

At the moment, fishers' information is being gathered in coastal municipalities, in cooperation with local government officials and community organizers. These will be the primary data which would be encoded into the fisherfolk database. The raw data from the resource and socio-economic assessments conducted in 11 bays, including Sapien Bay, are now also being encoded into the database. Efforts are being made to make the system fully operational and institutionalized in BFAR by the end of the project in 2005.

As part of the Information, Education and Communications (IEC) component of PhilFIS, a national web development and administration training was conducted as an avenue for distributing information from the system. During the training, participants created websites which would serve as their respective official regional presence on the Internet and facilitate delivery of basic fisheries information services. As BFAR staff and their various publics become familiar with developments in information and communications technology, the existence of these websites is anticipated to speed up communications across the country. Along with the BFAR national website <http://www.bfar.da.gov.ph>, the FIMC currently hosts regional websites, including that of Region 6 which can be accessed through <http://region6.bfar.da.gov.ph>.

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The Contributions of Planning Activities in the Participatory Process

Rommel P Guarin

BFAR's Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division

Planning, monitoring and evaluation are three important tools in determining an endeavor's success. Monitoring is the periodic collection, processing and reporting to management of information on department operations, and program and project implementation. Evaluation involves the assessment of whether program objectives are being met or not, drawing lessons that can be taken into account in further improving later phases of implementation or in planning subsequent programs and projects.

In the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Regional Office 6, the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PMED) is the hub where information from the agency's various divisions, operating units, technology outreach stations, special projects and provincial offices is processed and consolidated. The information derived can then be used to improve the delivery of services and address potential troubles before they become problems.

Mr Roberto Espinosa, the officer in charge of PMED, believes that the targeted goals can be achieved more efficiently through careful planning. He also underscores the importance of involving major stakeholders in the formulation of strategies and identification of activities that would enhance policies toward fisherfolk empowerment.

PMED Activities

Regular PMED activities include the conduct of planning workshops, provincial orientations, and the monitoring and evaluation of various fisheries programs and projects. It is during such events when various stakeholders discuss and evaluate accomplishments, identify issues and concerns that affect program implementation, and elicit recommendations from their partners: representatives from Local Government Units (LGUs), provincial fisheries coordinators, report officers and, occasionally, provincial agriculturists.

During such workshops, Mr Espinosa emphasizes a 'bottoms-up' approach, where project

proposals and other recommendations originate from partner-implementers, instead of the usual practice of government agencies being the ones who decide what projects to 'give' beneficiaries. This practice makes more sense, because target beneficiaries have knowledge regarding the suitability of the proposed project in their locality. For example, municipal fisherfolk from Antique Province on Panay Island will find it feasible to request for seaweed culture projects or milkfish fry-gathering devices.



Participation of BFAR's LGU partner-implementers in planning workshops ensures that they have a 'say' in policy-making. Mr Espinosa is seen conferring with fisheries extension officers in the formulation of workplans.

Problems with Planning and Learning Lessons

Planning is no walk in the park: all the best laid plans can and do go wrong from such unexpected occurrences as budget cuts, lack of counterparting from LGUs, and realignment of LGU priorities, e.g., their emphasis on tangible infrastructure projects. Austerity measures, instituted by the government due to a ballooning budget deficit, sent top management back to the drawing board to revise plans for next year's activities, not to mention the problems it caused in the conduct of various training and monitoring activities for the current year.

However, such problems could lead to lessons learned so that improvements can be made for the better. For example, during a provincial orientation in Aklan Province, the provincial agriculturist complained to the group that he was not made aware of the various fisheries projects being implemented in the province. To get around this, Mr Espinosa proposed that in addition to sending communications to the governor, a separate copy will be furnished to the provincial agriculturist.



Open forums help clear up various issues and concerns that impede project implementation. BFAR 6 Assistant Regional Director Juliet Demo-os clarifies with LGUs who will initiate training and strengthening of Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Councils (FARMCs).

In another instance, problems regarding coordination occurred between the province- and municipality-based fisheries extension officers of Guimaras Province, where one party was not informed of the activities being conducted by the other. To avoid such misunderstandings and duplication of activities in the future, they were advised that all fisheries projects should be coordinated with the Provincial Office for Agricultural Services.

Another problem encountered by the planning division was the delay in the submission of accomplishment reports and other supporting documents for the payment of

incentives of fisheries extension officers implementing the GMA-Fisheries Program² from certain provinces. During a recently-concluded planning workshop, Mr Espinosa asked Mr Ruel Almoneda, provincial fisheries coordinator of Negros Occidental, to share his experiences in this matter. Mr Almoneda's province always submits the requirements on time, even considering the great distance between the farthest municipality and the province's capital, Bacolod City. He said they instituted policies at their level, such as the strict adherence to deadlines and issuing demerits on their performance evaluation ratings.

The conduct of planning activities is here to stay, even with the presence of expected or unexpected barriers. This is one way BFAR involves its stakeholders in policy-making, the benefits of which will hopefully trickle down to its beneficiaries and clientele, and the fisheries industry as a whole.

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² The Ginintuang Masaganang Ani – Fisheries Program is being implemented by BFAR to support the goals of the Fisheries Code of 1998 (Republic Act No 8550) and Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (Republic Act No 8435), which include food security, poverty alleviation and social equity, income enhancements and profitability, global competitiveness and sustainability. It aims to provide national directions and a framework to develop and manage the country's fisheries resources, focusing on development and management efforts.

Inter-LGU Alliance Building: A Key to Sustaining the Integrated Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (IFARMC)

Josephine P Savaris

Up-scaling One Municipality's Experience

The implementation of PhilDHRRA's coastal resource management (CRM) program using the tripartite partnership approach in Inopacan, Leyte, has brought about significant changes such as the formation of a viable council, the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (FARMC). The FARMC is mandated to assist the local legislative body, the Sangguniang Bayan (SB), in the management, conservation, protection, regulation and rehabilitation of marine and aquatic resources. The FARMC should recommend appropriate plans and ordinances to the SB to assure food security and general welfare of marginalized fisherfolk.

In 2001, a project called "Mobilizing Fisherfolk Formations in Western Leyte" – funded by Oxfam Great Britain – made possible the idea of up-scaling the experience in implementing CRM in Inopacan to cover the five adjoining municipalities of Hindang, Hilongos, Baybay, Bato and Matalom. The project objectives include complementation of ordinances and formation and strengthening of the Municipal FARMCs in the six municipalities. These MFARMCs will then be merged into an Integrated MFARMC that will take the lead in managing a common fishing ground used by the majority of fisherfolk in Western Leyte, Camotes Sea.

Why Integrate Municipal FARMCs?

The various stakeholders in Western Leyte have identified several reasons why they opted to integrate the MFARMCs:

- The need to have complementary ordinances across municipalities
- LGUs have to maximize resources (human and financial) through sharing
- Several institutions and agencies working in CRM need to collaborate and coordinate to have more focus
- Participating municipalities have to share responsibility in the management and protection of the marine and coastal resources in the Camotes Sea area commonly used by the majority of fishers
- Recurring issues can be handled through the concerted efforts of the cooperating municipalities
- Achieve better representation of marginal fishers through linkages and networking, and
- To have a better impact.

Alliance Building and Activities among Local Government Units (LGUs)

In late 2001, the process of alliance building started by making courtesy calls and orienting the six Local Chief Executives (LCE) on the need to integrate. A group was formed to take the lead in activities toward integration, including the Municipal Agriculture Officer, Philippine National Police representative and SB on Agriculture and Fisheries. The group drafted a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was signed in April 2002 by the LCEs of the six participating municipalities. The highlight of the MOA is the formation of an Integrated FARMC. It also defined the IFARMC's roles and the support that would be extended by the LGUs.



MOA signing among the LCEs of participating LGUs

A series of activities were then conducted across LGUs, including the formation and reorganization of the Municipal FARMCs and their integration in early 2002. Consultations and workshops were held to identify common and recurring issues. An inventory and review of existing ordinances was done, which became the basis for recommending to the SB the formulation of municipal ordinances that are 'complementary' and address common CRM issues.



IMFARMC participants on a study tour to Aklan and Iloilo

The IMFARMC underwent trainings and seminars to enhance and develop its capacity as an organization. Among the capability-building activities conducted were leadership and values training, orientation on the salient points of the New Fisheries Code of 1998, paralegal enhancement of the FARMC law enforcement arm, the Bantay Dagat, and a study tour for IMFARMC leaders to successful CRM sites in Aklan and Iloilo.

A concern about minimal participation of women in FARMCs was addressed by conducting a Gender Planning and

Trainers Training, where an agreement was reached to consciously increase the number of women in FARMC membership and leadership.

To increase the level of awareness of fisherfolk in Western Leyte, a radio program on CRM topics ran for six months from DYAB³ in Cebu. Fisherfolk in the six participating municipalities, and others who could be reached by the program, listened for 30 minutes on Saturdays to inputs and issues discussed on air.

The IMFARMC likewise underwent activities to develop and strengthen itself as an organization. These activities included election of officers, regular meetings where member municipalities took turns hosting the activity, and drafting of the Integrated MFARMC policy.

Sustaining the IMFARMC

Even with uncertainties about funding support for the IMFARMC, mobilization continued in 2003. Among the efforts exerted were information and dissemination campaigns, conduct of integrated seaborne patrol operations, and assistance in the drafting of municipal fisheries ordinances of other municipalities such as Matalom and Hindang. In 2003, the IMFARMC in Western Leyte was also recognized by BFAR. In 2004, leaders of the IMFARMC focused on linkaging and networking. The IMFARMC Chairperson became a member of the Council of Leaders in the Visayas Fisherfolk Alliance. The MFARMC Chairperson of Inopacan was chosen as the Regional FARMC Representative for Region 8. IMFARMC leaders also participated in various CRM-related gatherings, such as the recently-concluded 5th Visayas Fisherfolk Symposium and regional consultations on new fisheries policies.

In 2005, the IMFARMC will be faced with many challenges. However, with the commitment and support of the LGUs in Baybay, Inopacan, Hindang, Hilongos, Bato and Matalom, with the line agencies' assistance, and with the help that the funding partners will extend, these challenges will be overcome with strength and confidence because people are one in their goal of making the lives of marginal fishers in Western Leyte better.

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³ DYAB is an AM radio station in Cebu Province, Philippines.

About the STREAM Journal

Published by STREAM – Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management

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Purpose

The *STREAM Journal* is published quarterly to promote participation, communication and policies that support the livelihoods of poor aquatic resources users in Asia-Pacific, and to build links within the aquatic resources management and other sectors across the region. The *STREAM Journal* covers issues related to people whose livelihoods involve aquatic resources management, especially people with limited resources, and government, non-governmental and international practitioners who work with them in communities. Such issues include learning, conflict management, information and communications technologies, aquatic resources management, legislation, livelihoods, gender, participation, stakeholders, policy and communications.

Another equally important purpose of the *STREAM Journal* is to provide an opportunity for seldom-raised voices to be heard and represented in a professional publication that is practical yet somewhat academic. The contents of the *STREAM Journal* should not be taken as reflecting the views of any particular organization or agency, but as statements by individuals based on their own experience. While authors are responsible for the contents of their articles, STREAM recognizes and takes responsibility for any editorial bias and oversights.

Distribution

The *STREAM Journal* is available in three formats:

- An electronic PDF version which is printed and distributed by the STREAM Communications Hubs in each country
- A version which can be accessed and downloaded in PDF format from the Virtual Library on the STREAM Website at www.streaminitiative.org, and
- A printed version which is distributed by the NACA Secretariat.

Contribution

The *STREAM Journal* encourages the contribution of articles of interest to aquatic resources users and people who work with them. The *STREAM Journal* also supports community-level colleagues to document their own experiences in these pages.

Articles should be written in plain English and no more than 1,000 words long (about two A4 pages of single-spaced text).

Contributions can be made to William Savage, *STREAM Journal* Editor, at <savage@loxinfo.co.th>. For more information, contact Graham Haylor, STREAM Director, at <ghaylor@loxinfo.co.th>.

About STREAM

Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management (STREAM) is an Initiative designed within the five-year Work Program cycle of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA). It aims to support agencies and institutions to:

- Utilize existing and emerging information more effectively
- Better understand poor people's livelihoods, and
- Enable poor people to exert greater influence over policies and processes that impact on their lives.

STREAM will do this by supporting the development of policies and processes of mediating institutions, and building capacity to:

- Identify aquatic resources management issues impacting on the livelihoods of poor people
- Monitor and evaluate different management approaches
- Extend information, and
- Network within and between sectors and countries.

The STREAM Initiative is based around partnerships, involving at the outset a coalition of founding partners (AusAID, DFID, FAO and VSO) supporting NACA. It has adopted an inclusive approach, reaching out to link stakeholders engaged in aquatic resources management and supporting them to influence the Initiative's design, implementation and management.

The partnerships' work is coordinated in each Country Office through a National Coordinator (a senior national colleague agreed with the government) and a Communications Hub Manager (a full-time national colleague supported in the first two years by STREAM), and linking a range of national stakeholders. The Communications Hub is provided with hardware, software, training, information-technology support, and networking and human resources support, and links national stakeholders through an internet-based virtual regional network.

National coordination is guided by an annually-reviewed Country Strategy Paper (CSP) drawn up by the Coordinator and Hub Manager in consultation with stakeholders with whom they regularly network. A CSP identifies key issues, highlights regional linkages, proposes and prioritizes key actions, and seeks funding for these from STREAM and elsewhere (with STREAM support).

The STREAM Regional Office (at the NACA Secretariat in Bangkok) directs the Initiative, provides a regional coordination function, and funds and manages cross-cutting activities dealing with livelihoods, institutions, policy development and communications, the four outcomes-based STREAM themes.

STREAM implementation is an iterative process, initially operating in Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Vietnam and Yunnan, China, and expanding within Asia-Pacific where opportunities exist to tackle poverty and promote good governance, as experience is gained, lessons are learned, impact is demonstrated and additional funding is secured. STREAM's communications strategy aims to increase impact by ensuring that existing knowledge and expertise inform ongoing change processes around the region, and that the lessons learned are disseminated throughout Asia-Pacific. The *STREAM Journal* and the STREAM website are components of this strategy.

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