

STREAM



Country Strategy Paper



PHILIPPINES

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PREFACE

What is STREAM?

Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management (STREAM) is a learning and communications initiative designed within the five-year Work Program cycle of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA). The STREAM Initiative aims to support poor people's livelihoods through improved communications, and by influencing institutions and policy development to better support the needs of poor people who are involved with fishing and small-scale fish farming. It will achieve this by working with partners to ensure that:

- Service providers better understand the *livelihoods* of poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users at local government, non-governmental and community levels
- *Institutions* better support the livelihoods objectives of poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users
- *Policy development* processes better reflect the livelihoods objectives of poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users, and
- *Communications* among poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users, service providers, institutions and policy-makers are improved.

The initiative is based around partnerships, involving at the outset a coalition of institutional partners (AusAid, DFID, FAO, VSO) supporting NACA. It adopts 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.

STREAM's work is coordinated in each partner country through STREAM Country Offices. These teams comprise a National Coordinator and a Communications Hub Manager (and in some countries, an Assistant National Coordinator) with linkages to a wide range of national stakeholders. The STREAM Regional Office supports these teams with hardware, software, information technology, networking and human resources. The Regional Office, at the NACA Secretariat in Bangkok, directs the initiative, providing a regional function and supporting interactions, lesson learning and partnership activities. The Country Offices are linked to the Regional Office through an internet-based virtual regional network.

What is STREAM Philippines?

The STREAM Initiative in the Philippines is a collaboration between NACA-STREAM based in Bangkok and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). It began after the 13th NACA Governing Council meeting in Langkawi, Malaysia in January 2002, when the Philippines requested to join the STREAM Initiative of NACA (the Philippines is part of the intergovernmental organization). The inclusion of the Philippines expanded the STREAM Initiative from the two pilot countries of Cambodia and Vietnam. The move demonstrated the intention of the Philippines to become a county partner of STREAM in attaining their mutual objectives and strategies of assisting poor aquatic resources users in the region.

In response to the request, the STREAM Regional Office embarked on a strategic planning process involving analysis of poverty and aquatic resources use nationally. A preliminary visit was also made to assess possible areas where the STREAM Initiative could add value to efforts underway in the country. The STREAM Director coordinated with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources as the primary government agency responsible for the growth and development of fisheries and aquaculture. BFAR Region 6 – seen as a center of Philippine aquaculture and in proximity to NACA participating and collaborating centers – was selected to host the STREAM Philippines Country Office. A National Coordinating Team composed of the National Coordinator, the Assistant National Coordinator, and the Communications Hub Manager manages the STREAM Philippines Country Office.

The STREAM Philippines Country Office began operations on 6 June 2002 at BFAR 6 in Iloilo City in the presence of STREAM Director Graham Haylor and NACA Director Pedro B Bueno. Following this event, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Agriculture's BFAR and NACA-STREAM took place on 7 June 2002 at the Office of the Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Quezon City.

What is a Country Strategy Paper?

A Country Strategy Paper (CSP) is a document drawn up in consultation with a range of national stakeholders in each STREAM partner country with support from the STREAM Regional Office in Bangkok. It identifies relevant national poverty and aquatic resources issues, examines policy and institutional environments, establishes key objectives, proposes implementation approaches, highlights partnerships with national and regional stakeholders, and provides a basis for seeking financial support from STREAM, its partners and other sources.

A CSP should remain valid for three to five years. The CSP, and the process and practice to develop it, will be reviewed and revised as circumstances change and learning takes place¹. The CSP will act as a guiding framework, enabling STREAM Country Offices and the Regional Office to make more detailed action plans so that the STREAM Initiative focuses its efforts to achieve its purpose and outputs around the themes of *livelihoods*, *institutions*, *policy development* and *communications*.

¹ A CSP Planning Kit is available from STREAM Country Offices.

SUMMARY

In 2002, the Philippines Government signed a Partnership Agreement with the NACA-STREAM Initiative. The initial focal point for STREAM work is Western Visayas, including the Sapijan Bay and Banate Bay areas where BFAR Region 6, the STREAM country host, has on-going engagements, and also areas within Regions 6 and 7 where marine ornamentals collection and trading occur.

The key disadvantaged groups (identified through a National Poverty and Aquatic Resources Review) for whom aquatic resources are a source of livelihood are the primary stakeholders for the initiative. These include people who are directly engaged in fishing activities (municipal or artisanal fishers including gleaners and shell gatherers), seasonal fish pond workers, regularly-paid fish workers, and groups who depend on non-fishing livelihoods activities in fishing communities (including fish vendors, fish processors, fish buyers, and fish trap and boat builders). Municipal fishers' access mainly bays, rivers, lakes, coral reefs and mangrove forests in coastal municipalities around the country.

The Philippines rank 85 out of 175 countries in terms of Human Development Index. Poverty is most acute and widespread in rural areas, including many coastal municipalities, where 54% of people are living below the poverty line. Dependence on coastal and inland aquatic resources is high among rural poor people, who tend to be self-employed, primarily in agriculture, fisheries and casual labor. They are almost all landless.

In 1991 the Philippines moved toward greater empowerment of people through efforts to decentralize political power, responsibility, functions and provision of services to Local Government Units (LGU), i.e., *barangays*, municipalities, cities and provinces. This included the management of fisheries and coastal resources. In 1997 the government aimed to provide a framework for the modernization of the agriculture and fisheries sectors. 'Modernization' – including for small-scale farmers and fishers – was to be supported from a competitiveness enhancement fund, though few small-scale operators have so far benefited. In 1998 the Philippine Fisheries Code aimed to clarify roles and jurisdictions and to enhance participation of all (including poor) stakeholders in decision-making through Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCs).

The objectives of STREAM Philippines are to:

- Better understand the *livelihoods* of poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users
- Better understand how *institutions* can support poor people's livelihoods
- Support better *policy development* and improved programs in support of the livelihoods objectives of poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users, and
- Improve *communications* among all STREAM stakeholders focused on enabling poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users to move out of poverty.

STREAM Philippines will:

- Share livelihoods approaches and analysis to broaden livelihoods understanding
- Complement capacity-building of BFAR staff and other partners
- Propose the discussion and drafting of a national fisheries extension program which would aim to address the dislocation of the national line agency from its original clients and could serve as a framework for supporting local governments' fisheries programs
- Work with others to improve appreciation of and strengthening of the FARMC concept in the context of a national fisheries extension program and strongly linked to IEC (information, education and communication) approaches, and
- Build on the Information Access Survey and, in support of BFAR (including Region 6), develop IEC strategies that will appropriately communicate policies, processes, lessons learned and significant change stories.

1. POVERTY AND AQUATIC RESOURCES IN THE PHILIPPINES

1.1 Rural and coastal poverty in the Philippines

The Philippines rank 85 out of 175 countries in terms of Human Development Index (UNDP, 2003). Poverty in the Philippines is most acute and widespread in rural areas. In 2000, 34% of the national population lived below the annual poverty threshold of Philippines Pesos (PhP) 11,605 (estimated at US\$ 223)². The most recent census from 2001 reported the population of the Philippines to be 77.2 million³ (UNDP, 2003), 40.7% of whom were living in rural areas. Nationwide, the incidence of poverty is about 25% in urban areas but more than 54% in rural areas (NSCB, 2004). Rural poor people tend to be self-employed, primarily in agriculture, fisheries and casual labor. They are almost all landless.

The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,100 islands and 64 of its 79 provinces include coastline. In 30 provinces, 50-69% (of families) are below the poverty threshold (including Region 6 where almost 54% of rural families were poor), and in a further three provinces 70% (of families) are classified as poor. In terms of income class⁴, 19 coastal provinces belong to the 24 poorest provinces. In terms of minimum basic needs (MBN) ranking, 18 of the poorest 20 provinces are coastal provinces (Rivera-Guieb et al., 2002).

STREAM Philippines is based in Region 6, which ranks sixth in terms of total poverty incidence of families. Four of its six provinces are included in the 2000 list of the 44 poorest provinces. These are Aklan, Antique, Capiz and Negros Occidental. Municipalities in Sapijan Bay (Batan, Ivisan and Sapijan), with which STREAM Philippines and BFAR are engaged, are in the provinces of Aklan and Capiz.

1.2 Importance of aquatic resources to coastal livelihoods in the Philippines⁵

Over 1,000 municipalities⁶ are located in coastal areas of the Philippines, which are home to millions of people for whom aquatic resources are a source of livelihood. Coastal fishing activities account for 65% of total fish production (31.3% aquaculture, 33.7% municipal fishing). By and large, the fisheries sector accounts for about 3.9% of GDP at constant prices and employs about 990,872 Filipinos (DA-

² In 2002 the poverty threshold was pegged at Philippines Pesos (PhP) 12,645 (estimated at US\$ 243).

³ Population is estimated at 84.2 million in 2004.

⁴ Income classification is indicative of the financial resources that a local government can generate for its development initiatives.

⁵ For more detailed analysis of poverty and aquatic resources use, refer to STREAM (2002).

⁶ A municipality is a local government unit in the Philippines. Provinces are composed of cities and municipalities. Municipalities, in turn, are composed of *barangays*. Municipalities are also called towns.

BFAR, 2002), about 68% (675,677) of whom are engaged in municipal or small-scale fishing⁷. Additionally, fish and fisheries products supply up to 70% of the total animal protein intake and 30% of the total protein intake of Filipinos. Per capita consumption is 36 kg/year which includes fresh fish such as tuna, round scad and mackerel; crustaceans and mollusks like crabs, shrimps, squids and mussels; dried or processed fish including shrimp or fish paste, canned sardines or mackerel, and fish sauce.

A review conducted for STREAM (2002) identified various disadvantaged groups within the aquatic resources sector. These key groups include those who are directly engaged in fishing activities for their livelihoods such as municipal or artisanal fishers in bays, rivers, lakes, coral reefs and mangrove forests in coastal municipalities all over the country (including gleaners and shell gatherers), seasonal fish pond workers, regularly-paid fish workers, and other groups who depend on non-fishing livelihoods activities in fishing communities. The latter group includes fish vendors, fish processors, fish buyers, and fish trap and boat builders.

1.3 Aquatic resources in the Philippines

The Philippines comprise a large coastal community with a total territorial water area of 2,200,000 sq km (including the EEZ, or Economic Exclusion Zone), 266,000 sq km of which are coastal. The coastline stretches to 17,460 km and coral reefs cover an area of 27,000 sq km. Administratively, the country is divided into 17 regions, 79 provinces, 115 cities and 1,495 municipalities and associated *barangays* which are the smallest geo-political unit in the Philippines.

The country has ten major lakes with a total area of 187,064 hectares. These are Laguna de Bay in Laguna and Rizal provinces, Lake Lanao in Lanao del Sur, Taal Lake in Batangas, Lake Mainit in Surigao del Norte and Agusan del Norte, Naujan Lake in Oriental Mindoro, Lake Buluan in Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Lake Bato and Lake Buhi in Camarines del Sur, Lake Dapao in Lanao del Sur and Lake Sebu in South Cotabato.

Fisheries production in the Philippines comes from aquaculture, municipal and commercial fisheries. Aquaculture and municipal fisheries account for 2,327,100 metric tons (MT) of annual total production of 3,369,300 MT, ranking 11th in the world in terms of fish production.

Marine municipal fisheries production from major fishing grounds total 807,524 MT (DA-BFAR, 2002). These major fishing grounds include the Visayan Sea, Bohol Sea, East Sulu Sea, Moro Gulf, Guimaras Strait, South Sulu Sea, West Palawan Waters, Lamon Bay, Leyte Gulf, Samar Sea, Davao Gulf, Cuyo Pass and Tayabas Bay.

⁷ Municipal fishing refers to fishing within municipal coastal and inland waters with or without the use of boats of three gross tons or less. Municipal waters include streams, lakes, inland bodies and tidal waters, public forest, timberlands, forest or fishery reserves, and marine waters within 15 kilometers of the coastline.

2. POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

2.1 Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160)

In 1991 the Philippines moved toward greater empowerment of people through decentralization efforts. With the passage of Republic Act (RA) 7160, political power, responsibility, functions and provision of services were devolved to Local Government Units (LGU), i.e., *barangays*, municipalities, cities and provinces.

Local Government Units (LGUs)

Most of the functions and services of the national government, including fisheries, are devolved to Local Government Units (LGUs). Rural coastal development may be viewed as one of the inherent functions of LGUs in accordance with their general powers for management within their territorial jurisdictions, which include municipal waters within 15 kilometers of the coastline. LGUs are authorized to pass local resolutions and enact ordinances that would strengthen implementation of national laws. They are also authorized to issue licenses and collect fees from any activities within their municipal jurisdiction.

In the context of aquatic resources management, the decentralization or devolution of power is viewed as a positive development but has also led to some complex implementation problems. For example, mechanisms to support fisheries management capacity-building efforts for local governments are necessary and the national line agency (BFAR) is expected to respond to this need, but is dislocated from this role by RA 7160, unless invited to do so by LGUs. In the absence of invitations to BFAR, some support has come from NGOs and private organizations in areas where they are present. However, due to limited resources, a considerable number of LGUs do not consider aquatic resources management important and do not receive this kind of support, thus fisheries extension services are rendered relatively ineffective.

2.2 Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1998 (RA 8435)

When the Agricultural Tariffication Act (RA 8178) was implemented in March 1996, the government created the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF), as a safety net to shield farmers from the entry of cheap imports. The ACEF is supposed to be funded from the proceeds of tariff collections from the Minimum Access Volume (MAV) system. Under Section 8 of RA 8178, the government was asked to collect ACEF from import duties of farm products under MAV until 2005, after which the import duties shall be reverted to the National Treasury. If RA 8178 is not amended, the nine-year lifespan of ACEF will expire on 6 March 2005.

An Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) became effective on 9 February 1998, in an attempt to provide an overall framework for the industrialization of the agriculture and fisheries sectors within the country. The provisions associated with the AFMA have implications for the management of coastal resources and hence also fisheries production.

The AFMA prioritizes industrialization as its main objective for the agriculture and fisheries sector by transforming it from a 'resource-based' to a 'technology-based' industry while "ensuring equitable access to assets, resources and services, and promoting higher value crops, value-added processing, agri-business activities, and agro-industrialization by enhancing the profits and incomes in the agriculture and fisheries sector, particularly small-scale farmers and fishers."

To date, few small-scale farmers have accessed available support because of rigid requirements and lack of information. As a result, most support has gone to large agri-businesses. The Philippines government said it would ensure the PhP 17 billion yearly appropriations for RA 8435, after President Arroyo committed in February 2004 to sign into law the proposed amendments, including a ten-year extension.

2.3 Philippines Fisheries Code of 1998 (RA 8550)

The primary mandate for aquatic resources management was further defined by the enactment of RA 8550 which became effective on 23 June 1998. RA 8550 is a product of a decade of struggle of NGOs and People's Organizations (POs) working in fishing communities to advocate for a law that is more attuned to the changes of the present time. RA 8550 is a codification of existing fisheries laws, but it has provisions containing policies which are new and innovative. Among these new concepts, the notable ones include:

- Limitation of access using scientifically determined procedures
- Integrated management consistent with inter-LGU cooperation as articulated in the Local Government Code, and
- Enhanced and institutionalized participation by the community through the various levels of FARMCs⁸.

The Code largely clarified issues pertaining to the extent of LGU jurisdiction in municipal waters and the operation of commercial vessels. Full implementation of the Code by the BFAR would ensure the dynamic participation of small fishers in fisheries development. The Code also aims for food security, but unlike AFMA, its approach is toward development, management and conservation of the aquatic resources to achieve food security. Thus, in terms of policy direction, the Code has some subtle

⁸ Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils

conflicts with AFMA. Operationally, BFAR takes its general directives from the Department of Agriculture (DA) and since the national directives coming from DA are more into maximization of production and modernization, it is expected that the regular programs of BFAR would also be in line with this directive. Thus, participatory resources management initiatives through special projects seldom get streamlined into the regular programs of the Bureau.

A mandatory review of the Code is to be undertaken every five years. NGOs and other private organizations made their own sectoral review of the Code and submitted their recommendations to BFAR. In turn, BFAR has facilitated its own review at regional and national levels in consultation with other stakeholders. NGOs and POs are hoping that their recommendations would be given due consideration in the final proposal for amendments that will be reviewed and acted upon by Congress.

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)

The Fisheries Code provided for the reconstitution of BFAR as a line bureau and the creation of the Undersecretary for Fisheries and Aquatic Resources under the DA to ensure that the needs of the fishing industry are attended to. The Bureau aims to improve aquaculture productivity within ecological limits; optimize utilization of off-shore fisheries and deep-sea resources; improve product quality; reduce post-harvest resources; conserve, protect and sustain management of the country's fishery and aquatic resources; alleviate poverty among municipal fishers and provide supplementary livelihoods; and provide a favorable policy environment conducive to increased investment, global competitiveness and people's participation. In pursuit of these aims, BFAR has to work with LGUs, which have now become its direct clients by virtue of RA 8550. BFAR does not directly engage with fishers because it is the LGUs who are given the power to plan, legislate, regulate, generate revenue, enforce laws and ordinances, relate with government agencies, POs and NGOs, and provide extension and technical assistance within their areas of jurisdiction.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCs)

One of the most relevant provisions of the Fisheries Code is the creation of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCs) at municipal/city and national levels. The FARMC is a recommendatory body composed of representatives from government, fisherfolk and non-governmental organizations. The majority of its members are representatives of different fishers' organizations.

Fishery Administrative Order (FAO) 196 was subsequently passed to provide guidelines on the creation and implementation of FARMCs. FAO 196 also defined the composition, tenure and functions of FARMCs at each level. There are still several issues that need to be addressed on the FARMC structure, the selection process, and clarification of the roles and internal mechanisms, which

would help to make it an effective vehicle for pursuing the real objectives of the fisheries sector it is supposed to represent. One of the major amendments recommended by NGO and PO groups for the review of the Code is the section on FARMCs.

2.4 NGOs and POs

There are many NGOs working in the outlying islands of the Philippines. The majority of them are forming regional and national networks to consolidate their resources and be more effective in providing services to the communities they are working with (Liamzon, 1990). There are also a growing number of sectoral issue-oriented networks formed around specialized agendas such as fisheries, agrarian reform, debt, women's rights and sustainable development. Among these NGOs, one large network working for fisheries reforms and advocacy is the NGO Network for Fisheries Reform (NFR). It was formed in 1994 when there was a clamor for a new fisheries code. NFR worked with fishers' groups, government and the media on several campaigns. The Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA), a secretariat of a national network of social development organizations and a stakeholder of STREAM Philippines, is an active member of NFR.

Most People's Organizations are cooperatives that were organized either by government agencies or NGOs. BFAR records show that there are 1,147 fishing cooperatives in the country. Eastern Visayas (Region 8) has the most fishing cooperatives (374) followed by the Bicol Region (Region 5) (112) and Western Visayas (Region 6) (118). However, it should be noted that not all of these cooperatives are active and those areas with NGO presence are the more active ones.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the STREAM Philippines Country Office are:

- Better understanding of the *livelihoods* of poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users by development workers, through the promotion of a Livelihoods Analysis Guide developed by STREAM, including BFAR and other national government agencies such DENR⁹, and DILG¹⁰, Local Government Units, Agricultural Offices including Batan in Aklan and Ivisan and Sapian in Capiz, academic and research institutions such as University of the Philippines Visayas, non-governmental organizations such as PhilDHRRA, Fisheries Councils such as Banate Bay Resource Management Council, Inc (BBRMCI) and Northern Iloilo Alliance for Coastal Development (NIACDEV), People's Organizations (POs) such as *Pagduso sa Agrikultura sa Tingub nga Aksyon sa mga Organisasyon sa Mangunguma Inc* (PATANOM), and media outlets such as Philippine News Agency (PNA) and Philippine Information Agency (PIA)
- Better understanding by *institutions* which support poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users of their own needs through the development and promotion of an Institutional Needs Assessment Guide
- Better *policy development* and improved programs in support of the livelihoods objectives of poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users through improved understanding and use of livelihoods approaches and by seeking opportunities to facilitate policy changes that support the objectives of people who are poor, and
- Improved communications among all STREAM stakeholders focused on enabling poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users to move out of poverty.

The initial focal areas are Western Visayas including the Sapian Bay and Banate Bay areas where BFAR Region 6 has on-going engagements, and areas where marine ornamentals collection and shipping occur, including Region 7.

STREAM Philippines aims to achieve the following outputs:

- Strategies, processes and practices to enable poor aquatic resources users to pursue their livelihoods objectives
- A Livelihoods Analysis Guide to help development workers focus on the objectives of fishers in crafting livelihood interventions

⁹ Department of Environment and Natural Resources

¹⁰ Department of Interior and Local Government

- An Institutional Needs Assessment Guide to help institutions acquire capabilities or improve current knowledge and skills to more effectively address development requirements of stakeholders
- A policy framework that would sustainably support the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users (see section 2), and
- Information, education and communication (IEC) materials that would effectively and efficiently communicate livelihoods strategies, processes and practices.

4. APPROACHES

4.1 Livelihoods

The provision of livelihoods support has long been a strategy for many projects in the Philippines, focusing on poverty alleviation and food security. The direction of such support, however, has been largely based on extending production technology and techniques. Few have looked into the livelihoods of people for whom projects are being provided. Similarly few BFAR staff have a clear understanding of a sustainable livelihoods framework approach and few project beneficiaries have been given opportunities to really look into what livelihoods they should undertake. It is in support of a broader understanding of livelihoods concepts that STREAM will work toward sharing of livelihoods approaches and analysis.

An April 2003 stakeholder orientation introduced the STREAM Initiative to participants, updated them on STREAM activities and consulted them on how they view their work with regard to that of STREAM. Stakeholders raised issues such as lack of funds and limited access to credit for poor people, lack of alternative livelihoods and Philippine 'livelihood projects' that are not sustainable. Along with information on the status of aquatic resources in the country, socio-economic conditions in coastal communities, and fisheries laws or ordinances that affect fishers, these issues would provide a platform to better understand and analyze poor people's livelihoods.

Within BFAR, a small Conversation Group has been organized to discuss livelihoods activities and look into why many activities are not successful or sustainable within communities. It is the purpose of the group to look into the details of livelihoods approaches and how communications influence communities as well as institutions. The Conversation Group evolved from the Livelihoods Approaches and Analysis Workshop conducted by STREAM in November 2003. Three 'livelihoods teams' composed of BFAR staff, LGU fisheries officers, NGO workers, FARMC and People's Organization leaders are involved. With support from STREAM and BFAR, the teams will develop a Livelihoods Analysis Guide as a tool for looking at livelihoods and ways to best support families, communities and organizations. The teams will field-test the Guide and look into ways of integrating it into effective ways of working. Where opportunities arise, STREAM shall seek support for community or other projects where livelihoods approaches can be used.

4.2 Institutions

The enactment of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 attempted to revitalize the fisheries sector toward sustainable development, conservation and protection with a view to attaining food security. A major project in this direction is the Fisheries Resource Management Project (FRMP) which focuses on resource rehabilitation and poverty alleviation in selected coastal areas. Where FRMP and

STREAM share similar objectives, the STREAM Initiative will work toward complementing capacity-building of BFAR staff and other partners in the areas of livelihoods approaches and analysis.

An institutional systems requirement report (Felsing, 2004) was recently undertaken for BFAR, where requirements for sharing or providing information were identified and recommendations made. STREAM will continue to work out the recommendations in collaboration with BFAR while developing the Livelihoods Analysis Guide and facilitating BFAR to work in this way, in cooperation with Local Government Units, People's Organizations and NGOs, to strengthen understanding and support among stakeholders and partners.

4.3 Policy Development

STREAM will seek support to propose the discussion and drafting of a national fisheries extension program. The program – which would aim to address the dislocation of the national line agency from its original clients – could serve as the framework for supporting local governments' fisheries programs.

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCs)

The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 encourages participation of local communities in aquatic resources management through FARMCs. The creation of the FARMC institutionalizes the major role of fishers and other resources users in the planning and formulation of sustainable development of fisheries resources. It was conceived as a community forum which would link BFAR and the LGUs. The FARMC structure has been in operation for some time, but BFAR internal reviews of the organization have revealed that a clear understanding of its role, and a great deal of empowerment and capacity-building, are needed before it could function effectively in all areas. On the one hand, adequate representation of fishers is constrained by low educational levels of fisher leaders, who as members of FARMCs are expected to negotiate with local government officials, politicians and industry leaders. On the other hand, despite FAO 196¹¹, the process of how to form FARMCs is still not clear to many. In fact, there are still municipalities where FARMCs were formed without any existing POs in the locality. In these cases, FARMC members were appointees of the mayor, which questions the validity of FARMCs as independent councils. It seems that the appreciation of the FARMC mechanism is still not fully developed within BFAR itself nor the LGUs (Felsing et al., 2003).

¹¹ Fisheries Administrative Order 196 of 2000, the guidelines on the creation and implementation of FARMCs

The FARMC mechanism is a positive innovation that needs to be continued and strengthened. In the context of a national fisheries extension program and strongly linked to IEC approaches, the STREAM Initiative will aim to work with others to improve appreciation of and strengthening of the FARMC concept.

4.4 Communications

A core objective of the STREAM Philippines Country Office is to develop information, education and communication (IEC) strategies that will appropriately communicate policies, processes, lessons learned and significant change stories to STREAM primary stakeholders (poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users, coastal communities and municipal fishers) along with secondary stakeholders including local and national government agencies, Local Government Units, non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, resource management councils, People's Organizations, the business sector and others in Asia-Pacific, through the STREAM Regional Office and direct links with Communications Hubs in other countries.

A communications strategy, building on the STREAM Information Access Survey (Felsing et al., 2003), should support and enhance BFAR's (including Region 6) IEC strategies to ensure continuity and sustainability of efforts in line with a national fisheries framework. The strategy shall evolve through discussions with BFAR IEC practitioners, STREAM partners and stakeholders, and will frame activities under the STREAM communications theme.

The STREAM Communications Hub enables regular exchange of information with other STREAM Country Offices in the region, including bi-monthly netmeetings, the STREAM website and annual regional conferences and other meetings where person-to-person sessions enable closer collaboration and sharing of experiences.

Regular communications vehicles include print media such as the quarterly *STREAM UPDATE* which announces and reports activities, the quarterly *STREAM Journal* in English and Ilonggo, which publishes articles, and monthly Media Monitoring Reports of current news and information on fisheries and aquatic resources from around the world. In addition, a wide range of reports and proceedings are shared as hard copies and also through the STREAM Initiative website, along with news and events, information about STREAM, persons to contact and activities from all Country Offices. News and developments in the STREAM Philippines Country Office are also shared via the BFAR website and its link to the STREAM Initiative website coordinated with the BFAR Fisheries Information Management Center.

5. PARTNERSHIPS

The Philippines Government requested the NACA Governing Council that it be included in the STREAM Initiative. A Partnership Agreement was signed and a Country Office was established in BFAR Region 6, in Iloilo City, in June 2002. The establishment of the Country Office outside of the national office in Metro Manila was a clear signal of the desire to engage closely with its primary stakeholders, i.e., poor and vulnerable aquatic resources users. The initiative is unique in that it is part of the intergovernmental NACA Work Program and is supported at the regional level by donors (e.g., Department for International Development [DFID] of the UK), international organizations (e.g., FAO) and international NGOs such as Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). These partners are active participants in shaping the direction of the initiative and providing technical and organizational support through some of their programs.

At the country level, STREAM is focusing on activities in Western Visayas, where it has begun to develop partnerships with provincial and municipal government units and other government agencies like DENR and DILG, NGOs such as PhilDHRRA, academic and research institutions such as University of the Philippines Visayas, People's Organizations and communities, particularly in the Sapián Bay and Banate Bay areas and Roxas City, Batasan Island, Tubigon in Bohol and Sabang, Olango Island in Lapu-Lapu City. These partnerships provide links to particular stakeholder groups within fisheries and aquatic resources.

Engagements with partners would depend on areas of interest and expertise. This would therefore evolve according to specific activities that would be undertaken.

6. RESOURCING

The implementation of this Country Strategy Paper will depend on availability of funds committed by donor parties and projects in collaboration with STREAM. As a regional initiative, STREAM does not have the resources at its disposal to fully fund the implementation of this CSP. Although STREAM can provide 'start-up' funds for each of the objectives outlined in this document, this contribution will be modest compared to the total funds required. Securing the resources to achieve the objectives set out in this CSP is therefore central to the STREAM Philippines mandate. It is recognized that securing these funds will be a challenge. It places a responsibility on, but also provides an opportunity for, STREAM Philippines, the STREAM Regional Office and all STREAM partners to work together to explore and follow up all potential leads.

The funds so far for the operations and activities of STREAM in the Philippines are derived from BFAR Region 6 and STREAM in Bangkok as stipulated in the Partnership Agreement. Although most of the current expenses are funded by STREAM, in the long term, routine operation would be via a self-sustaining model or be absorbed by BFAR.

7. REFERENCES

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