

Introduction to the Science in Ecosystem-Based Management Workshop

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Around forty percent of the world's population lives in coastal cities; many more are dependent on the food, raw materials and the other goods and services that the seas provide. In the future, this dependency will increase as population continues to rise and migration to the coast increases. However, at the very time that human dependency on the ocean is increasing, its health is declining as pollution over-fishing and climate change combine to threaten the sustainability of marine ecosystems. The challenge to environmental scientists, managers and politicians is to manage the competing pressures on the ocean so that the decline in quality is reversed.

In Southeast Asia the development of the coastal zone has been faster than any other part of the planet and within a generation has brought rapid population and industrial growth face-to-face with traditional low intensity coastal exploitation. Rapid development has forced the region to seek urgent solutions to coastal management, many of which can now be thought of as best practice worldwide. On the other hand, and in common with other tropical ecosystems, the region still requires fundamental understanding of the way in which its marine ecosystems function and are impacted by human activities. If politicians and planners are to sustain coastal exploitation they need means by which they can predict the consequences of their actions on the sustainability of the coastal resources that they exploit. In a world where the oceans are rapidly becoming warmer and more acidic, there will be a need to draw on some outside experience but much of the knowledge needed is specific and must come from research carried out within the region itself.



23-27 November • Manila, Philippines