

Making Invisible Information Visible: Impacts of the Manila Bay Area Environmental Atlas

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Making information visible means developing ways how information is used to improve the performance of an organization. It requires knowledge, information management, information technology and appropriate management policies in order to bring accurate and high quality information to stakeholders in a timely and understandable format. The Manila Bay Area Environmental Atlas was developed and packaged with the ultimate purpose of providing necessary information to stakeholders of Manila Bay Area in attaining their shared vision.

This paper discussed the effects and impacts of the Atlas two years after its publication. Following the objectives of the Atlas, the discussion focused on the following:

- enhancement of awareness of the stakeholders on the natural resources, and engineered structures, and the status of the environment of the Manila Bay Area

The Atlas reinforces the public awareness campaign in the Manila Bay Area. The Atlas is very informative. Aside from the textual information that was usually provided to the stakeholders, presentation of the set of information in a map captures the attention of the stakeholders on both the existing natural, social and economic features and the threats to these features in the area. While there has not been formal assessment on the effects of the Atlas on changing the stakeholders' behavior, it is apparent that the Atlas has contributed to their knowledge.

- provision of data and information for policy formulation, planning, decision-making, monitoring and overall management of MBA to fulfill the MB shared vision

Since the publication of the Atlas, many institutions requested and acquired information for use in their projects, organizations or offices. There have been policy changes,



improvement in planning and processes in environmental management. Some examples are:

- integrating land and water in the planning process,
- integrating climate change, and natural and anthropogenic hazards in planning and management.
- developing various projects to implement the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy
- clean-up operations of illegally established structure in the Manila Bay,
- strengthening the environmental impact assessment process by mapping environmentally critical areas, and
- suitability assessment for establishing mangrove plantations.

External effects were also discussed such the development of atlases of other river basins in the Philippines inspired by the experiences in compiling the MB Atlas.

This paper also tackled the sustainability issues of maintaining and updating the Atlas so that current information will be provided to the stakeholders in a more efficient and effective manner.

The Manila Bay Area Environmental Atlas has been a useful source of information for raising awareness of stakeholders and has contributed in improving performance of stakeholder, and the various agencies of the national and local governments to attain the shared vision of the stakeholders of the Manila Bay Area. Sustainability of the Atlas, which includes updating of data and facilities, is one of the major challenges that should be addressed in order to attain the ultimate goal of the Atlas of contributing to improved performance by the stakeholders.