

Fisheries Use Zoning: a FISH Project Initiative to Enhance Fisheries Resource Management Interventions

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To provide a structure and coherence among the various fisheries and coastal management interventions being established, the FISH Project, a 7-year technical assistance funded by USAID and implemented in partnership with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Philippine Government, introduced marine spatial planning (MSP) that focused on fisheries use zoning for defined marine ecosystem shared by municipalities in each target implementation area. This intervention was patterned after the MSP process introduced in the Great Barrier Reef but modified and abbreviated owing to the relatively much smaller spatial expanse of the area, on-going parallel initiatives in the area, technical staff on hand, and available financial resources. Also marine use zoning models developed in other tropical areas were taken into account, particularly: the Tun Sakaran Marine Park, Semporna Islands, Sabah, Malaysia; Wakatobi and Komodo National Parks, Indonesia, ICZM zoning scheme for Xiamen, China; the Integrated Land, Coastal, and Sea Use Zoning of Batangas Bay and Bataan Province, Philippines.

The MSP initiatives of the FISH Project are closely linked to the rest of the ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM) initiatives. The project implementation areas have more or less similar fishing and water-use activities but their development directions differ from one another and this became apparent later on in the setting of zoning objectives and prioritization of water-use activities. The entire fisheries-use zoning was carried out following the process of [1] orientation and objective setting, [2] mapping of current fisheries and other water uses, [3] determining and evaluating interaction among the various uses to identify possible multiple use conflicts and use and habitat incompatibilities, [4] mapping of current and future uses taking into consideration resolution of conflicts, [5] field validation with stakeholders and representatives of resource users, [6] consultation with local government executives and legislators, [7] finalization of fisheries use zoning maps, [8] consultation with a broad base of stakeholders and resource



users, and [9] legitimizing zoning plans through legislation or other kinds of policy instruments. Currently, one project site is almost done and the municipalities within are already the process of enacting the zoning maps into ordinance. The rest of the other areas are already in the phase of finalizing their zoning maps.

MSP, in general, or fisheries use zoning, in particular, became the structure that linked together the various fisheries resource management initiatives. It enhances the objectives for doing registration and licensing, it further puts spatial perspective to species-specific and fishing gear-specific management interventions, it rationalizes enforcement efforts, and finally, it sets the ground for the still on-going project activity to limit fishing effort and in putting in place an appropriate fishing effort configuration for each particular unit of marine ecosystem shared by various users.