

MPA Networking in the Philippines: Finding Synergy despite Adversity

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The diversity of cultures of the people dealing with the challenge of biodiversity conservation suggests that Filipinos show a wide range of ways doing things to adapt wisely to a rapidly changing world. MPA networking has been pursued in many areas of the Philippines and from a comparative investigation based on four network clusters in the focus areas assisted under the USAID funded Philippine Environmental Governance Project 2 suggests that most transactional costs can be overcome through MPA networking and inter-LGU alliance building. Four LGU Provincial MPA network clusters in Illana Bay, Camotes Sea, Southern Bohol and Northern Negros show important lessons learned in the crucial processes that help promote functionality of CRM efforts and processes through transparency, accountability and participatory decision making in areas of MPA planning and implementation as important entry to an overall CRM effort. The MPA networks link coastal law enforcement to fisheries management and biodiversity conservation. Adaptive management through joint participatory monitoring have been important capacity building measures to enjoin committees to learn on how to feedback and build confidence among MPA network members to share and learn from each other such as initiatives in CRM forums or State of the Coasts reports.

Value added benefits could be derived in addition to financial costs minimization through cooperative and complementary engagements in governance measures more than those derived through singular LGU approaches and at a sectoral and techno-ecological perspective. It also suggests that despite the real constraints of the biophysical condition of an area, starting with singular MPA efforts in strengthening are necessary but pursuing MPA networking in areas show areas where accelerated development can be achieved in through confidence building. Albeit the importance of political and institutional benefits that can be gained by explicit and environmental governance objectives, strategic science based adaptive management approaches are crucial in the transparency process and facilitates accountability and participatory decision making process. Incorporating these governance perspectives in evaluating MPA



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effectiveness at each MPA and at a network level not helps accelerate but also paves the way to sustainability and its overall sustainable development context.