

Supply Chain Interventions for the Benefit of Small Fishery Producers: Case Studies from the Philippines

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In the Philippines, small-scale fisheries, as common pool resources, remains beset by the problems of resource degradation and widespread poverty in coastal communities. Even as open access persists in most of the country's fishing grounds and state policies are unable to catalyze the development of an efficient and sustainable fishing industry, community-based coastal resources management (CBCRM) approaches centered on property rights are being increasingly adopted by fisherfolk and non-government organizations as both tactical necessity and strategic imperative.

With the CBCRM movement in the Philippines entering its second generation, there have been both successes and failures. There have been substantial gains in the area of resource conservation especially with marine protected areas as one of the main strategies being employed. However, this stands in stark contrast to assertions of small-scale fishers that they do not benefit economically from the market from their crucial role in coastal resource management.

This dilemma of market disempowerment is further embedded in the phenomenon of rapid global economic integration, which if not properly managed, threatens to exacerbate the plight of coastal communities. Specifically, there are dangers of unsustainable production spurred by the strong demand of global markets and breakdown of emergent community property rights regimes due to the pressure to privatize resources.

To deepen the investigation into the situation of small-scale fishers vis-à-vis other economic players at the local, national and global level, case studies analyzing the supply chain were conducted on selected fishery products, including milkfish, seaweed and tilapia. These studies focused on the dynamic of interlinkages in the fishing industry and sought to describe the full range of activities required to bring fishery products from capture/culture, through the different phases of production and delivery to final consumers. It inquired into the disjuncture between



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high levels of economic integration into national and global product markets and the extent to which countries and people actually gain from such integration.

Based on these studies, development interventions were initiated by local associations of small fishery producers with support from government agencies and non-government organizations. These interventions include enhancement of property rights arrangements, mitigation of externalities caused by fishery activities, and measures towards supply chain integration.

The case studies will highlight palpable changes, from the perspective of small producers, in the areas of governance and distribution of benefits along the supply chain with focus on sourcing of inputs, stability of resource tenure, and development of independent capacity in marketing and processing. Further, it will look into the possibilities of developing economic partnerships between small fishery producers and the private sector, through corporate social responsibility schemes, within the supply chain which could include initiatives on product certification, benchmarking and buying contracts.