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ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

An Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) is an integrated management approach across coastal and marine areas and their natural resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use of the whole ecosystem.



EAFM shifts away from the single-species fisheries management approach of the past and towards an approach that seeks to balance ecological and human well-being priorities through effective fisheries governance. EAFM is a practical way to achieve sustainable development while maximizing the ecosystem benefits of a fishery.

While catch documentation and traceability (CDT) supports the tracking of marine resources, it does not necessarily inherently promote sustainability and biodiversity conservation unless the CDT data gathered are actively used for and supported by sustainable fisheries management. The EAFM approach:

- Builds on and improves existing management;
- Links fisheries management across boundaries and jurisdictions;
- Builds on and integrates collaborative management and other participatory approaches;
- Integrates traditional, local and scientific knowledge;
- Strengthens the capacity of agencies through improved planning and cooperation;
- Promotes communication and trust;
- Increases support for improved governance, compliance and enforcement;
- Protects the fishing sector, other sub-sectors, and other fisheries users from negatively impacting each other; and
- Improves human capacity needed for sustainable development.

THE CHALLENGE

Fisheries face many threats and issues that reduce their potential to contribute to sustainable development. In the past, fisheries management has taken a single species approach, which has succeeded most often in temperate countries with existing good governance and compliance.

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However, effective fisheries management has always been a challenge in the complex multi-species, multi-gear fisheries of the Asia-Pacific region. As many of the region's coastal fisheries have declined, the need for more effective and equitable management has become increasingly evident.

USAID OCEANS' APPROACH

USAID Oceans encourages program partners to practice sustainable fisheries planning and management that is linked to catch documentation and traceability and human welfare objectives. To achieve these goals, USAID Oceans supports:

IMPROVED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLANS.

USAID Oceans is focused on advancing and strengthening fisheries management among ASEAN and Coral Triangle member countries, particularly in those bordering the biodiversity-rich Sulu-Sulawesi Seas. The program supports the development of EAFM-based Sustainable Fisheries Management Plans that define principles for the growth, control and maintenance of fisheries within an enabling framework that improves the health, productivity, and resilience of the whole ecosystem.

USAID Oceans' Sustainable Fisheries Management Plans consider the relationship between fishing activities and the ecosystem as a whole, and as such include social and economic implications, as well as management requirements. EAFM-based planning also addresses biodiversity, target and endangered species, waste and pollution, and the welfare and interests of all fishers—from artisanal, small-scale and subsistence fishers to large-scale producers.

DATA-DRIVEN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT. USAID Oceans supports national governments to link CDT systems with existing national information systems to improve fisheries management planning with data-driven decision-making. USAID Oceans provides technical assistance to national partners to link, improve and/or develop technical infrastructures that inform sustainable development.

CAPACITY BUILDING. In partnership with national institutions, USAID Oceans delivers workshops to build capacity for EAFM and strengthen local fisheries governance. USAID Oceans leverages established regional and national EAFM capacity building investments made in the region, including the expertise and experience of past and current USAID bilateral projects and other regional partners, particularly the Essential EAFM training program of SEAFDEC. Capacity building activities strive to increase participants' abilities to manage and monitor fisheries, including the labor and gender dynamics within the sector, for safe and sustainable fisheries.

USAID Oceans supports regional, national and local partners to further sustainable fisheries management planning. Working in tandem with the program's CDT, partnerships and human welfare activities, USAID Oceans implements EAFM activities that support traceability objectives and are inclusive of human welfare concerns including labor conditions, worker rights and gender equity. USAID Oceans has:

- Together with program partners SEAFDEC, CTI-CFF and national fisheries agencies, developed a sub-regional EAFM plan for the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, as well as framework plan for Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand.
- Conducted Rapid Appraisals for Fisheries Management and subsequently developed Sustainable Fisheries Management Plans for adoption in program learning sites that link with broader national management plans.
- Increased the capacity of national fisheries agencies to conduct Rapid Appraisals for Fisheries Management and develop EAFM-based Sustainable Fisheries Management Plans.
- Created a dialogue for linking learning site catch documentation and traceability systems with national fisheries information systems to support data-driven sustainable fisheries management.
- Documented USAID Oceans' learning site experiences to develop new EAFM training modules that include guidance for Catch Documentation and Traceability System design and development processes, as well as best practices for integrating gender equality and human welfare objectives throughout CDT and EAFM initiatives.

Learn more at seafdec-oceanspartnership.org or contact us at info@oceans-partnership.org.