

The Role of Government Network for Local-wide Resource Management in The Philippines¹

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ABSTRACT

Development of various coastal resource management in Philippines initiates putting more emphasis on community-based coastal resource management. Variety of community-based project which is particular successful examples illustrating how communities can manage their resource usually facilitated by NGOs, academic and generating external financial support. Major influence affecting the evolution of coastal management in the Philippines is the devolution of authority from central to local government (provincial, city, and municipality). Before the passage of RA 7160, Local Government Units (LGU) gave emphasis on the delivery of services but the hampered by limited range of functions and responsibilities. Weak powers and authority also delimit their role in term of finance and local decision-making process. With the passage of RA 7160 in 1991, the Code provided stronger role of local government. The LGU of Anilao, Banate and Barotac Nuevo, in Iloilo signed the Banate Bay Resource Management Agreement of 1996. They manage the Bay and meet common area development plans through the Banate Bay Resource Management Council, Inc (BBMCI). The creation of BBMCI was mandated to prepare and implement one holistic coastal resource management plan commonly beneficial to the participating municipalities.

Keywords: Coastal resource management, decentralization of coastal management, local government unit, RA 7160, BBMCI,

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1. "This paper provides information on the current issues on coastal resource management implemented in the Philippines. This highlights on the best practices on coastal resource management where the partnership of local government units enabled them to become more stronger, powerful and responsible in local governance."

2. It is the intention of this paper to present the experiences of the BANATE BAY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL, INC. in implementing the Banate Bay Coastal Resource Management (CRM) Program of the four adjacent municipalities sharing a common depleted fishing ground.

I. Background

3. The Philippines is an archipelagic country composed of 7,100 islands with a total coastline of 18,000 kilometers. With an estimated 80 million in present population, 62% are living in the coastal zone. There are 1,542 municipalities, where 832 are coastal municipalities and 25 are coastal cities.

4. Over the last 20 years, coastal areas in the Philippines have come under increasingly severe threats due to human activities. More than 75 percent of the coral reefs in the Philippines has been degraded from human activity (Chou et al. 1994; Gomez, et al. 1994). Mangrove forests are declining at a rate of 2,000 ha/yr with only 120,000 ha of mangrove forests remaining today from the 160,000 ha 20 years ago and 450,000 at the turn of the century (DENR 1995; White and de Leon 1996). Municipal fisheries production has been relatively stagnant for the last 20 years with recent and noticeable declines annually since 1991 (BFAR 1995, 1997). Coastal ecosystems and their natural ability to produce are being overexploited to the point of causing permanent damage to them. This means that future generations will have fewer resources and the natural productivity of the ecosystems will be significantly reduced (DENR, 2001).

II. Coastal Resource Management (CRM) Initiatives in the Philippines: Building on Experience and Lessons Learned

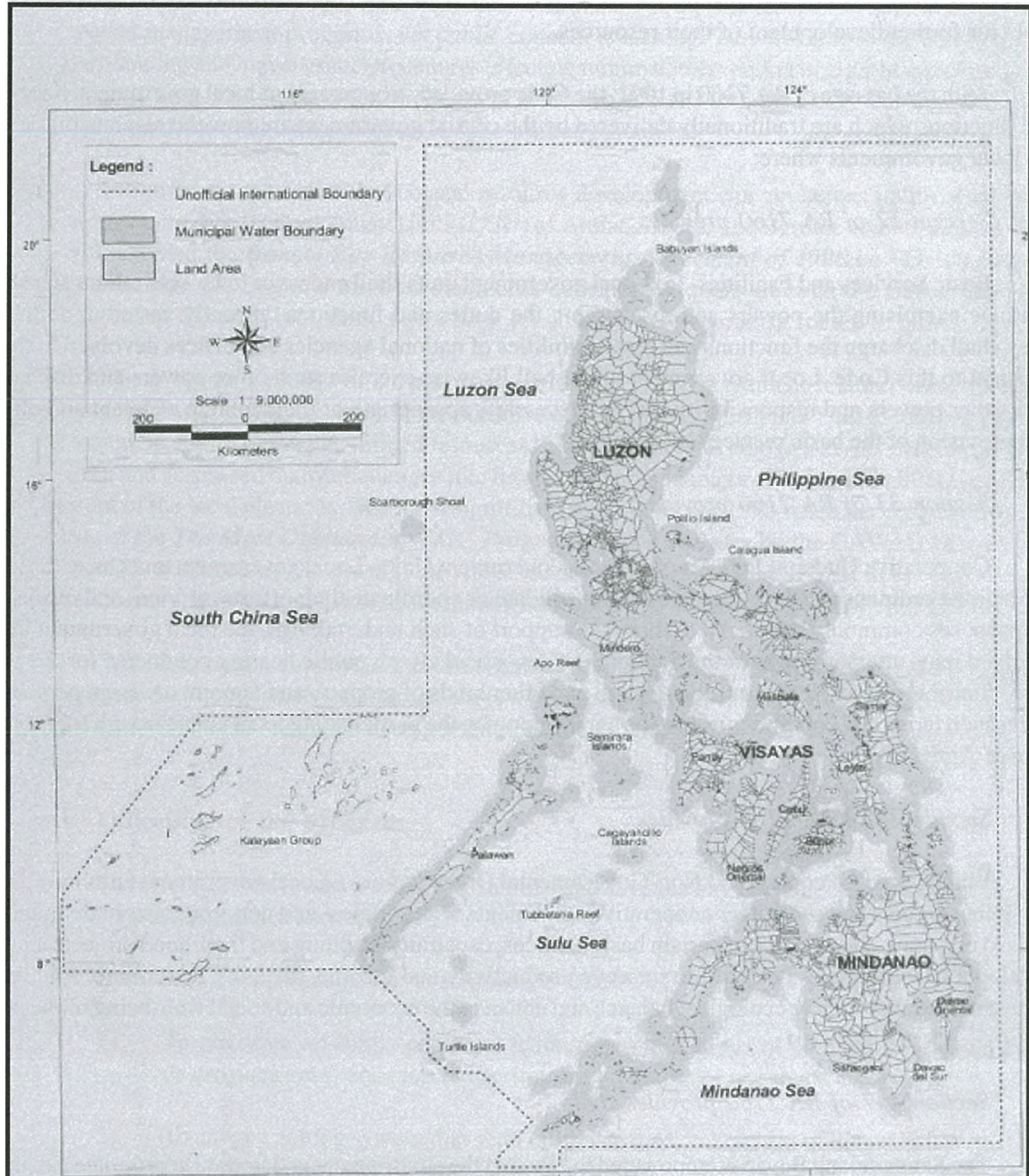
5. In the Philippines, changing coastal demographics, rapid population growth and unsustainable resource use patterns triggered the development of various CRM initiatives putting more emphasis on community-based coastal resource management.

6. The first is a variety of community-based projects that have resulted in successful examples showing how communities can manage their coastal resources usually facilitated by NGOs or academe and generating external financial support.

7. The second major influence has been a series of donor-assisted projects that have resulted in a number of pilot projects in coastal management and built on lessons from the small community-based models developed earlier. A thrust in all such programs has been the participation of local management from the bottom up. Although national government agencies has been involved in all aspects, national policies on CRM are still weak, and no one agency in the country has a significant and clear mandate for coordinating the management of coastal resources. The mandate for coastal management is shared, not well defined, and sometimes under dispute.

8. Another major influence affecting the evolution of coastal management in the Philippines is the devolution of authority from central to local governments (provincial, city and municipality). The challenge created by the decentralization of coastal management responsibility is that few coastal cities and municipalities have the capacity to manage their natural resources. They generally lack trained personnel, budget and capacity in planning and technical knowledge in coastal management. In spite of these limitations, the motivation among LGUs to manage their resources is increasing rapidly as they recognize the seriousness of the problem and what they stand to lose if no action is taken. And the real example of this is the Banate Bay Coastal Resource Management Program.

Administrative boundary map showing approximate municipal and city land boundaries and area covered by municipal waters in the Philippines





III. Coastal Resource Management as a Basic Service of Local Government

9. Before the passage of RA 7160, Local Government Units gave emphasis on the delivery of services but hampered by limited range of functions and responsibilities. Their role is also delimited by weak powers and authority in terms of finance and local decision-making process. Major taxes are imposed by the central government and the share from the proceeds could not cope up with financial needs of the LGU for further development of their resources.

10. With the passage of RA 7160 in 1991, the Code provided stronger role of local government. Services and functions which are traditionally delivered by the central government are now the responsibilities of the local governments where:

Section 17 of RA 7160 provides:

11. Basic Services and Facilities- (a) Local government units shall endeavor to be self-reliant and shall continue exercising the powers and discharging the duties and functions currently vested upon them. They shall discharge the functions and responsibilities of national agencies and offices devolved to them pursuant to this Code. Local government units shall likewise exercise such other powers and discharge such other powers and responsibilities as are necessary, appropriate or incidental to efficient and effective provision of the basic services and facilities.

Section 33 of RA 7160 provides:

12. Cooperative Undertakings Among Local Government Units- Local government units, may through appropriate ordinances, group themselves, consolidate or coordinate their efforts, services and resources for purposes commonly beneficial to them. In support of such undertakings, the local government units involved may, upon approval of the Sanggunian concerned after a public hearing conducted for the purpose, contribute funds, real estate, equipment and other kinds of property and appoint or assign personnel under such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon by the participating local units through Memorandum of Agreement.

Section 35 of RA 7160 provides:

13. Linkages with Peoples' and Non-Governmental Organizations - Local government units may enter into joint ventures and such other cooperative agreements with peoples' and non-governmental organizations to engage in the delivery of certain basic services, capability-building and livelihood projects, and to develop local enterprises designed to improve productivity and income, diversify agriculture, spur rural industrialization, promote ecological balance and enhance the economic and social well-being of the people.

Section 447 of RA 7160 provides that:

14. The Sangguniang Bayan is empowered to "Protect the environment and impose appropriate penalties for acts which endanger the environment, such as dynamite fishing and other forms of destructive fishing, illegal logging and smuggling of logs, smuggling of natural resources products and endangered species of flora and fauna, slash and burn farming and such other activities which results in pollution, acceleration of eutrophication of rivers and lakes or of ecological imbalance

IV. The Case of The Inter-LGU (Local Government Unit) Partnership for CRM of Banate Bay

15. *Banate Bay*, a common fishing ground of the municipalities of Anilao, Banate and Barotac Nuevo

all in the Province of Iloilo, Philippines, has traditionally been recognized as one of the richest fishing ground in Panay Island. The past decade showed that harvest from the Bay have significantly declined due to widespread over-exploitation and habitat degradation driving the marginal and sustenance fisherfolks to live a miserable life.

16. In the past, various agencies and institutions in the Philippines have experimented on a wide array of coastal management programs, yet public concern is lacking. This was due to the contemporary top-down planning and bureaucratic procedures effecting minimal intervention in the municipal level. With the passage of the Local Government Code of 1991 known as RA 7160, the Local Government Units were forced to address their own problems despite limited resources.

17. Premised on the belief that coastal resource development can cut across political and territorial boundaries, the Local Government Units (LGU) of Anilao, Banate and Barotac Nuevo, all in the Province of Iloilo signed the *Banate Bay Resource Management Agreement of 1996* on February 28, 1996 to jointly manage the Bay and meet common area development plans through the Banate Bay Resource Management Council, Inc., thus, a new hope for a blue – green paradise started to glitter.

18. The program's profile of success on coastal resource management features some elements that are quite impressive, one of which is the initiative of the Local Government Unit to join together on a co-management approach despite limited resources. The program was able to take-off even without external funding and surpassed many challenges like limited budget and major changes in political leadership as a turn-out of the local elections. The most significant success was in 1998 when the program was awarded as one of the *Ten Most Outstanding LGU Programs in the Country* by the GAWAD GALING POOK AWARDS, managed by the prestigious Asian Institute of Management (AIM) in cooperation with the Department of Interior and Local Government and Local Government Academy (DILG-LGA).

19. With the popular support of the community to the program, after the sixth year of program implementation, the municipality of Barotac Viejo an adjacent coastal municipality joined in the Inter-LGU Partnership for coastal resource management thus the program now expands to another Bay the Barotac Bay.

V. Objectives of the Program

20. To restore, preserve and create opportunities and save the bay from further deterioration by adopting management policies and strategies.

21. Specifically, the program aims to achieve the following:

- 1) To eradicate all forms of illegal fishing; ban operations of commercial fishing boats that destroy sea grass and stop indiscriminate gathering of sea shells and corals;
- 2) To adopt a zoning system that shall eliminate the construction of illegal fish pens, fishponds and other structures along and within the area;
- 3) To adopt a "regeneration" program like mangrove reforestation, and artificial coral reefs.
- 4) Organize the small fisherfolk into associations or cooperatives and develop their capacity to manage their own organizations.
- 5) To conduct continuous coastal zone research studies;
- 6) To maintain data banking system;



VI. Program components:

1. Institutional Development

One of the key success factors in any project is community involvement, that is why the BBRMCI invested on a long term public education program. Activities include community organizing, education and organizational development to enable them to become effective managers of their resources through adoption of approved practices.

2. Fishery Law Enforcement

Responsible for the review and codification of the laws of the four (4) municipalities. Stricter rules and regulation are adopted for the attainment of the goal and objectives of the program. A licensing procedure was recommended to effect legalization of fishing operations that served as the monitoring tool for municipal.

3. Resource Regeneration/Mangrove Reforestation

To restore the productivity of the Bay, projects like sea farming, mangrove reforestation; establishment of reserve areas and sanctuaries were adopted. An integrated zoning plan was developed and implemented as incorporated in the respective municipal fishery ordinances.

4. Coastal Zone Research and Data Banking

This involves inventories and profiling, conduct of verification studies as output of research activities and project monitoring and evaluation.

5. Livelihood Development

To provide sustainable livelihood options giving priority to small-scale fishermen affected by the enforcement of the management plan, livelihood projects were introduced on the program's second year of implementation. This includes swine fattening and livestock dispersal projects, culture of sea shells, bivalves, mollusks and seaweeds, gear production and marketing, value adding, and small-scale fishing.

6. Infrastructure Development

Provision of post harvest facilities to improve quality of products. Establishment of coastal resource center for trainings and convention, settlement area for indigent fishermen families and improve farm to market roads .

VII. what has been done?

- 1) The participating municipalities entered into an agreement to jointly manage the bay resources. Stipulated in the agreement is to create a body that will be responsible in carrying out their approved CRM plan. The body was supported in terms of its financial need for operation and manpower requirement.
- 2) The creation of Banate Bay Resource Management Council, Inc. (BRMCI) which was mandated to prepare and implement one holistic CRM plan commonly beneficial to the participating municipalities.

- 3) The forging of a Memorandum of Agreement among various agencies to collaborate and fast track their mandates. There are eleven agencies serving as an advisory body to the Council. The group is called the Multi-Sectoral Management Committee that meets regularly.
- 4) Preparation and implementation of an integrated zoning plan. Six zones were identified based on management purposes.

Zone I- Brackish Water Fishponds and Water Tributaries

Covers all river systems including its tributaries and all brackishwater fishponds, developed and undeveloped.

Zone II- Mangrove Areas

Covers the area measuring a distance of not less than fifty (50) meters from the peripheral dikes of fishponds going seaward with or without aquatic vegetation.

Zone III- Tidal Flats

Covers all foreshore areas exposed during the lowest low tide excluding mangrove cover designated for conservation and management of sea shells.

Zone IV- Shallow Water Fishing Area

Refers to the area with a water depth of 0.5 to 10 meters during the lowest low tide. This area is reserved for shallow water fish coral, fish shelter, stationary lift net, crab pots, fish pots, cast net, push net (catching hipon during season), culture of mussel/oyster culture, gathering of bangus fry and for mariculture purposes.

Zone V- Deep Fishing Area

Refers to the area with water depth of more than ten (10) meters during low tide. This area is open to all gears except for active gears. The deep sea fishing areas comprise all waters within the marine municipal waters beyond ten (10) meters depth.

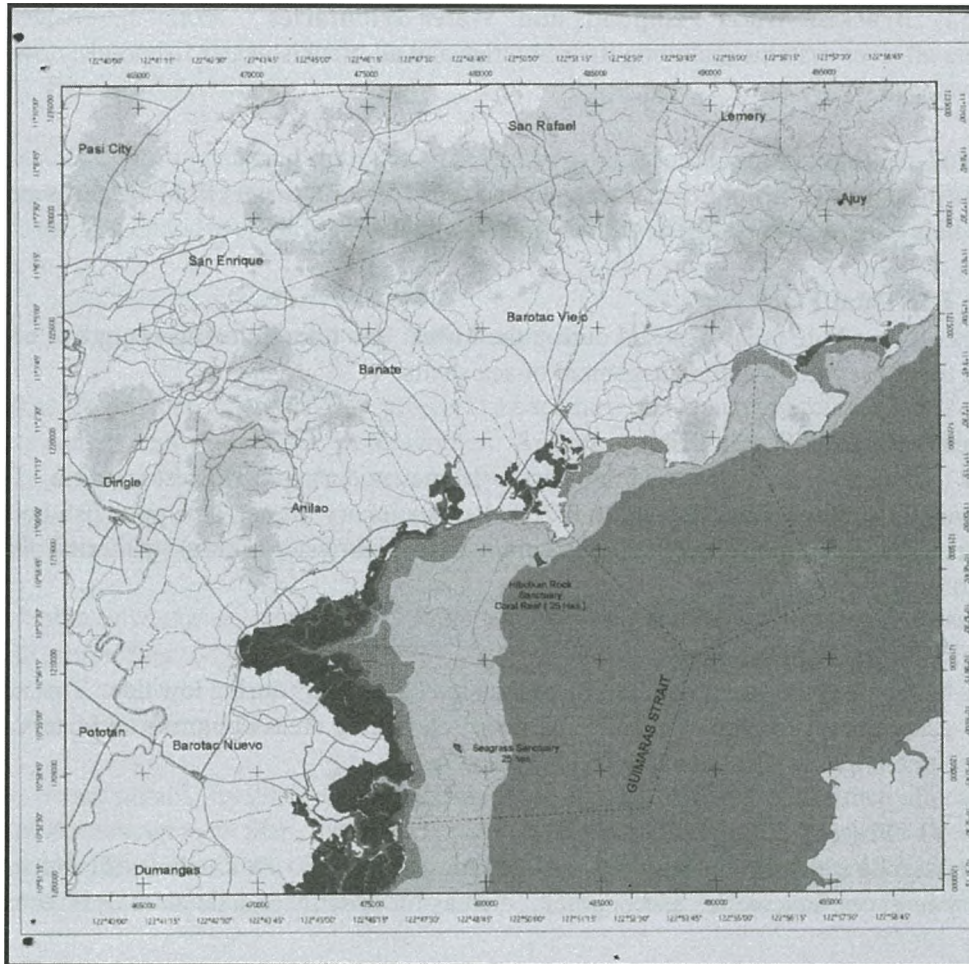
Zone VI- Fishery Refuges/Sanctuaries

Comprises the area included within the geographic coordinates. This includes all areas declared as fishery reserves, sanctuaries and/or reserved areas for specific aquatic animals or ecosystems.

- 5) Harmonized Municipal Fishery Ordinance. Rules and regulations are the same as reviewed and approved by their respective legislative body before the implementation;
- 6) Created the following attached committees:
 - a. Multi-Sectoral Management Committee composed of experts from the different national agencies that forged MOA with the Council;
 - b. Executive Committee – composed of the Local Chief Executives of the four municipalities and the Executive Director;
 - c. Local Task Force on Law Enforcement – composed but not limited to representatives from the Philippine National Police (PNP), Office of the Municipal Mayor, Office of the Municipal Agriculturist, Office of the Municipal Treasurer, Association of Barangay Captains (ABC), Barangay Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (BFARMC), Deputized Fish wardens, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries of each municipality;
 - d. Barangay Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (BFARMCs)



Map of Benate Bay



- 7) Organized and strengthened fisher folk associations and cooperatives
- 8) Participated in the preparation of the Executive Agenda of the participating municipalities.
- 9) Established data bank and conducted research and assessment of the area
- 10) Conducted aerial videography and coastal mapping of the area
- 11) Provided sustainable livelihood projects to fisher folk beneficiaries.
- 12) Provided continuous CRM advocacy among the stakeholders.
- 13) Established resource regeneration projects like, artificial reefs, mangrove nurseries .

VIII. Problems Hurdled:

- 1) Limited funds for alternative livelihood projects. Many fishermen were affected with the management policies. Through a continuous education campaign they are willing to go into other types of income-generating projects that are in consonance with management policies. In order to help our fishermen, the Council identified and prioritized needs and coordinated with various institutions for assistance (e.g. Department of Agriculture (DA), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)), Provincial Government of Iloilo, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Local Government Support Program (LGSP), Politicians and NGOs).
 - 2) Limited office facilities/equipments. The Council started to operate with one old typewriter. Important documents were done in the Office of former Board Member Pablito Araneta (Founding Chairman). A computer set was purchased in 2000 through a Cash Award from the Local Government Academy upon winning as one of the Gawad Galing Pook Awardees in 1998. Due to lack of tables, other detailed BBRMCI staff provided their own. At first, monitoring and surveillance of Banate Bay was difficult and expensive due to lack of patrol boat and the Council had to hire pump boats. Later, as a result of the continuous education campaign, fishermen became supportive and allow their boats to be used by the Council without cost.
 - 3) Change in political leadership. After two years of operation, there was a change in leadership due to the 1998 local election. The newly-elected officials (3 mayors and majority of the Municipal Councilors, Barangay Officials) had limited knowledge about the program and less supportive, the Development Task Force finds it hard to implement the plans and programs smoothly. To address the problem, the Council conducted a series of dialogues and program orientation. This resulted to their positive view over the program and necessary support was generated.
 - 4) People's attitude towards change. At the start of the program, the Council conducted a series of education campaign and pulong-pulong (dialogues) in the thirty (30) coastal barangays on the plans, programs and management policies. For a while, the fishermen reacted negatively because their income will be greatly affected. However, due to the continuous education and trainings, the fisherfolks became aware of the program and have come to realized their important roles in the sustainability of the bay's resources and that they are not merely users but resource managers.
22. This resulted to an active fishermen participation that activities like survey and data gathering, attendance to meetings, mangrove planting, project monitoring and planning had become a voluntary act of the fishermen.



IX. Lessons Learned:

- 1) Multi-sectoral cooperation was the greatest strength of the program. The Inter-LGU partnership was strategic but the functional roles of the POs and National Government Agencies, academe and research institutions were instrumental to the success of the program. Today, there are 11 agencies collaborating with Banate Bay Resource Management Council, Inc.
- 2) Strong political will of the Municipal Mayors was responsible for the initiative to save Banate Bay. They have shown their commitment in pursuing their development agenda by sharing their limited financial and human resources to get things started. They were not discouraged by the lack of support from the national government nor assistance from external institutions. LGU program and projects initiated by the LGUs themselves seem to attract more support from other sectors/institutions.
- 3) The presence of full-time professional staff in the BBRMCI may also be cited as one success factor. In many CRM programs, the CRM Council are simply Ad time. In the case of Banate Bay, each municipality assigned permanent fishery technicians detailed on a full-time basis to BBRMCI directly under the Executive Director. This ensured continuous implementation of the activities and project under the Banate Bay Resource Management Program despite any revamp in the LGUs.

X. Future Plans:

- 1) Strengthening of fishermen association and integration of association into cooperative. As of this writing, there are 17 existing fishermen's organization organized by BBRMCI duly registered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) while 25 others were strengthened and assisted.
- 2) Delineation of Municipal Waters and demarcation of reserve areas. The plan to delineate municipal waters and territorial boundaries of the Bay for protection and conservation .
- 3) Establishment of Breeding Center for Fin fishes and mollusks to sustain stock. The establishment of breeding centers for fin fishes like groupers, sea bass and tilapia will augment stocks of these species which were found to be depleting.
- 4) Establishment of infrastructure (post harvest facilities, fisher folk settlement area, farm to market road). There is a need to establish ice plant and cold storage facilities (at present only one ice plant is servicing the northern towns of Iloilo), fish landing facilities in strategic areas within the bay and a settlement area for marginal fishermen. Additional access roads will improve the delivery of goods from the coast to the market areas.
- 5) Certificate/standardization of products coming from the Bay area for global competitiveness. Famous bay products like blue crabs, shrimps, breams, sardines and mackerel, bangus and rare sea shells needs to be certified to met the foreign standards and compete in the international market.
- 6) Development of Eco-Tourism Area. There is a bright future for the declared 100 hectare Mangrove Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary (in Palaciawan & Tiwi, Barotac Nuevo) to be developed as an eco-tourism area where at least 21 Avifauna species (shore and migratory birds) now permanently abound the dense mangrove stands. This area along with the proposed eco-tourism area off Talisay Point in Barotac Nuevo will bring development coupled with conservation in the area. Mangrove Reserve may also be a site for future laboratory/field training for students and practitioners having related interests.

- 7) Establishment of Coastal Resource Management Center for Panay Island. The ultimate dream of the BBRMCI is to cater to the needs of the visiting parties (local and international) in the wide-spread utilization of Community-Based CRM strategies and opportunities in improving the lives of the coastal communities through the establishment of a CRM Training Center.
- 8) Enhancement of Mangrove and Forest Nurseries in the Barangay Level. The enhancement of mangrove areas will be effectively implemented with the establishment of forest nurseries in the barangay level, raising the awareness of the residents on the multiple benefits derived from upland and mangrove reforestation projects. This in turn will be a livelihood opportunity for the communities who will answer the need of seedling requirements of the reforestation and enhancement projects.
- 9) Establish alliance with upland municipalities. The proposed alliances on the neighboring upland municipalities (Dingle and San Enrique) was already initiated by the past and present LGU leaders. A more concrete plan will have to be drawn.
- 10) Intensify linkages with funding institutions (internal and external). Continuing efforts are focused in strengthening linkages with previous partners like the CIDAs Local Government Support Program, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Philippines, the various national agencies and other NGOs. Further collaboration with other agencies possibly with research institutions and other funding agencies will be included.
- 11) Identify and develop sustainable livelihood projects like:
 - a. cage culture of fin fishes
 - b. gracillaria culture
 - c. mud crab culture in magroves
 - d. micro-enterprise development
 - e. value adding of locally available marine products such as blue crabs, bangus shrimps, sardines and herrings

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