Philippine Fisheries Code: Some Features and Prospects

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Two Bills in Congress

Questions pertaining to the fisheries code are manifold: Will it be passed? Which version? Which provisions will be maintained? Who will stand to benefit?

Two versions of the Fisheries Code have emerged from the 10th congress. From the Upper House is Senate Bill No. (SN) 1708 entitled, "An Act Providing for the Management and Conservation of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Creating for the Purpose the Department of Fisheries, Integrating All Laws Pertinent thereto, Appropriating Funds therefore, and for Other Purposes." This bill consolidates 13 bills that dealt with specific items such as a) conservation and management of seaweeds and aquatic invertebrates; b) intensification of production and provision of post-harvest techniques for fish, shellfish and marine life; c) repeal of laws, particularly those referring to coral resources; d) banning of the exportation of raw sea shells and fresh seedlings of seaweeds; and e) institutional strengthening. Three of these 13 bills deal with the codification of existing fishery laws and were authored by Senators Macapagal and Shahani. Senators Sotto III, Romulo, Maceda, Osmeña III, Macapagal, Mercado, Shahani and Alvarez are the authors of SN 1708.

SN 1708 was passed last August 5, 1997 upon the Third and Final Reading after having gone through a period of amendments and interpellation beginning in March 1997. The title of the bill as approved is "An Act Providing for the Development, Management and Conservation of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Renaming for the Purpose the Department of Agriculture as Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Integrating All Laws Pertinent thereto, Appropriating Funds therefore, and for Other Purposes."

From the Congress is House Bill (HB) No. 7366 entitled, "An Act to Codify All Laws on Fisheries and Aquatic Resources," which consolidates seven versions dealing mostly with the codification of laws on fisheries and aquatic resources and the democratization of its utilization and management. HB 7366's main sponsor is Congressman Jose T. Villarosa who chairs the House Special Committee on the Fisheries Industry composed of Congresswoman Acosta, Congressmen Albano, Dragon, Abad, and Tañada and members of the special committee on the fisheries industry.

HB 7366 is presently undergoing the period of interpellation, a procedure in legislative bodies wherein an official(s) is asked to explain a bill or a policy.

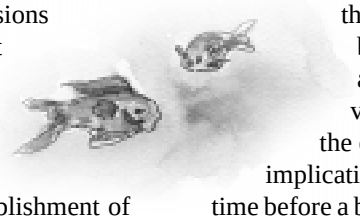
The Senate version recognizes the spread damage of aquatic resources, low aquaculture

productivity, under utilization of the offshore and the Exclusive Economic Zone, overexploitation of the near-shore coastal resources and poverty among municipal fisherfolk. Likewise, the rationale invoked by the House in said sponsorship is "the continued deterioration of the marine ecology and the resulting reduction in the stocks of marine resources such as fish, crustacean, and seaweed." Both versions support the codification, amendment and update of existing laws to reflect "recent changes in our marine environment and economics."

Features of the Fisheries Code

Both Senate and House versions contain significant improvements from Presidential Decree (PD) 704 in the area of resource management and conservation and of assigning use rights and privileges to Filipino citizens. PD 704 has been used as the framework for fishery management for two decades now. It is development-oriented with policy statements emphasizing the "acceleration and promotion of the integrated development of the fishery industry" and the industry being a "preferred area of investment." While it cannot be said that conservation and protection initiatives were ignored in PD 704, such initiatives were limited in scope—mostly closed seasons, fish sanctuaries, illegal fishing and exportation of *bangus* (milkfish) fry—and did not have the implementing guidelines on which to operate. In contrast, both senate and house versions invoke the framework of sustainable development, taking note of maximum sustainable yield, total allowable catch and fishing effort limitations. The Senate version, moreover, suggests that fishpond lease agreements (FLA) and license fees for commercial fishing vessels be based on economic rent, a concept espoused by fisheries scientists worldwide, as a resource management criteria.

PD 704 is not just silent over who should have exclusive claim to the country's marine resources but, in fact, allows foreign equity of up to 40%, the limit allowed by the 1971 Philippine Constitution. The Senate and House versions state that the country's fishery resources are for the exclusive use and enjoyment of Filipinos. The Senate and House versions provide priority to municipal fisherfolk and their organizations/cooperatives (depending on definition) in the exploitation of municipal and demarcated fishery areas. Moreover, both versions bestow management rights to the people who directly use the resource and, in fact, upholds and encourages the establishment of Resource Management Councils from the *barangay* (village) to the national level.



Another noteworthy improvement from PD 704, although espoused solely by the senate version, is the concept of integrated development. This is stated in the Declaration of Policy, Sec. 2(f), and Sec. 13, *Permits for environmental impact projects*, which provides for the incorporation of externalities induced by upland and terrestrial activities on fisheries. Sec. 17 further states that "management of contiguous fishery resources such as bays and gulf, which straddle several municipalities or provinces, shall be done in an integrated manner, and would not be based on political subdivisions of municipal waters."

Likewise, the attempt to codify all laws relevant to fisheries will improve and streamline responsibilities towards fisheries management and enforcement.

The Senate and House bills contain provisions that various stakeholder groups consider inimical to their welfare. These groups include small fisherfolk, commercial fishers, academe, peoples' organizations and non-government organizations and government institutions. These stakeholders have varied agenda. Thus, specific provisions that tend to favor one sector prove to be detrimental to another. The points of contention between the house and senate versions are discussed here not just to highlight similarities or differences but also in relation to the legislative procedure. This process highlights the system of review in both Houses. Thus, if a provision in one version runs counter to the other, this would have implications on the length of time before a bill is finally passed, or if the bill is passed at all. The "critical" provisions of the proposed Fisheries Code from both houses of Congress are as follows:

SN 1708 and HB 7366 maintains the definition of municipal fishing as those below three gross tons or those not requiring the use of fishing vessels. Both versions maintain that only municipal fishing is to be conducted in the seven kilometer area and in all bays (The House version assigns responsibility to the Authority to determine which bays to close to all commercial fishing.).

A critical feature of both versions is the clarification of jurisdiction over the 7 to 15 km area of municipal waters (see box on page 13). The laws that presently govern municipal waters as defined by the Local Government Code (LGC), include PD 704 (as amended

PROVISIONS	SENATE VERSION	HOUSE VERSION
use of municipal waters	SN 1708 provides for the LGU to authorize or permit small and medium commercial fishing vessels to operate within 7 to 15 km, provided that: a) there will be no commercial fishing in municipal waters with depth less than 7 fathoms; b) fishing activities use methods and gears that are consistent with national policies; c) prior consultation with the municipal or city FARMC has been conducted; and d) applicant vessels as well as the ship owner, employer, captain and crew have not violated this Code, environmental laws and other related laws.	HB 7366 provides for the municipal or city government, acting through its local chief executive and acting pursuant to an appropriate ordinance, to authorize or permit small scale commercial fishing vessels and gears to operate beyond 7 up to 15 km from the shoreline of municipal waters as defined herein, provided that all the following are met: a) such fishing activity is determined to be consistent with national policies set by the Administration (Philippine Fisheries Administration) and b) prior consultation with the local FARMC has been conducted.
fishpond lease agreements	SN 1708 provides for areas leased for fishpond purposes to be no more than 25 hectares.	HB 7366 provides for areas leased for fishpond purposes to be no more than 50 hectares for individuals and 500 hectares for corporations or fisherfolk organizations.
institutional arrangements	SN 1708 proposes the renaming of the Department of Agriculture to that of Department of Agriculture and Fisheries with an Undersecretary for Fisheries.	HB 7366 proposes the creation of a Philippine Fisheries Administration attached to the Office of the President.

by PD 1015), Letter of Instruction 1328, Fishery Administrative Order (FAO) 156 and FAO 164 which specify the allowable types of fishing activities within the 7 km and 7 fathom-depth area. These laws, when interpreted with the LGC, leave a "vacuum" as to the management of the area not otherwise covered, i.e., 7 to 15 km. Presently, this controversy has sparked a flurry of legal and policy interpretations on the right of the local government units (LGU) to allow or disallow commercial fishing, in general, in these disputed waters.

The positive aspect of both versions of the proposed Code is its consistency with the LGC as it assigns to the local chief executive full jurisdiction over municipal waters. Moreover, enough safeguards have been installed to minimize discretionary and abusive regimes, such as prior consultations with Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Councils (FARMC) and closure of bays. Nevertheless, the small scale fishery sector consider such safeguards as futile especially in situations where local chief executives or their cohorts are themselves the beneficiaries of commercial fishing enterprises. The long and lasting solution is vigilance on the part of people's organizations such as FARMCs and a wise electorate.

Both versions provide for the granting of FLAs to existing fishpond operators upon expiration of said FLA. The difference lies in the permissible area which is less than or equal to 25 hectares, for the Senate version, and 50 hectares for individuals and 500 hectares for corporations or *status quo* (as

provided for by PD 704), for the House version. The Senate version also provides that the assignment of priority rights to existing FLA holders be limited to the first 25 hectares only (Sections 35 and 36).

The argument against the common provision is the violation of preferential treatment to fisherfolk and their cooperatives. Likewise, the issue of inter-generational equity may be invoked because the privilege to use the resource, for which the initial lease already constitutes 25 years, excludes the present non-users. It can thus be argued that present FLA holders have already benefitted from the use of this resource and that it is but fair to afford other parties to avail of the benefits for the next 25 year-lease period. On the other hand, granting the privilege to present holders may argue on the basis of economic efficiency. Current FLA holders know the production and marketing strategies while new entrants would have to undergo a "learning" process.

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Similarly, the difference in permissible hectarage is a reflection of equity and efficiency considerations.

The initial proposal of the Senate version was the creation of a Department of Fisheries, separate and distinct from the Department of Agriculture (DA). However, the creation of a new department is perceived to be unresponsive to the urgent problems of fisheries overexploitation. The proposal was therefore watered down in its present and approved version, to that of an attached department to the DA. Nevertheless, the Senate version involves the reconstitution of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources into a line bureau with regional, provincial and municipal offices established.

The House version proposes the creation of the Philippine Fisheries Administration with regulatory and supervisory functions, attached to the Office of the President. Meanwhile, a parallel entity, the National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Board, is proposed to perform corporate as well as governing and policy making responsibilities.

Among the various points of contention of the two Houses of Congress, that pertaining to institutions is the least problematic and controversial, with impending solutions already in sight.

Prospects for the Fisheries Code

The past. Earlier versions of the fisheries code have been deliberated upon during the eighth and ninth congress with Sen. Agapito Aquino and Sen. Santanina Rasul, acting as main sponsors, respectively. Both bills have been shelved, archived and refiled.

Thus far, three landmark legislations pertaining to the environment have been passed by the eighth and ninth congress, a total of six years. These include Republic Act (RA) 7942, The Philippine Mining Act; RA 7076, The Small-scale Mining Act; and RA 7586, The National Integrated Protected Areas System Law.

What lies ahead. The Senate version was passed on its Third Reading, August 5, 1997. The House version is still undergoing a period of interpellation, i.e, Second Reading. After the Third Reading, both versions will then be referred to the bicameral conference committee, known candidly as the "Third Congress." This committee harmonizes conflicting provisions of the two versions. Thereafter, the conference committee report is approved by both chambers and is submitted to the President for approval.

Whether a version of the Code will be passed soon is not clear. Nonetheless, that the two versions are converging on certain issues and appear to be more and more parallel to each other is positive. With the exception of the proposed institutional set-up, the earlier points of contention appear to have been ironed out.

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Planning for Integrated Coastal Management: What Are the Steps?

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What is a Plan?

Why do we always talk about planning? Why can't we go directly to required actions? In practice, whenever we want to undertake any meaningful action to effect change in human behavior, the state of our environment, or other results, we have to make plans. In short, planning is the process of organizing our ideas and resources to make things happen. A plan expresses a detailed program of action. It is orderly and logical. The process of planning involves arranging actions so that they add up to a desired result. Ultimately, plans help us to devise projects to realize achievement, both simple and complex. Plans are a prerequisite to any form of management.

Integrated Coastal Management Plans

Integrated coastal management (ICM) is really a large set of goals and objectives we set out to achieve. ICM includes many activities—often complex ones—which are carefully arranged in plans. A plan can arrange actions to solve very specific problems such as the degradation of a small mangrove forest. Or, a plan may organize all the required actions to manage the coastal resources in one municipality covering 100 kilometers or more of coastline. A plan can layout a work schedule for a project team for only three months. Or, a plan can set out a series of goals, objectives, policies, strategies and actions which involve hundreds of people and their work for over five years. Plans for ICM are inherently variable depending on their overall intended purpose. They change with time as they evolve. But without good plans, we cannot easily move ahead.

There is always a trade off between short and long term planning and action and indeed, differing opinions exist among persons who have biases for one or the other. For example, the politician of two to four years duration wants plans which produce almost immediate results. He or she wants to increase fishery production at all costs and show tangible monetary benefits for his constituents. The politician wants livelihood opportunities which produce quickly. This may have to be done at the cost of longer term production and stability of the natural coastal resource base. On the other hand, the planner for sustainable development will have another bias. He or she will prefer to develop plans which ensure long term protection of environmental resources and natural production, because he/she knows that short term gains often cause long term losses. This is very evident in the Philippines today with respect to the state of mangrove forests

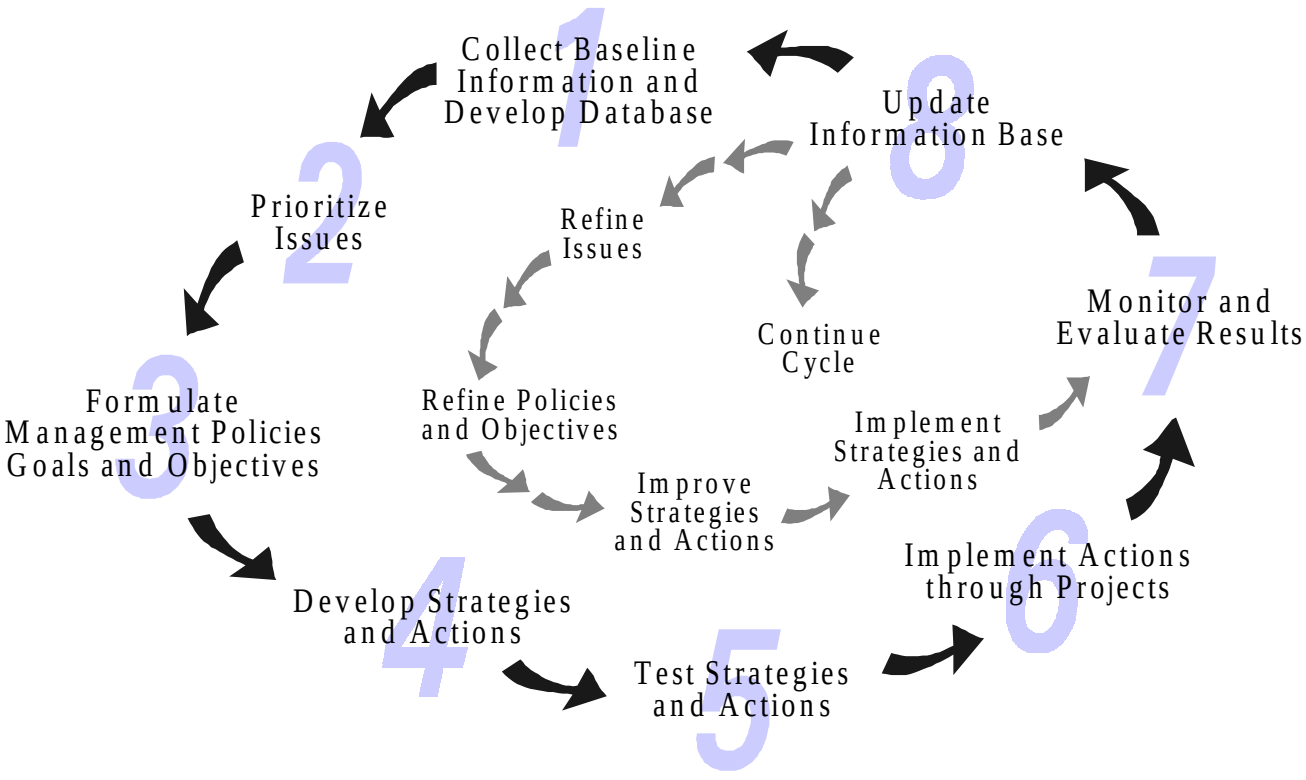

FIGURE 1. BASIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE.

which are not nearly as productive as 50 years ago. Plans and their time horizon can make the difference in outcome. But, since people make plans, their own perspectives and biases will inherently affect the contents and results of the plans!

Regardless of the size, scope and complexity of a plan, there is a planning process and certain basic ingredients. Various programs in the Philippines and abroad have, through experience, helped us determine what is essential in the planning process to achieve results in both the short and long term.

Basic Planning Process and Contents

Figure 1 shows us a basic planning and implementation cycle. All plans and management evolve from an information base. The better quality the information, the more realistic the plan. Plans made from hearsay are very unreliable and will lead people astray and cause damage. Thus, obtaining reliable information is the first step in planning. The question then arises as to how much information and what sources we should utilize. For ICM planning, we usually start with secondary information and then go to field assessments and interviews with people to collect primary data. The problem is that this is time consuming and expensive so we have to decide what is essential for good ICM planning. This often involves some debate. Good planning for fisheries management, as an example, usually requires data on fish stock status and ecology. This can require one or more years of costly field research. Short term ICM planners usually do not want to wait for this input. But, in the long run, reliable data of this kind is essential to plan for fisheries management. Of course if we know that a local fishery is already overfished, then our task is easier and we can plan only for the conservation side of management—not further

exploitation. But knowing that fisheries are already overexploited is not so easy as it seems! This is because there are usually many different fisheries to consider!

The basic planning cycle continues to formulate plans once good information is available. Plans need a focus so that they do not attempt to solve too many problems at once. Thus, identifying management issues and deciding on their level of importance are essential first steps in determining what comes first. Issue analysis and prioritization helps us decide where to start. If our reef is being blasted to pieces and the reef is the major resource of a coastal area, it is easy to prioritize the issue of blast fishing. But as we begin to analyze contributing causes to blast fishing, we will probably realize that the task is not as easy as it first appears. The blast fishers may come from afar which highlights the need for local law enforcement. But, sometimes the blast fishers come from the area and claim poverty and no alternative sources of income. In this case, the solution may involve new jobs, education, peer pressure and other interventions all of which complicate the plan development. Nevertheless, the plan objective can still be to stop blast fishing but the various strategies and actions may be more than simple law enforcement. The planning process will help us sort out the actions needed, their timing, their level of support and who will implement them.

Plans need a focus so that they do not attempt to solve too many problems at once. Thus, identifying management issues and deciding on their level of importance are essential first steps.

The planning cycle is not simply a linear and sequential process. It can follow a variable path and some things can come before others. But, the way it is presented in Figure 1, there is a sequence. The reason is that for any first time plan, certain pieces are essential—otherwise it is not a plan! After issues and their analysis comes the plan goals and objectives. These are easy once the issues are determined because an objective for the issue of blast fishing is to stop blast fishing—simple. Well, it is not quite so simple but you get the idea. An important criterion in deciding the objectives is whether they are measurable and doable. Simply stopping blast fishing may sound good but it may not be achievable as such. Thus the objective should be more specific. For example, our objective could be: "to stop blast fishing in the area adjacent to barangay x and within one kilometer of the marine sanctuary y." There are many permutations on how to state an objective but in the end, it must be possible to achieve within the time frame of the plan.

Once objectives are decided, policies, strategies and actions follow. Without going into definitions of all these, the key thing to remember is that objectives must translate into meaningful actions. But a simple long list of actions will not do the job. Rather, we need policies to guide our actions in general. And, we need strategies. A strategy can be the setting up of a marine protected area, zoning of the resource area, organizing management committees and educating a community group among many other possibilities. The actions will be the particular steps to implement a given strategy. This sounds easy but believe me, it can get complicated quickly! Actions, once decided require people, money, time, organization, communication—and more—to implement. Thus, the need for a detailed and logical plan.

A good plan makes implementation easy because it is all laid out. And a good plan is not simply a piece of paper. Rather, it represents experience, testing and ongoing actions which are working in the field. Plans evolve over time through various trials and improvements. Plans are intended to be implemented and the sooner implementation starts during the planning process, the more likely that the plan will be practical and acceptable. Planning for ICM implies a high level of participation of all stakeholders. This participation is not only in planning but in implementation as well; and the sooner and more effectively the two merge, the better the plan.

This brings us to the point of monitoring and evaluation. All our efforts are ultimately tested in the field with real people and actions. We hope to achieve certain results such as improved quality of our

Feedback to appropriate phase

Phase	Activities and Outputs	Technical Assistance Roles of Non-Government Organizations, Academe, Donors and National Government	Roles of Community, Local Government and Stakeholders
1. Program preparation	• Determine boundaries and scope • Make workplans/budgets • Assign personnel • Secure consensus on overall approach	• Prepare workplans • Formulate working agreements • Contract staff • Train staff • Facilitate consensus on design	• Enter into memoranda of agreement • Participate in discussion • Communicate needs and potential roles
2. Secondary information gathering	• Compile existing maps, reports, data • Interview information sources • Compile existing laws, agreements, plans • Review other sources of information	• Locate sources of information • Compile information in useful form • Coordinate activities	• Provide information • Assist to compile information • Begin to develop information storage and retrieval system
3. Field assessment/ study: Participatory Coastal Resource Assessment (PCRA) and other research	• Train practitioners • Conduct PCRA mapping and data collection • Contract special research studies on fish stock assessment, habitat condition, water quality, enterprise and others	• Train practitioners • Facilitate PCRA • Conduct specialized research • Analyze research data • Make results available	• Conduct PCRA with technical assistance • Participate in special research and data collection • Assist to analyze data • Provide inputs to mapping
4. Database and profile development	• Set up data storage and retrieval system • Compile coastal environmental profile • Use profile as planning base • Refine boundaries and further research needs	• Determine data storage site, personnel • Write profile • Distribute profile • Facilitate discussions on boundaries and research needs	• Provide information • Assist with profile analysis • Use profile for planning • Decide on boundary demarcation
5. Prioritize issues and analyze causes	• Conduct community and municipal-based planning sessions • Develop issue tree • Prioritize issues for management • Determine causes of issues	• Facilitate process • Interject outside perspectives, research findings, policies, etc. • Help translate issues into causes	• Provide basic policies • Provide major inputs to plan • Build consensus among community • LGU support to planning process
6. Policy and plan formulation	• Conduct planning workshops to determine objectives, strategies and actions • Determine clearly stated goals, objectives and indicators • Interagency coordination • Determine composition of management body • Initiate preliminary plan implementation	• Facilitate planning process • Provide technical guidance • Assist to set up management bodies	• Provide basic policies • Provide major inputs to plan • Build consensus among community • LGU support to planning process
7. Plan/project implementation	• Design pilot projects • Test projects • Formalize and set up management council • Secure support as required • Increase implementation effort	• Facilitate initial implementation • Provide seed funding • Provide technical guidance • Conduct training course as required	• Take full responsibility • Participate in implementation • Provide local pesonnel
8. Monitoring and evaluation	• Train monitoring and evaluation team • Monitor environment and ICM process and feeback to database and plan • Evaluate program results and feedback to plan	• Assist to train LGU personnel • Assist to analyze data • Assist to set up sustainable system	• Collect data • Use data to refine plan and update database • Participate in process • Take responsibility

FIGURE 2. PHASES, ACTIVTIES AND PARTICIPANT ROLES IN A COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS.

coral reef, mangrove forest or water. We must monitor the results to see if this is occurring. And, we must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan design and its implementation. Otherwise, we will never know if we are creating the changes we desire through the most efficient and effective means—the plan.

Once we reach the point of being able to monitor and evaluate our results, the planning cycle becomes less rigid. The findings of monitoring can feed into the cycle at the data base and profiling stage, at the plan objectives and policy stage or simply in refining the strategies and actions. The point is that as we learn from monitoring and evaluation, we can improve our plan, its ingredients and the effectiveness of implementation.

Outputs and Responsibilities

Another way to look at the planning process is through the normal activities involved to complete each planning phase, the important outputs and who is responsible. Figure 2 breaks the planning cycle down in eight phases with associated activities and the roles of various actors in the planning and implementation process.

Responsible individuals, groups or organizations make and implement plans. It is essential to be clear who is responsible for what action. In the developing world of the Philippines, ICM is typically driven by outside organizations which provide technical assistance and support in various forms to the more localized and ultimately responsible entities of the local government, local community groups, non-government organizations and people's organizations. The dichotomy between the outside technical assistance groups which often include national government, and the community level stakeholders, needs to remain transparent and clearly stated in ICM plans. It is unlikely for ICM to develop effectively without some outside facilitation, but the LGUs and communities must fully take the reins at some point during the planning and implementation phases, for the ICM process to be sustainable. Thus, we always have to keep in mind to what degree the real, on the ground, stakeholders are taking responsibility and are able to fully comprehend and continue the planning and implementation process. This is the ultimate test of success in any ICM program and plan.

It is essential to be clear who is responsible for what action.

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All in a Day's Work

162,300 kilograms. That's the amount of trash collected from beaches by some 30,000 volunteers who participated in last September's International Coastal Cleanup Day (ICC). Participation cut across many sectors — local government units, line agencies, the Philippine Navy, the Philippine Coast Guard and its civilian arm, the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary, schools, non-governmental organizations, corporate and business groups, and community residents were all represented.

"The message that the ICC sought to bring across—that garbage is everybody's problem and responsibility—seemed to strike a responsive chord among the various sectors," noted Rebecca Pestaño-Smith, information education and communication coordinator of the Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP), which facilitated the cleanup in several areas in the Visayas and Mindanao as well as in San Vicente, Palawan and Infanta, Quezon. A major outcome of the ICC was the institutionalization of the coastal cleanup by the governments of Lapu-lapu City and Cebu City, which have adopted measures to include coastal areas in their clean and green programs.

The event was part of a yearly cleanup campaign coordinated internationally by the Washington-based Center for Marine Conservation (CMC) and in the Philippines by the non-governmental organization International Marinelife Alliance Philippines. Data from the Philippine cleanup will be sent to CMC and will be included in a database to be analyzed by scientists in their search for a solution to the world's marine pollution problem.

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Reclaiming the Island Reefs

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Luís de la Concepción III tried to get out of the family "business". The son of fisherfolk, he moved out of his small village in the central Philippines province of Negros Occidental to try his luck in Manila, the country's capital. After finding life just as tough in the big city, de la Concepción is now back in Caliling where local legend says giants roamed in the past.

He has taken up fishing once again but often still finds himself with very little to show for his efforts. Using simple tools like multiple hooks and lines and nets and sharing his catch with the owner of the boat, fishers on a good day gets a little less than $2 (60 pesos) and on a bad day less than 50 cents (15 pesos). Harsh weather means not going out to the sea.

Things have not always been that bad for the local fishers. But the unwise exploitation of marine resources over the years has taken its toll. Ham Chua, President of Calaogao Marginal Fishers Association (CAMAFA), said illegal methods—including dynamite, cyanide, natural poisons, electrical current—were used before, causing untold damage to the reefs and marine resources. Fish eggs were collected and mangrove trees were used as Christmas decorations.

Chua said when the current conservation efforts in Caliling started sometime in 1994, "Only 32 per cent of coral reefs were left not only due to illegal fishing but also because of soil erosion."

This situation was not unique to the Negros village. By 1991, experts were reporting that about 70% of the Philippines' coral reefs were in poor or, at best, fair condition. Excellent reefs comprised only 5% of the estimated total of 27,000 square kilometers. That is indeed a terrible state of affairs for a country which, with some 7,100 islands, has a shoreline longer than the continental United States.

With up to 25% of the country's total fish catch associated with coral reefs and with fish providing more than 50% of the Filipinos' animal protein intake, there was compelling reason to act. Government agencies and non-government organizations (NGO) have both taken steps to solve the problem. But even more significant is the growing trend among local communities to take the initiative in restoring and conserving their natural resources (see next article).

What is happening in Caliling now is just one of the latest initiatives by a community to