

A New Hope for San Miguel Bay

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San Miguel Bay is one of the twelve priority bays in the Philippines being covered by the Fisheries Sector Program (FSP) under the joint undertaking of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Asian Development Bank (ADB). FSP is a five-year (1990-1994) comprehensive strategy in addressing the basic problems confronting the fisheries sector nationwide. In coastal areas, FSP aims to regenerate coastal resources, rehabilitate the coastal environment, and alleviate poverty among municipal fishermen particularly through the diversification of their sources of income.

Problems and issues in San Miguel Bay were identified by International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM) in its research study conducted in 1979-1981. In 1982, ICLARM published management options for identified problems and issues but nothing has been done after that.

In 1991, the DA conducted series of information dissemination on concepts of coastal resources management. In mid-1991, San Miguel Bay CRM Inter-agency Task Force was formed to coordinate activities in the bay. In 1992 ICLARM was engaged by DA to conduct resource and ecological assessment (REA) and socio-economic and investment opportunity studies (SEIOS). Meanwhile rehabilitation efforts were conducted by DA from 1992 to mid-1993.

On August 21, 1993 a formal body was organized by the Inter-Agency Task Force. It is called San Miguel Bay Management Council. It is composed of executives of local government units, representatives from non-governmental organizations, fishermen's associations, and other stakeholders in the bay. At last, a new hope for the effective management of coastal resources in San Miguel Bay.