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

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Abstract

In the Philippines, small-scale fisheries, as common pool resources, remains beset by the problems of resource degradation and widespread poverty in coastal communities. Community-based coastal resources management (CBCRM) approaches centred on property rights are being increasingly adopted by fisherfolk and non-government organisations 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. 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 analysing the supply chain were conducted on selected fishery products, including tuna, milkfish and seaweed.

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. Based on these studies, development interventions were initiated by local associations of small fishery producers with support from government agencies and non-government organisations. 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 also 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.

Keywords: Community property rights, community-based coastal resources management, small-scale fishers, supply chain, value chain analysis