

Abstract

SESSION 2:

Accelerating Actions for Sustainable Development and Climate Change

WORKSHOP 2.2:

Application of Knowledge Management in Scaling up Partnership Investments in a Blue Economy

“What Gets Measured Gets Managed” The Application of the SOC Tool in Managing the ICM of Batangas Province Philippines

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The State of the Coasts (SOC) reporting system is designed to assist local governments implementing integrated coastal management (ICM). It serves as score card for local governments to measure progress towards their sustainable development targets. The SOC provides the common framework across ICM sites in the East Asian Seas (EAS) region for measuring their progress. It prescribes the use of 35 core indicators covering the six elements of governance (i.e., policy, strategies and plans; institutional arrangement; legislation; capacity development; and financing mechanisms) and five issue-specific management programs (natural and man-made hazard prevention and management; habitat protection, restoration and management; water use and supply management; food security and livelihood management; and pollution reduction and waste management).

SOC reporting triggers planning and management actions. The SOC report summarizes progress, trends and shortcomings in ICM programs in a straight forward, visual manner, clearly indicating to policymakers, managers and the general public where actions have been successful and where further work is required.

The SOC of Batangas Province was developed to assess the progress and impacts of ICM implementation in the Province. The report serves as the first comprehensive assessment of the Province's progress in terms of the Sustainable Development of Coastal Areas (SDCA) framework, and in relation to its implementation of the Batangas Province Strategic Environmental Management Plan (2005-2020).

The Batangas SOC report noted positive developments in the province particularly in various governance aspects. It also indicated areas that required attention that the Province needed to prioritize. The approach taken by the SOC and the focus on the local level provides important information on what is happening on the ground which is often not readily available. By building on strong data and monitoring system at the local level, the local SOC reports can eventually be rolled up into reliable national and regional SOC.



THE EAST ASIAN SEAS CONGRESS 2015
16-21 November 2015 • Danang, Vietnam

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About Loreta Sollestre:

Ms Loreta Sollestre has been connected with the PG-ENRO since 1998 and demonstrates exemplary leadership and foresight as the current Head of the Planning and Coastal Management Section. This is the focal unit for implementation of the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Program of the Province of Batangas, which is a demonstration site of ICM under PEMSEA (Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia).

Under Ms Sollestre's supervision and facilitation the province's ICM program formulated the Batangas Strategic Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) that provides a more comprehensive approach to the management of its bays and environment. The implementation of the SEMP is a multi-stakeholder collaborative effort of the industry, local and national government agencies and non-government organizations. Ms Sollestre had been instrumental in forging these partnerships towards the desired development and the protection and conservation of Batangas bays.

With the facilitative role of Ms. Sollestre, the SEMP, comprising key components and action programs, accomplished several targets in aspects of development, environmental governance and sustainability. Standing solidly on legal instruments as platforms, her efforts significantly contribute to ensuring continuity and institutionalization of reforms in the province, e.g. establishment of Batangas Environmental Protection Council and Bay Region Boards through a provincial ordinance, the Bantay Dagat Network through an Executive Order and the establishment of an environmental database, Integrated Information Management System through a memorandum of agreement with the De La Salle University – Lipa. As a member of the technical working group for the formulation of a Provincial Framework Development Plan, Ms Sollestre was instrumental in ensuring that concepts of ICM are integrated in the province's Water Use Plan.

Ms. Sollestre has an eye for strategic partnership. Through her leadership in science-based protected area management, the partnership between the Province of Batangas and CI resulted in the establishment of the 43 marine protected areas (MPA) with a total of 2,076.56 hectares as locally managed sites. These are instituted as a network of MPAs through a Memorandum of Agreement signed by several Local Chief Executives in Batangas in recognition of the critical role of MPAs in the conservation of marine biodiversity and ensuring that its management needs are well supported by the local government. At present, the law enforcement support to sustain management of these MPAs is delivered through a network of local law enforcers or Bantay-Dagat, strengthened further by an executive order from the Office of the Governor and in coordination with government enforcement agencies. In addition, the information and education campaigns (IEC) are enhanced among stakeholders through a recognition system and venue for sharing best practices (e.g. BRAVO Awards). Batangas Recognition Award for Verde Passage Outstanding MPA. BRAVO is the only province-wide initiative that feeds into the nation-wide MPA awarding system under the MPA Support Network (MSN).

Ms. Sollestre is known for her enthusiasm in deriving and applying new learning in her work in the Government. She was among the trainees of CTI Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP) for local early action planning for climate change and vulnerability assessments of coastal ecosystems. She and others in the PGENRO honed skills in these and facilitated the development of the provincial Climate Change Adaptation that became integrated into the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan as well as mangrove rehabilitation plans as a CCA mitigating measure. In turn, the team from PGENRO transferred capacity in CCA planning to another province in the Verde Island Passage, that is, Occidental Mindoro.

On the aspect of fisheries management, Ms. Sollestre is the focal person in the PGENRO who consolidated the various efforts of the municipalities of Balayan Bay, CI – Philippines and the BFAR through ECOFISH Project, in the research of reproductive biology of fisheries and in the formulation of the recommendations for EAFM. This led to the first local government initiative for the seasonal fishery closure in Balayan Bay, dubbed Pagpapahinga ng Look Balayan. The LGU initiative is an adaptation to enhance coastal protection and strengthen fisheries resilience, and involves 9 municipalities around Balayan Bay and a coordinated network of Bantay Dagats, the Batangas Environmental Response Team (BERT) from the Office of the Governor and national law enforcement agencies such as Philippine National Police -Batangas, PNP Maritime Group and Philippine Coast Guard. Ms Sollestre, as Head of the ICMP -PGENRO, serves as Team Leader of the Operation Center during the 21 days of seasonal closure implementation.

In all these achievements in the Province of Batangas, Ms Sollestre emphasizes the value of collaboration and partnership, in making science available to the local level decision-makers and in its integration into planning processes and management, in motivating peers and acknowledging everyone's contribution – big or small – to the betterment of the Province of Batangas, in continuous public awareness programs, and in strong leadership of the local government that make possible the implementation reasonable solutions in managing natural resources.