

ABSTRACT

HABLO, ROED SHANE T. University of the Philippines in the Visayas, March 2001. Issues and Challenges in the Planning and Implementation of Coastal Fisheries Projects in the Province of Iloilo.

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A study to determine the key factors that affect the planning and implementation of fisheries projects was undertaken in four coastal municipalities in Iloilo. The study also looked into the manner and extent towards which decentralization under the Local Government Code of 1991 and the Fisheries Code of 1998 worked out for the fisheries sector in Concepcion, Dumangas, Leganes, and Miag-ao. The data and information were generated through survey and interviews with stakeholders that included the municipal mayors and other officials, planning and development coordinators, fisheries technicians, representatives of fisheries groups and the beneficiaries.

Among the factors identified is proper project planning with the participation of all the stakeholders, specifically the involvement of the beneficiaries in project identification. Approval must be based on technical viability and not on political endorsements alone. To ensure project sustainability, monitoring and evaluation must be regularly conducted. Funding for local fisheries projects is also a major concern. A majority of the projects were financed from external sources because the fisheries sector received less than 2% of total municipal budgets. Increasing the sector's allocation can ensure the implementation of projects in coastal barangays, enable the regular conduct of monitoring and evaluation, as well as finance capability-building programs for all stakeholders. At this point, it is important that proposed projects be included in the municipal development plans so as to secure allocation for them. The technical skills and expertise of implementors and stakeholders also remain a critical factor. Furthermore, local ordinances must be reviewed such that provisions like the imposition of fees and fines for the fisheries sector can serve as mechanisms for increased revenues for the local governments thereby enabling the financing for more projects. Close coordination between project implementors or funding institutions and the beneficiaries must be developed and sustained to ensure project success.

Decentralization has not achieved its full impact on the development and management of local fisheries projects but it is evident that local governments have begun to realize the vast power and responsibility that it entails. Given the various constraints, however, there is still the need to strengthen their capabilities in the planning and implementation of their fisheries projects.