Perceptions of Coastal Communities on Blue Carbon Ecosystems Services at the Municipalities of Eastern Samar and Western Visayas, Philippines

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The blue carbon ecosystems (mangroves and seagrass) in the Philippines provide a wide range of benefits to the coastal communities; from provisional, regulating and cultural services ranging from supply of food and a natural fish nursery, carbon storage, protection against storm surges and as a tourism site. Existing studies in the Philippines have shown how local people in coastal areas affects the utilization and managing of the blue carbon ecosystems. However, little have recorded and evaluated the perception of people on the importance of these coastal ecosystems at the municipality level in relationship with rate of utilization to the different services these ecosystems provide. It is very important to understand the level of awareness and usage of mangrove, seagrass and associated resources because it can help in contextual formulation and implementation of management plan of coastal ecosystems in the municipality. In this study, household surveys, key informant interviews (KII), and focus group discussions (FGD) using semi-structured questionnaires will be utilized at coastal areas in select municipalities of Eastern Samar and Western Visayas. This study aims to determine the local knowledge of the coastal communities on blue carbon ecosystems, evaluate how they directly or indirectly use the services and identify potential local threats and destructive activities. It will also highlight the perception and evaluation of the existing efforts of the local government and their effectivity on the management of blue carbon ecosystems from local perspectives which has been largely overlooked.

Keywords: Blue Carbon Ecosystems, Coastal Management, Ecosystem Services, Coastal Communities, Awareness, Utilization

