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Improving marine fisheries management in Southeast Asia: Results of a regional fisheries stakeholder analysis



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ABSTRACT

A regional fisheries stakeholder assessment identified key regional issues and trends facing marine capture fisheries in Southeast Asia, as well as identifying relevant considerations and strategies in potentially addressing such regional issues and trends. The analysis provided a better understanding of the interplay between stakeholders; identifying key points of influence as well as strengths and weaknesses within the framework of promoting sustainable fisheries in a multistakeholder context. Several strategies are presented on how to address the priority issues and threats that face marine capture fisheries in the Southeast Asian region.

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1. Introduction

The coastal waters of Southeast Asia are among the most productive and biologically diverse in the world [1–4]. As a consequence, they are critical both for global economic and food security and as a conservation priority. Southeast Asians rely more heavily on fish as a primary source of dietary protein and income generation than any other people in the world. Furthermore, fish consumption continues to increase across the region, ensuring that the role of fisheries in providing livelihoods, trade, and food security to Southeast Asia will continue to grow. High rates of population growth and rapidly increasing food needs are putting enormous pressures on the region's coastal and marine resources, as are uneven levels of economic development, resource use, and technological change.

It is now almost universally accepted that most of the near-shore fisheries in Southeast Asia are overfished and that fishing overcapacity is one of the leading causes of this overfishing [5,6]. Consequently, these waters are now experiencing increased levels of conflict and social unrest, affecting both regional security and environmental sustainability. If managed more effectively, capture fisheries can provide economic benefits to the countries of Southeast Asia.

In order to further inform its understanding and planning

efforts related to regional marine and fisheries engagement, during 2014 the United States Agency for International Development – Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID/RDMA) supported a fisheries stakeholder assessment in the Southeast Asia region focusing on commercial capture marine fisheries. This assessment followed off of a global Fisheries Opportunities Assessment which identified several key fisheries issues and opportunities that remain relevant to Southeast Asia today [3]. Related to these are a range of conditions and forces influencing Southeast Asian fisheries. These conditions and forces can be broadly categorized under the categories of weak governance, socioeconomic conditions, and ecosystem change. Recent research by Williams [7] provides information needed to develop a better understanding of the key multi-lateral and bi-lateral stakeholders including government, non-government, and private-sector bodies influencing (or positioned to influence) regional capture fisheries.

The topical scope of the fisheries stakeholder assessment was focused primarily on stakeholders operating within private sector commercial fisheries. Stakeholders under this scope included fishing companies, fish processors, fish brokers and middlemen, and in-country exporters. Commercial fishery associations (as well as federations of multiple fisheries associations) also fell under this scope. A secondary focus included small-scale commercial (often referred to by others in the region as “traditional”) fishers, many of who also fall into the stakeholder category of subsistence fishers.

The geographic scope of the fisheries stakeholder assessment was focused on trans-boundary and regional marine capture

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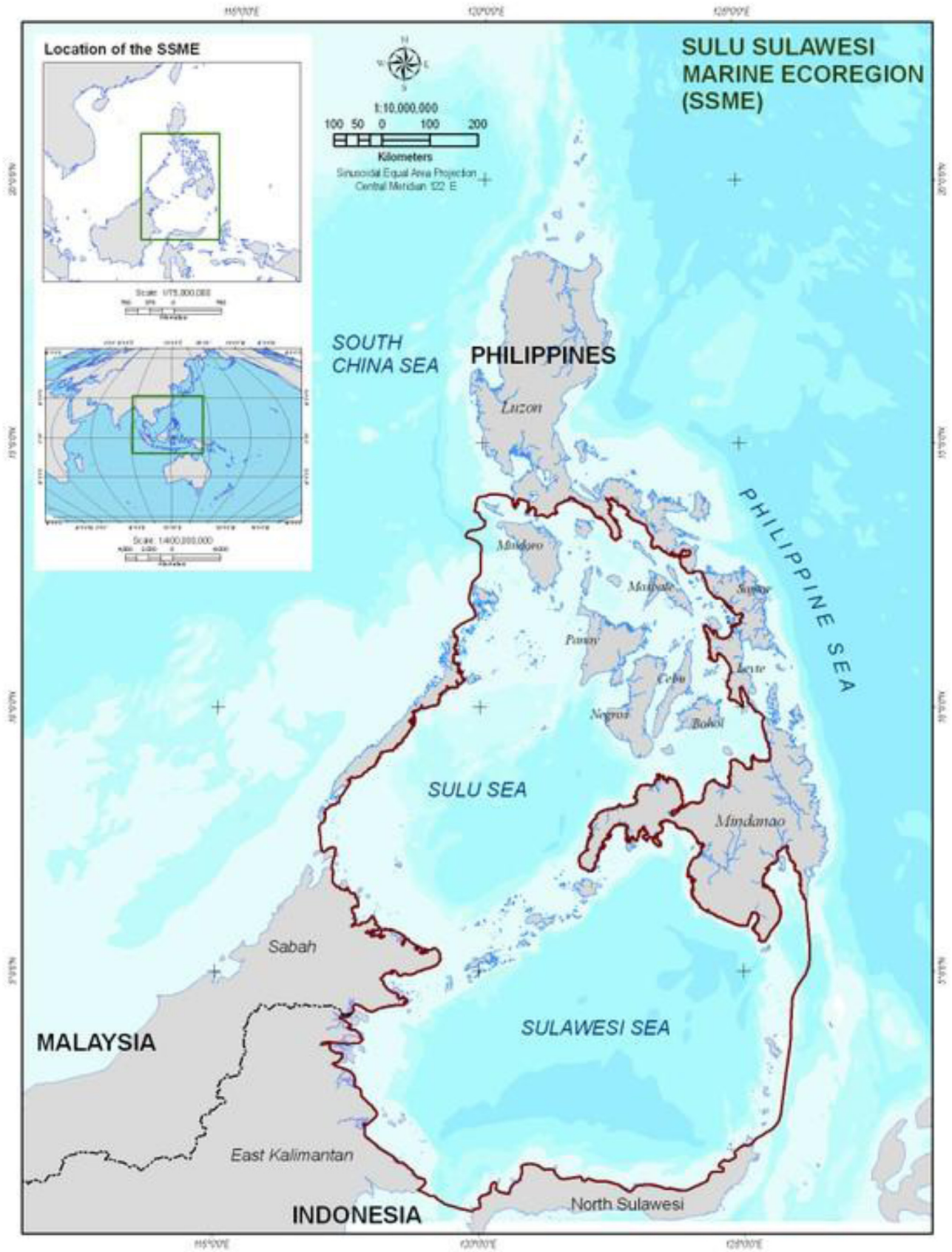


Fig. 1. Map of the Sulu Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion.

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