



ICM Solutions

Shared Responsibilities, Shared Benefits: An Innovative Approach to Engaging Fisher Communities in Sustainable Coastal Resource Management

- Da Nang's socioeconomic development is highly dependent on its rich natural resources, particularly with regard to fisheries and coastal tourism. Protecting and managing these marine and coastal resources are therefore a priority of the City.
- Guaranteeing the rights of the fisher folks to continue fishing and maintaining their source of livelihood, while at the same time playing a key role in coastal resource management to support a vibrant tourism industry that is fueling the City's economic growth, has been a challenge.
- One innovative approach applied by Da Nang City involved the establishment of a Model Club of Coastal Community for Sustainable Development. The Club promotes the direct participation of local communities in coastal resource management and in the implementation of alternative livelihood options to generate higher incomes and better living conditions among the members.



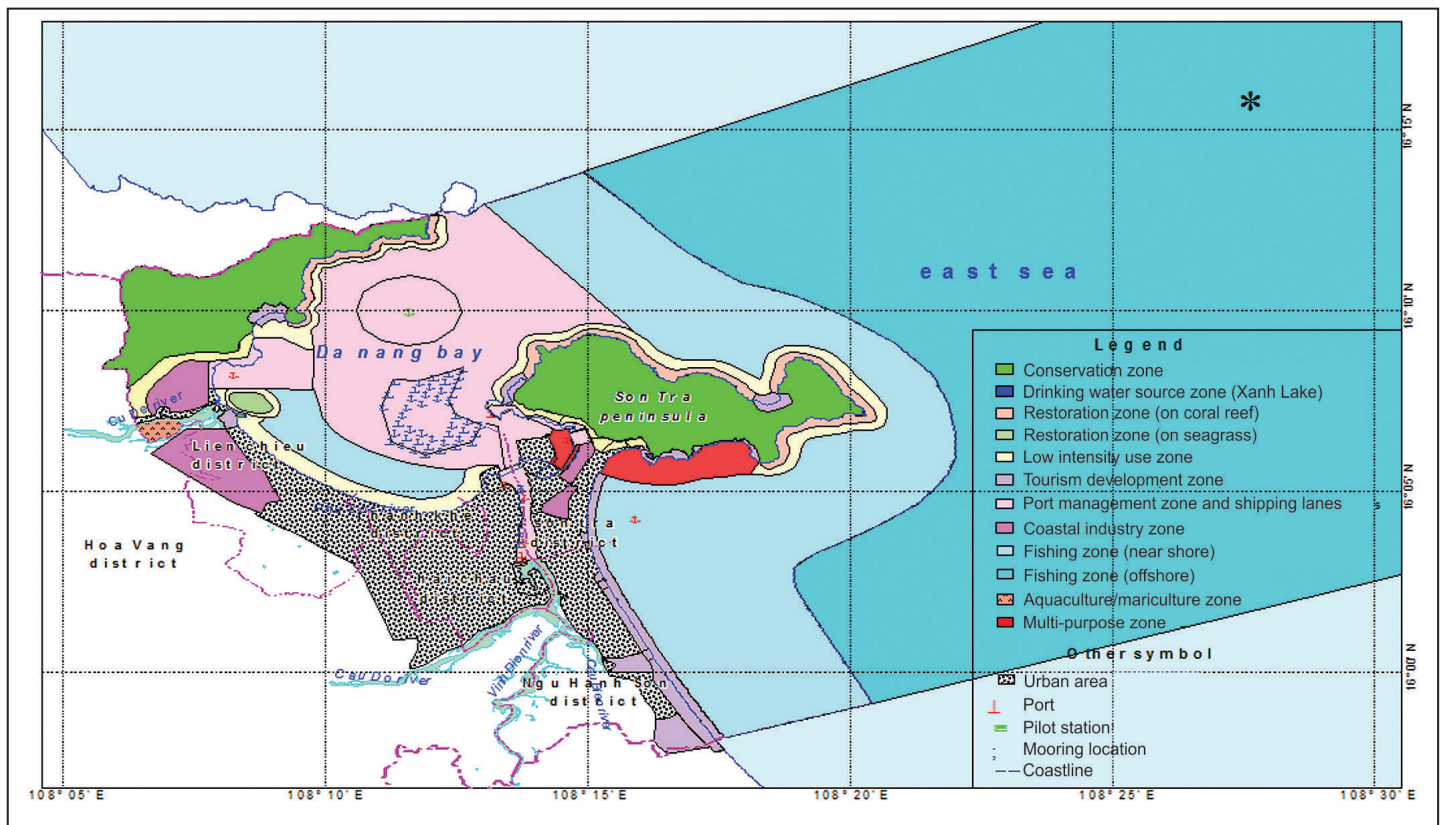


Figure 1. Da Nang coastal use zoning scheme with ten functional zones, including a tourism development zone.

Context

ICM implementation in Da Nang started in 2000. It was seen as a means of guiding and supporting the city government in its pursuit of sustainable development, as manifested in Da Nang’s Socioeconomic Development Plan and Environmental City Plan. Over ten years of ICM program implementation have contributed to improving the City’s planning and management capacity including expanding the involvement of civil society in program implementation resulting to better appreciation of the role of communities in environmental protection.

The ICM Program also facilitated the application of tools and methodologies on environmental monitoring, coastal resources assessment, natural disasters management, livelihood development, and food safety, among others. The coastal-use zoning plan in particular helped the city government in resolving use conflicts including conserving biodiversity around the Son Tra Peninsula.

Tho Quang Ward in Son Tra District, an area slated for tourism development, hosts an estimated 38% of households that rely on fishing, aquaculture, and seafood processing. These activities contributed to the serious decline of certain marine species in the Son Tra Peninsula. The processing of seafood also polluted and adversely affected the coastal landscape. Locals do not strictly observe environmental and marine resource guidelines as provided in the country’s Fisheries and Aquaculture Law. The perception was that the management and protection of coastal resources are the sole responsibility of government agencies.

In response, the City Government issued guidelines to strengthen the capacity of local communities and encourage their involvement in coastal resource management, protection of rare and endangered aquatic species, and rehabilitation of coastal habitats. More importantly, the City aimed to provide better livelihood opportunities to improve the quality of life of the local communities.

Solutions

One innovation instituted by the City to better engage the fisher communities was to establish a Model Club of Coastal Community for Sustainable Development. The idea behind the Club was to build awareness, capacity, and ownership among the local communities in coastal resource management. At the same time, the Club was a forum for developing and promoting alternative livelihood options to generate higher incomes and better living conditions among the members. The following provide insights and lessons learned from this innovative approach.

Establish the Club's Foundation and Code of Conduct

The Club was launched in November 2010 with the presence of local leaders and representatives from farmer associations and relevant government departments. The Club was guided by a Code of Conduct that outlines the social norms, and the rules and responsibilities of the members.

Initiate, develop and implement the Club's activities

To reinforce the activities of the Club, the Da Nang ICM Program, in collaboration with Da Nang Farmer's Association, helped the Tho Quang coastal communities and fishers to initiate, develop and implement the following activities:

- Develop a five-year (2010–2015) coastal development plan for the community
- Coordinate trainings to raise public awareness on coastal resources and environment protection, relevant law and regulations, cultural behaviors, and disaster risk reduction and prevention skills. Participants included Club members and representatives of fishing, aquaculture, and seafood processing households.
- Participate in environmental response dry runs organized by the city government in relation to environmental disasters, salvage and rescue at sea, monitoring and surveillance of destructive fishing activities, poaching of protected species and illegal mining activities.
- Conduct information and education campaigns on coastal resources and environment protection for the Action Day-Week-Month for Environment, "Clean up the World Day," and other occasions.

THE MODEL CLUB OF COASTAL COMMUNITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- A volunteer organization of workers engaged in fishing, aquaculture, and seafood processing.
- Its policy is to facilitate the implementation and assist in the enforcement of relevant policies, legislations, and guidelines related to fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing.
- The Club also facilitates public information and education campaigns to ensure the effective and rational use of the coastal resources.

- Mobilize coastal communities to participate in beach cleanup activities, such as during Green-Clean-Beautiful Sundays, National Week of Clean Water and Sanitation, The World Environment Day, Viet Nam’s Sea and Islands Week, and Clean Up the World Day.
- Guide, advise, and conduct vocational consultations and technical assistance for people to secure loans to help them shift from fishing to other vocations.
- Recognize individuals who have exhibited excellence in the coastal green-clean-beautiful environmental protection, and publicize their example for others to emulate.

Replicate the good practices and expand coverage to other coastal communities

To promote the replication of good practices generated from the ICM program and in particular the best practices of the model club in Tho Quang Ward to the other coastal communities in Da Nang City and elsewhere in Viet Nam, the Da Nang Agency of Seas and Islands maintains a website, www.ccbhd.danang.gov.vn, that showcases the activities and outputs of the Club. A plan to scale up the model club’s good practices for the period 2015-2019 will cover four wards located in four different districts of the city. Ultimately, the target is to have a similar community club in each coastal ward in Da Nang by the year 2020.

Results

Improved management and protection of coastal resources. People in the community have completely discontinued illegal coral extraction and have significantly reduced the use of small dragnets for inshore fishing. The Club is responsible for both harvesting coastal aquatic resources using allowed methods/tools and protecting corals and seaweeds in the coastal water of Son Tra Peninsula. Every week, Club members undertake specific tasks to protect the coral reef in the area, in accordance with their time and as appropriate to their daily work. Ever since the Club started to operate, eight cases of illegal coral exploitation have been discovered and reported. In addition, Club members were active in information and education campaigns, raising the awareness of other fishers in the surrounding areas about the rules of marine resources exploitation and coral reef protection. Local authorities on the other hand better regulated aquaculture activities that were polluting marine resources.





Improved coastal environment. The Club mobilized 500 to 600 people to regularly clean public areas, as well as the areas around their residences along the beaches. Communities reintroduced some coastal flora and fauna, which improved the Tho Quang Ward landscape. The Club also promoted environmental sanitation such as solid waste collection for 5 km of the beach area along Hoang Sa coastal road. The Club recommended to the city government and relevant authorities the provision of appropriate spaces that support fishers to dry seafood. Some 25 households received adequate drying space, ensuring the upkeep of the coastal landscape. Club members now enjoy a more conducive environment that enhances their material and spiritual life.

Increased participation of communities and organizations in marine and coastal resources and environmental protection. A total of 2,136 aquaculture and fishing households in Tho Quang benefitted from information campaigns on the coastal resources and environment protection. As a result, 1,800 households committed to protect the coastal resources and environment with no aquaculture, no coastal fishing, no seafood drying at coastal roads, and treatment of sewage and solid waste before discharging into the environment.

Jobs created for local fishers through skills trainings and livelihood assistance. A total of 200 participants from 42 fisher households were engaged in vocational trainings. As a result, 40 fishing households switched to fish farming, mushroom and flower cultivation, and other services such as offshore fishing boat servicing. Five households formerly engaged in aquaculture shifted to tourism services dedicating two canoes and one upgraded ship with the capacity of 35 horsepower for tourist services. The new vocations provided the fishers with more stable sources of income and better working conditions.

According to Nguyen Dinh, Club Chairman and a resident of group 23, Tho Quang Ward, club members who are into inshore fishing have an average monthly income of about VND 2.5 million. Shifting to tourist services raised their monthly earnings to about 3 million, with less occupational risks.

Club members also received assistance such as guidance in availing loans, experience sharing, technical assistance, and vocational consultations. Six households received loans from the Farmer Association of Tho Quang Ward for assistance in shifting from aquaculture to other jobs. Moreover, Club members and fisher households were



able to invest VND 530 million (about US\$ 25,000) to upgrade three small boats to larger vessels for tourism services. Various initiatives created 14 permanent jobs, five of which went to members of the Club. Finally, the Club was able to convince and mobilize 20 households doing fish and snail farming in the storm sheltering area of Tho Quang ward to obey the regulations prohibiting farming in the said area.

Increased public awareness and perception change on environmental protection

Three hundred attendees from Son Tra and Ngu Hanh Son districts participated in three information and education campaign trainings on ICM. The attendees also enhanced their disaster prevention skills during the exercises.

Seventeen beach cleanup campaigns were conducted and attended by 300 participants who indicated 100% involvement in the Club's activities. Flyers about the fishers' role in the development of Environmental City Initiative were disseminated during the activities. The Club also launched the "Green-Clean-Beautiful Sundays" to advocate environmental cleanup.

This has also had spin-off benefits for the Club itself. In 2012, 22 members from Tho Quang and other nearby wards joined the Club (15 members from Nai Hien Dong ward, four from Man Thai, one from Tho Quang, and two from Thuan Phuoc ward). Membership is expected to increase to 60 in 2015.

Lessons Learned

1. A “Model Club” is an innovative approach to organizing and engaging local communities in environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. The Club allows the members to interact with each other and with representatives of the City government. It gives a voice to the fishers and fisher households who are otherwise sidelined from planning and development processes, but must bear the brunt of the changes brought about by development.
2. With proper guidance and mentoring in the early stages, the local fishers took ownership of the Club and were better able to convey the rationale and benefits of improved coastal resource management through the activities organized by the Club. Activities such as regular consultations and meetings, information and education campaigns and coastal cleanup events raised awareness and enhanced participation in the Club. Local ownership is a prerequisite to ensuring the Model Club’s sustainability.
3. By interacting with the Club, the City government became more aware of the priorities, capacities, and needs of the community in order to make the transition from being a barrier to or constraint in sustainable development to a responsible player. Through awareness building and training programs, the fisher community was empowered, and willing to take on the responsibility as a partner of the City in ensuring effective management and sustainable utilization of coastal resources.
4. At the end of the day, the fishers of Tho Quang Ward needed to see benefit from the changes in behavior and, in some cases, livelihood changes that they were being asked to make. By supporting the fishers with skills development, financial aid, and technical advice, the fishers experienced direct benefit, which enticed them to switch vocations or to adapt other livelihoods that lessened the pressure on the natural coastal environment. In turn, this allowed the recovery of some key aquatic species such as corals, algae and seaweed, which in turn enhanced livelihoods associated with tourism. Most importantly, it resulted in higher income at safer and better working conditions, leading to a much improved quality of life for the fishers.

Keywords

sustainable livelihood, alternative livelihood, urban development, fisher folks, coastal tourism

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