

Forest Resource Management Component Natural Resources Management Program II

LESSONS AND EXPERIENCES

a. Lessons from the People Oriented Forestry Program/Community-Based Forest Management Program¹

Several lessons can be learned from the implementation of the People Oriented Forestry Program/Community-Based Forest Management Program. They are crucial to the sustainability of the program as a strategy for the management of forest resources in the country. The following lessons highlight in general terms the specific gains, of the CBFM program as the national strategy for forestland management.

- **CBFM Benefits Close to 2 Million Filipinos** – As of 1999, there are 355,799 households participating in close to 4,800 CBFM sites all over the country. This translates to close to 2 million Filipinos currently in People-oriented Forestry Project areas and potentially 20 million upland residents. At the currently accepted estimate of 2.4% population growth, the projected population in the uplands in 2025 will be 40 million. They represent the poorest of the poor who are depending on the success of CBFM to realize their dreams of a better life. The CBFM forest management initiative provides the communities with a powerful instrument for economic development. It provides a long term lease over a portion of the forestland and with it control over an important resource. It is a resource that the communities can utilize to stimulate economic development in the uplands in partnership with government and the private sector.

- **Long History of Commitment to Participatory Management of Forest Resources** - There is a long history, 30 years, of commitment to the community-based forest management. The paradigm shifted from a small number of corporations (TLAs) overseeing thousands of hectares to a large number of small communities each devoted to managing a few thousand hectares. The evolution was hastened by the realization that effective management of the resources require the involvement of people and communities living within or close to the forest and whose very existence depends upon it. Self-preservation is the highest instinct for survival and if the livelihood (the forest) of the communities become imperiled the community act accordingly to preserve its source of livelihood as long as they are empowered to do so. Here lies the reason for the effectiveness of communities in protecting and managing forest and other natural resources.

¹ Lifted from the NRMP Technical Paper entitled “Community based Resource Management as a Strategy for Sustainable Economic Development”, prepared by Dr. Florentino Tesoro. June 1999.

- **Tree Farming and Forest Plantations in A & D and Private Lands -**
One of the programs of the POFP is the development of plantations and tree farms inside A&D and private lands. Tree farms and plantations were developed in A&D and private lands through the efforts of individual families and small land holders who saw the potential of planting trees for future economic gain. This was a direct influence of the National Forestation Program which campaigned for plantation development in private lands. Records of the DENR show that the reported area of private tree farms and plantations is more than 8,200 hectares nationwide (Table 4) although estimates run close to double this figure since many farmers do not bother to register their tree farms with government. Land ownership is a powerful stimulus for development because the people know that whatever they plant they will harvest. It is greatly affected by unstable policies.

Table 7. Estimates of area planted by small land holders in A & D and titled lands.

Regions	Estimate of Area Planted (ha)*	Estimate of Cost per ha (P)**
CAR		
Region 1	31.00	
Region 2	927.00	~40,000
Region 3		
Region 4	270.00	
Region 5	746.00	
Region 6	1,093.00	
Region 7	667.00	
Region 8	128.00	
Region 9	2,500.00	~10,000
Region 10	934.00	~20,000
Region 11	846.00	~20,000
Region 12		
CARAGA	81.00	
ARMM		
Total/Average	8,223.00	~ 22,500

* Does not include unrecorded and unreported private plantations.

** Cost of maintenance up to maturity/harvest

Source: DENR/NRMP in Regions 2, 10 and 11 and DENR Region 9 and FMB.

On the basis of the reported and recorded area of tree farms and plantations the estimated investment is more than P160 million pesos based on a development cost of about P20,000/ha. This is despite the ambiguity of policies on private plantations and tree farms. Imagine the extent of forest cover that can be established and the amount of investment that can be

generated by just improving the extension activities of the DENR, setting policies that make it easier to harvest and transport forest products from private plantations and working in partnership with other agencies of government and the private sector to ensure markets for these products.

- **People in the Forest are the First Line of Defense in its Protection and Management** - CBFM recognizes that people are already in the forests. While they live on what they can get from the forests they can be and have been shown to be the first line of defense in the protection and management of forest resources. However, they do not have the resources to develop the forest and therefore they need technical and financial assistance especially from the DENR, the LGUs, the private sector, the financial institutions and other stakeholders of the forest resources.

The Peoples Organizations value the forests for which they have been empowered to protect. At least 4 members of POs have been reported to have lost their lives trying to protect their forests from illegal logging. Two of these were in Region 2 (one in Ilagan, and the other in Cabagan, Isabela). The third PO member who lost his life defending and protecting the forest was in Compostela, Compostela Valley.

There are numerous instances where communities have kept vigil just to stop illegal logging. They seized and confiscated illegally cut logs and brought to court perpetrators of illegal logging.

- **Government Saves Close to P127 Million Annually in Forest Protection Through CBFM** - The area estimated to be under CBFM/Ancestral Domain and Management Projects amounts to about 5.5 million hectares. Were these areas to be managed and protected by the government, the total cost of protection would be close to P127 million annually. The government utilizes forest guards to patrol and secure the forests. One forest guard is assigned 4,000 ha to patrol and protect. It would take 1,378 forest guards to protect the area being managed by communities. Each forest guard receives an average annual salary of P74,142 plus allowances and bonus of about P18,000 a year or a total of P92,142. The total salary and allowance of 1,377 forest guards amount to about P127 million a year. This is the savings of government by allowing communities to manage and protect the forest.
- **LGUs Contribute to Fund CBFM Initiatives** - Through collaborative efforts of DENR, LGUs and POs over a decade of partnership, the LGUs have come to realize the importance of CBFM in the management of resources found in their jurisdiction. LGUs are now providing financial resources to communities for various purposes such as for the preparation of comprehensive land use plans, rehabilitation of old roads

leading to the barangays and communities and for livelihood projects. Table 8 shows the contribution of LGUs to communities in three regions in the country.

Table 8. Contribution of LGUs to CBFM activities.

Regions	1996	1997	1998	1999*
Region 2	P650,000	P1,507,000	P2,725,000	P2,183,000
Region 10		700,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Region 11	670,000	1,950,000	2,300,000	210,000
Total	P1,320,000	P4,157,000	P7,025,000	P4,393,000

*First quarter of 1999

More concerted efforts of DENR and POs would generate more resources from LGUs and other sources such as the private sector and financial and other institutions.

- CBFM is the Strategy for Forest Resources Management in at Least 25 Countries of the World** - In at least 25 countries in tropical and sub-tropical countries of the world and where population is high, CBFM is the strategy adopted for sustainable forest development². Experiences range from almost 200 years as in the case of Indonesia to less than 3 years in the case of Guyana. The Philippines has almost 30 years experience. During the last 7 or 8 years, the CBFM program of the country has established a nationwide network of people's organizations, forged formal linkages between DENR, LGUs and POs, and has started to form business relationships between the POs and the private sector. It has laid the foundation for a truly participatory management of forests and natural resources, a situation that other countries which have adopted CBFM as a strategy for forest management have yet to achieve.
- CBFMP is a National Program** - Finally, it has become clear that CBFM is not just a DENR program. If it has any chance to succeed it must become the program of all concerned, the POs, the LGUs, the NGOs, the financial institution, the private sector, Congress, but most of all the DENR. DENR must be true to its role of facilitator, that of making policies that simplify the procedures which facilitate the faster processing of documents, reduce the cost of transactions, of linking the POs to resources whether from the banking or the private business sectors and those providing social services. But above all, a shift in attitude especially of the field personnel from that of a controller to a change agent must take place.

² Community Forestry as a Strategy for Sustainable Forest Management. Proceedings of the International Conference. May 24-26, 1996. Manila. DERN/ITTO.

b. On Institutional Partnership³

- The government has perennially lacked sufficient resources to uphold its control and ownership over the State-owned land and resources. This realization points to the fact that there is a need for DENR to engage LGUs, local communities, and other stakeholders in the management of these forest areas. FLUP is a good entry point for DENR and LGU partnership. It provides information necessary to design and institutionalize long-term collaboration and partnership between DENR and LGU, and it opens opportunity for future investments that enjoins participation of other stakeholders including private sectors in the management of forestland. A Joint Memorandum Circular of DENR-DILG-LGU that provides Guidelines for Devolution, Decentralization and Partnership on Forest Management Functions is an initiative to assist leverage and redirect investments of DENR and LGUs towards Sustainable Forest Management.
- A more effective partnership is going to appear through the experience of DENR working with the LGU. Common pursuit of shared agenda and shared activities will provide a basis for gradually developing and testing different types of partnerships. In the same token, co-management offers a potentially valuable opportunity to test DENR and LGU partnership in managing a major watershed area given the limited DENR and manpower resources.
- NRMP has assisted the development of Co-management agreement between the Provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya and the DENR. While at its infant stage, this experiment on co-management also offers valuable opportunity to test a DENR-LGU partnership in managing a watershed. Given a limited DENR budgetary and manpower resources, it is an opportunity to test ways in which DENR can play a mentoring and supporting role, assisting relevant LGU authorities in developing the technical capacity and expertise to manage the watershed in an environmentally responsible manner.
- Having the full mandate and jurisdiction as well as the institutional expertise and experience over State-owned land, DENR is thus in a position to provide the leadership role to institutionalize partnership in the management of forestland. In the availability of new initiative in DENR-LGU partnership, it can only be sustained if DENR would permanently assign office/agency along with cadre of permanent staff to

³ With some addition from the author, insights are taken from papers of Michael Morfit on Framework for DENR-LGU Partnership, and David Craven on FLUP: Strengthening Technical and Institutional Capacity.

assume responsibility for watershed management planning and DENR-LGU partnership.

- Development of confidence building is essential if we are to promote partnership between DENR and LGU in the management of forestland. DENR should therefore establish routine procedures for informing LGUs of the proposed national government programs in their jurisdiction to promote and implement information sharing, joint training, and joint monitoring. Building DENR-LGU partnership is the most appropriate strategy for ENR Management. LGUs and local communities are considered as principal stakeholders. NRMP-CBFM sites have demonstrated this evolving partnership with LGUs giving financial, manpower, and even infra support in CBFMP implementation.
- The FLUP (watershed management) has demonstrated to be an effective planning tool and entry point for partnership between DENR and LGU in land use planning.
- Government must develop and maintain critical support services for community forestry in partnership with other stakeholders and institutions (OGAs/NGOs).
- Simplified, transparent monitoring by DENR of environmental effects of forest use rather than micro-management prescription and proscription of behaviors would be a desirable changing approach of DENR towards POs and CBRM, in general.

c. On FLUP and Forestland Allocation

- The essence of FLUP does not end in allocating unallocated forestlands. Joint monitoring of existing allocation must be done to ensure that the goals and objectives are met and appropriate action must be done if found otherwise. Opportunity cost and damages must be assessed due to inadequate management and identify constraints if there are any.
- Since communities exist in areas under any form of allocation or within open access areas, the CBFM strategy will have to be in the driving force in allocating and managing the forestland. CBFM cut across any allocation scheme or management.
- With the absence of accurate data, community mapping proved to be useful in validating land use vegetation. It has been used extensively in the municipalities and provinces assisted by NRMP in FLUP preparation. It is therefore wise to prepare thematic maps that incorporate results of community mapping prepared through participation of different stakeholders.

d. On Management Plan Preparation and Implementation

- Together with CBFM tenure, development and implementation of management plan provide communities to obtain official management responsibility and authority for forestlands and may access resources use rights. Experiences of NRMP in CBFM has shown that the community's visioning exercise give them the better appreciation of the whole planning process and increase PO's sense of ownership, and empower and motivate them to positively move towards the realization of their vision and objectives.

e. On Application of Environmental Performance Monitoring for Sustainable Forest Management

- Experience in the use of SFM criteria and indicators such as that of Environmental Performance Monitoring gave credence and promoted a greater appreciation of the CBFM strategy, as the link between management practices and its environmental impacts are understood by the participating communities and CBFM implementors. Well-meaning promotion of the EPM tool or the national level C & I for SFM would therefore increase appreciation of participants in CBFM as national strategy for sustainable forest management and development.
- While environmental management programs have always strive to learn from experiences, an environmental monitoring system that uses adaptive management systems places new emphasis on systematically tracking and analyzing performance, and subsequent modification of workplans and objectives. When EPM is tied to program objectives and provides timely, relevant, and cost effective information, monitoring enhances program successes by allowing managers to make better decisions. Iteration is the key to management cycle. Management activities must be repeatedly modified as new information becomes available about the effectiveness of management actions.
- The regular monitoring and measurement of environmental impacts is cost center along with other PO commitments and activities. This should be factored-in and included as among the priority activities and should be properly appropriated in the implementation of management plan.

a. On CBFM Enterprise Development

The economics of community-based harvesting is completely different from the old TLA (corporate) system. An economic framework within which the POs can operate and prosper in the developmental stages requires **greater**

flexibility on harvesting methods, product line, markets, and financing methods.

Limitations/constraints are on the use of mechanized methods; inappropriate methods of assessing and imposing forest charges and other fees; inappropriate permitting and documentation requirements. These led to inefficiencies and low returns on PO forest products harvesting/processing operations. Market distortions are being manifested through local restrictions (either from local DENR offices or LGUs) and marketing policies severely affect the financial viability of community operations.

DENR's oversight approach to implementation has been to micromanage many of the business decisions relating to harvesting methods, product line, and markets, without taking account of the economic consequences of these regulatory pronouncements.

DENR's traditional "command and control" role, a legacy from the TLA period has in several instances become an obstacle to fledgling POs trying to create sustainable agroforestry enterprises. Selective logging procedures that were developed for the TLAs, and regulations on transporting and processing, permitting requirements, which were all developed for corporate operations further caused problems.

g. Tenurial Security

- Legal recognition of community-based rights provides the best and most secure guarantee of local control over forest ecosystems. POs have demonstrated positive and/or high impact on forest protection. Under PO management, CBFM areas have been protected from timber poaching, encroachment and degradation. Indeed, timber-poaching occurring in certain places is outside of CBFM areas where government has weak presence and control.
- Publicly transparent and widely acknowledged delineation and demarcation of CBFM area boundaries is essential to impress on both the stakeholder-communities and the rest of the public who has control and accountability over the resources in the CBFM areas. It also serves as deterrent to the unauthorized entry and access by non-members of the PO-stakeholder.

h. Individual Property Rights (IPR)

- Awarding Individual Property Rights (IPR) to PO members has made a positive impact/gains as an alternative livelihood/income generating strategy. Experience in Regions 02 (Baggao, Cagayan, and Ilagan, Isabela); 04a (Ma. Aurora, Aurora), and 11 (Laac, Davao Province)

shows that capitalist/investors are more at ease to deal with individual members than with several members and officers in an organization. Individual members become individual entrepreneurs, personally responsible and liable to the outcome of the business, thus, giving their one hundred percent effort to ensure its success. Unlike in an organization, no one has a personal stake on the business activities. Initial capital and/or materials are mostly supplied by the investors, thus, risk is minimal or even nil. The process could be a real-life business education to PO members to become real entrepreneurs, and prepares/molds them to handle bigger responsibilities at the organizational level.