

# Forest conservation program full steam ahead, says DENR

*Manila Bulletin, Published April 4, 2017, 10:00 PM  
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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is pushing for the full implementation of a forest conservation strategy to help reduce climate change impacts in the country.

DENR's Forest Management Bureau, in cooperation with the German Government's Environment Ministry, is working together for the implementation of the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) strategy to help reduce impacts of climate change by protecting and sustainably managing the country's forests.

The DENR-FMB and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the German government's international development cooperation agency, have been working together for the sustainable management of forests through the joint project "Preparation of a National REDD+ Mechanism for Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Conservation of Biodiversity in the Philippines" or the National REDD+ System Philippines.

The project helped create a national framework for REDD+, considering ecological, social and governance safeguards.

The REDD+ strategy contributes to the conservation of forests to meet 40 percent of the 70 percent carbon emission reductions that the Philippines committed to during and shortly after the Paris climate conference led by the United Nations in 2015.

Forest conservation also ensures the sustainable provisions of other ecosystem services such as food and water.

Trees sequester carbon from the atmosphere, which greatly contributes to reducing the global temperature.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identified the global forestry sector in 2007 as the second leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions from human activities, after the energy sector, and as responsible for approximately 17 percent of emissions, largely due to deforestation.

Through their joint work, GIZ and FMB generated a reduction and removal of approximately 467,000 tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emission in the three project sites in Albay, Eastern Samar and Davao Oriental through co-management and tenure arrangements with local communities and indigenous people groups for long-term forest conservation which are integrated in forest land use plan covering 366,407 hectares of forest areas.

About P24.3 million were awarded through 18 contracts with local partners, such as local government units, academe and the Philippine Eagle Foundation to support forest conservation activities.

FMB and GIZ are organizing the REDD+ project closing event on April 7 to stimulate support for sustaining the project's achievements and for the issuance of appropriate laws and policies for the country's full REDD+ implementation. (Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)