

DENR-2 calls for 'honest' review of forest program's impact

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IMPACT STUDY. Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cagayan Valley Director Gwendolyn Bambalan urges an honest review of forestland projects in Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya on Wednesday (March 2, 2022). Such will determine the impact and effects of the project on the beneficiaries and to the environment, she said during a planning workshop. (Photo courtesy of DENR-2)

TUGUEGARAO CITY – Hoping for a clearer picture of accomplishments, the chief of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) has urged implementers to start evaluating the impact of the Forestland Management Project (FMP) in the provinces of Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya.

In her message during the opening of the three-day assessment and planning workshop for the FMP, DENR-2 Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan underlined the importance of assessing not only the progress of the FMP but also the realization of the goals and objectives of the project.

“We should honestly review where are we now. We should start looking at the impacts and effects of this project to the beneficiaries and to the environment of the two provinces after almost 10 years of implementation. If there are gaps and missing links still, we have to do something about these in the remaining year,” Bambalan said.

She also ordered the provincial environment and natural resources (PENR) officers to look back at the project document where the different strategies and components that need to be addressed are identified. “This document is vital in the preparation of project completion report,” she said.

Balamban reported that under the FMP, a total of 36 agroforestry support facilities were turned over to local government units and people’s organizations in Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya. About 25,377.80 hectares of plantations were also established and are now being protected and maintained.

Through the FMP, enterprise development projects were also provided to 34 people’s organizations.

FMP is a 10-year watershed rehabilitation project implemented by the DENR under a loan agreement between the Philippine government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. It aims to strengthen forestland management in three critical river basins in the Philippines through the implementation of collaborative and comprehensive community-based forest management strategies.

Implemented in the nine sub-watersheds of the Upper Magat and Cagayan River basins in Region 2, the project also seeks to improve forest conservation and socio-economic conditions of affected communities; and contribute to disaster risk mitigation efforts in vulnerable areas.

Project manager Marlon Atienza said the participants shall formulate phase-out strategies to ensure the completion of the targets considering the effects of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic and other factors. They shall also develop an operations plan for the remaining activities.

“We have to ensure that the project will be sustained. We also need to identify our good practices which should be translated to policy recommendations to improve the forestry sector as a whole,” he added.
(PNA)

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