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MOREFORESTs

Management of Resources on Forestlands through
Enhanced Sustainable Technologies

Version 1.0

ANNEX 11: Provincial Forestland Assistance Team-Supporting Governance
Oriented Co-management of Forestlands

ANNEX 11: PROVINCIAL FORESTLAND ASSISTANCE TEAM

– Supporting governance-oriented co-management of forestlands

Why Provincial Forestland Assistance Team (PFAT)?

- The Provincial Forestland Assistance Team (PFAT), initially capacitated by GIZ, provides technical assistance to municipalities and cities in Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) preparation and formulation.
- The PFAT enables coordination of FLUP technical assistance. It is composed of technical personnel both from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and provincial local government unit (LGU).
- The PFAT strengthens existing government structures. The members of PFAT are foresters, community organizers, agriculturalists and planning officers, and continue to work in their current positions as government employees.

Innovative Approaches

- The partnership with the DENR and the provincial government combines the expertise of different agencies. The DENR has expertise on forestry laws and regulations, and personnel from the province are better in training and facilitation.
- The involvement of the Provincial Planning and Development Office links FLUP assistance to preparation of Comprehensive Land Use Plans.
- The focal persons complement and follow up assistance provided by the PFAT. The DENR and provincial LGU have assigned focal persons to all cities and municipalities with forestland areas in the province. The experience shows that focal persons form a close relationship with the partner LGU during the FLUP preparation and usually continue to support and assist them effectively after approval of the FLUP.
- The committee composed of heads of the participating offices coordinates province-wide FLUP technical assistance in Negros Oriental. Besides overseeing the FLUP technical assistance, the committee can monitor the FLUP implementation in all cities and municipalities, resolve issues affecting several LGUs and create the basis for province-wide planning of joint forestland management.

Applications as of now in Negros Oriental

- The PFAT and focal persons are now assisting two cities and seven municipalities in FLUP preparation.
- Three cities and nine municipalities already implementing FLUP can request technical assistance from PFAT and are supported by focal persons in day-to-day FLUP implementation.

Provincial Forestland Assistance Team

– Supporting governance oriented co-management of forestlands

1. Background

The Province of Negros Oriental is one of the leading provinces in the country to implement joint forest and forestland management through Forest Land Use Plans (FLUP) and Co-Management Agreements (CMA). At the moment 11 LGUs, among 22 with forestland areas, have FLUPs and 9 are in the process of preparing these plans. The goal of the province is to cover all LGUs with FLUPs by the end of 2013.

The city and municipal LGUs have to be assisted in preparing and implementing FLUPs and CMAs and there are many advantages in institutionalizing this assistance at the provincial level.

In Negros Oriental the partnership between the Department and Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the provincial government, both mandated to provide technical assistance for city and municipal LGUs, helped to create frame for province wide FLUP and CMA technical assistance. The Provincial Forest Land Use Assistance Team (PFAT) as a joint team between DENR and the Province was created in January 2012.

Often a third party, such as a non-governmental agency, academe or development agency is needed to initiate the partnership between different government agencies and to strengthen the capacities of the technical staff. In Negros Oriental the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is providing technical assistance for the PFAT. This assistance is planned to last for the period of two years until the end of 2013.

History of FLUP Technical Assistance in Negros Oriental

The FLUPs in Philippines have been mainly prepared with the help of direct assistance from the development agencies and Negros Oriental is not an exception to this rule. The development agencies have played an important role in facilitating the FLUP process in the Province. It is clear that continuum in the support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Philippine Environmental Governance Project (EcoGov) to GIZ has helped to keep the FLUPs on the agenda of the DENR and LGUs.

At start the partnership with the EcoGov in 2004-2006 was instrumental in creating the first FLUPs in Negros Oriental. Six LGUs were supported by the EcoGov and were able to complete their FLUPs and sign CMAs during the first phase of EcoGov assistance in 2004-2006. The EcoGov also strengthened the capacities of the technical staff from the DENR in the FLUP process and tools. (Graph 1.)

After the EcoGov project supported the preparation of the first six FLUPs in the Province, seven other LGUs started FLUP preparation during

2007. The DENR was assisting them in the process. Nevertheless even the LGUs with relatively good technical capacities and resources struggled to finalize the plans without direct assistance from the development agencies. In fact only one out of seven who started the FLUP preparation in 2007 was able to finalize the plan before the tstart of the Community Based Forest and Mangrove Management Project (CBFMMP), supported by German development partners GIZ and KfW, in 2009. In 2010 and 2011 the CBFMMP through DENR supported finalization of the four FLUPs brining the total number of FLUPs in the Province up to 11 (Figure 1.)

Later during the revision of the province wide FLUP assistance in the beginning of 2012 the GIZ agreed to support capacitation of the PFAT who in turn would capacitate all LGUs in the Province requesting technical assistance.

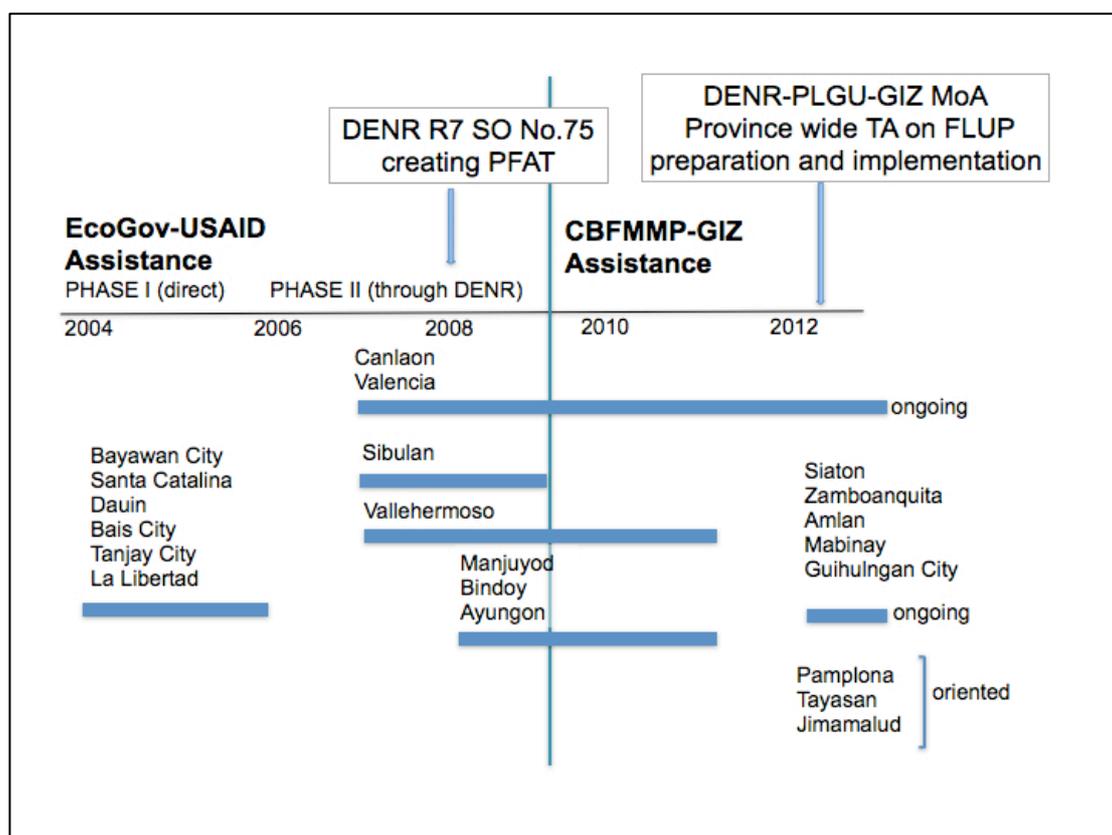


Figure 1. History of Technical Assistance in FLUP Preparation

Local Policies Mandating Province Wide FLUP Support

The formulation of local policies is a good way to agree on and institutionalize the FLUP technical assistance. Two policies, indicated in the timeline above, provide the basis for the FLUP technical assistance. Initially the PFAT was developed by the DENR at the regional level when, in order to sustain the assistance provided by EcoGov Project, the **DENR-R7 issued Special Order No. 75.**¹ This order was issued in March 2008 to institutionalize the Provincial Forest Land Use Assistance Team (PFAT). The

¹ Special Order No. 75 Series of 2008

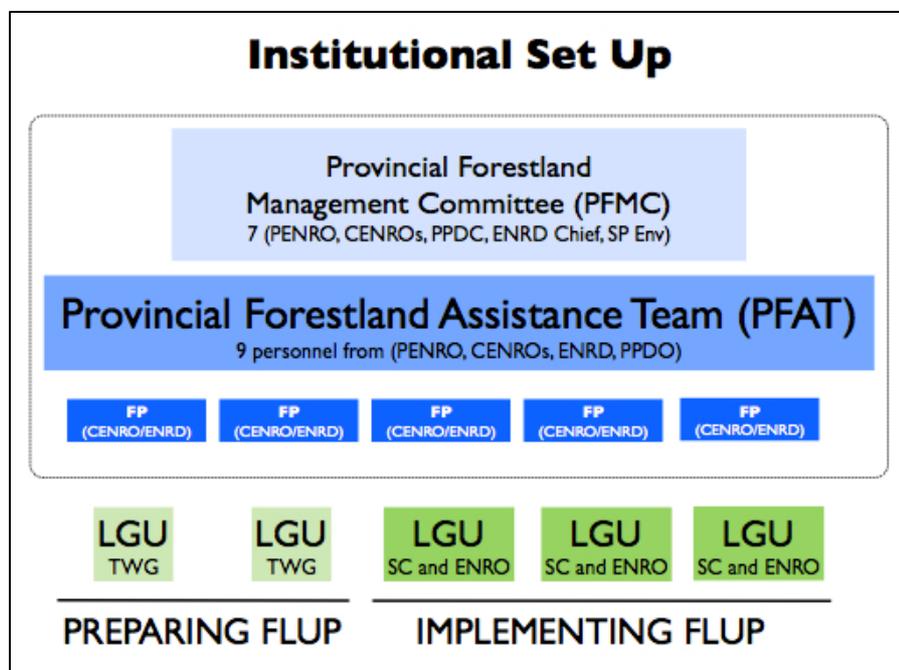
PFAT created in 2008 was composed of DENR personnel from the regional office as well as technical staff from the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) and Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO).

Later signing of the **Memorandum of Agreement in January 12th 2012** between the Province of Negros Oriental and DENR-R7 created a wider framework for the FLUP technical assistance. Based on this MoA the Provincial LGU now plays an important role in providing assistance to municipal and city LGUs together with the DENR.

The members of the PFAT and Focal Persons (FP) assigned to each LGU with forestland areas were later specified in the DENR Special Order and Executive Order of the Province.² Aside from naming the personnel these orders describe the specific tasks of the PFAT and FPs.

2. Institutional Set Up

The PFAT today consists 9 technical personnel both from the DENR and the PLGU and is supported by 20 Focal Persons assigned from the DENR or the PLGU to assist 22 city and municipal LGUs. The PFAT members are foresters, community organizers, agriculturalists and planning officers. They all continue to work in their current positions as government employees and are capacitated to provide technical assistance in FLUP preparation and implementation. Some have been involved in the FLUP assistance during the years when EcoGov project was implemented in the province, but many are new to FLUP.



² Revised DENR Special Order No. 08 Series of 2012 (issued to nominate the DENR personnel), as well as Provincial Executive Order No.08 Series of 2012 (issued to nominate the PLGU personnel).

Figure 2. Institutional Set Up

The partnership with the DENR and the Provincial Government has proven to be very successful in combining the expertise of different agencies. The DENR has expertise on forestry laws and regulations while personnel from the province are better in training and facilitation. Likewise the involvement of the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) links FLUP assistance to technical guidance given to LGUs in preparation of Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUP).

The PFAT and FPs are supervised and supported by a committee composed of heads of participating offices. This FLUP coordination committee, named as Provincial Forestland Management Committee (PFMC), represents Provincial level Technical Working Group (TWG)³ mentioned in the co-management policy. If needed the existing committee can be complemented with other stakeholders to jointly evaluate the FLUP implementation in all cities and municipalities of the Province.

The role of Provincial Forestland Assistance Team (PFAT):

- Provide trainings and guidelines for LGUs to formulate Forest Land Use Plans (FLUP)
- Train and advice Steering Committees and City/Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officers in FLUP implementation
- Document training process and develop IEC materials
- Facilitate regular monitoring and maintain province wide monitoring system for evaluation of FLUP implementation



Picture 1. PFAT members in Negros

It is clear that role of the PFAT after preparation of the FLUPs continues in supporting the implementation of the agreed plans. However at the moment the main focus of the group is to assist 10 remaining LGUs in the Province to come up with the plans and start the joint forest and forestland management with the DENR. The PFAT is composed of technical personnel coming from the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) and Environment Natural Resources Office (ENRD) under the Provincial Governor as well as from the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) and Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of the DENR.

³ JMC-01 Section 6.3. DENR-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 98-

The GIZ assists the team to develop a good quality training tools (presentations, outlines, questionnaires, checklists etc.) which are tailored to the specific conditions in the target LGU. Through workshops and regular meetings GIZ also strengthens the skills of the team to facilitate the process and supports them in providing back up to the Focal Persons assigned to LGUs.

The role of DENR and PLGU Focal Persons (FP) assigned to each LGU:

- Provide direct technical assistance to LGU Technical Working Groups (TWGs) during FLUP preparation
- Coordinate between PFAT and LGU in organization of trainings and capacity development
- During implementation of FLUPs and Co-Management Agreements FPs strengthen institutional capacities of the Steering Committees and City/Municipal ENROs
- Monitor FLUP preparation and implementation and submit regular reports to Provincial Forestland Management Committee

The 20 Focal Persons provide day-to-day assistance to LGUs. Based on the experience in the Province they work 5-15 days a month directly with the LGUs assisted and are available to support the FLUP preparation and later assist in the implementation of the plan. They are assigned to specific LGUs and provide assistance and coordinate all the environmental activities supported by the DENR and the Province in this LGU also beyond FLUP assistance. The Focal Persons come from the Environment Natural Resources Office (ENRD) under the Provincial Governor as well as from Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices (CENRO) of the DENR.

The main benefit in assigning the ENRD and DENR personnel directly to the target LGUs is that they get to know the people and understand the opportunities and hindrances in working with a particular LGU and its personnel. When linked with the PFAT and members of the Provincial Forestland



Picture 2. Focal Persons in Negros Oriental

Management Committee (PFMC) they can effectively coordinate and facilitate the technical and financial support provided to a specific LGU.

The role of the Provincial Forestland Management Committee (PFMC):

- Monitor and evaluate FLUP implementation
- Coordinate FLUP technical assistance and support
- Advocate and raise awareness in joint forestland management
- Facilitate resolution of issues in forestland management among City and Municipal LGUs and stakeholders

The PFMC is advisory committee coordinating the FLUP technical assistance in the Province and advising LGUs and stakeholders in the FLUP implementation. It has advisory role while the decisions on the FLUP implementation are made at the city and municipal level FLUP Steering Committees. However in its advisory role the committee can coordinate the support from provincial level and make recommendations for the priority investment areas.

Also as leaders of the technical staff assigned to PFAT and as FPs the committee supervises and supports them. The regular meetings can help to align the support among agencies so that all members of PFAT have similar follow up and back up from their respective agencies.

The PFMC in Negros Oriental is composed of six persons. The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) is acting as a chair of the committee. The other members are: Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator (PPDC), Chief of Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD), two Community Environment and Natural Resources Officers (CENROs) and Chairman for Environment from Provincial Board/Sanguniang Panlalawigan. Ideally the committee should include all agencies providing technical assistance and support to city and municipal LGUs in land use planning and forestland management.

The PFMC has a clear role in monitoring and evaluation of FLUP implementation and can act as neutral body to compare developments in different LGUs. When FLUPs are developed to all LGUs in the province the committee can also recommend strategies beyond the municipal boundaries for example on watershed conservation programs or facilitate resolution of issues hindering implementation in several LGUs on overlapping or unclear boundaries, allocations and tenure.

4. Advantages and Challenges of Province Wide FLUP technical assistance

The province wide FLUP technical assistance in Negros Oriental is in its early stages and many of the opportunities will still have to be discovered. Nevertheless the past year has shown that institutionalizing the partnership between the provincial government and DENR through PFAT can create a viable frame for FLUP assistance needed to prepare the FLUPs. Along the way the skills and commitment of the participating personnel will increase and it is expected that they will be more equipped to continue the assistance during the implementation of the agreed plans. It is good to keep in mind from

ANNEX of MOREFOREST

the beginning that PFAT is not created only to facilitate the preparation of the FLUPs but also continues the assistance once the FLUPs have been approved.

The advantages of centering the FLUP assistance to the Province are:

- Involvement of the Province will enhance technical assistance previously provided only by the DENR
- PFAT/PFMC can have significant role in province wide FLUP monitoring and evaluation and in providing evidence for decision making
- PFAT can bring LGUs together and support sharing of doable strategies and lessons learned
- PFMC can facilitate solving of issues that concern several LGUs

Anchoring the FLUP assistance to provincial level has an advantage because the technical personnel at the provincial level have a good understanding of the local conditions. They usually know the LGUs being assisted and are often already working together with them to implement projects and programs of the government. However there are also some challenges in institutionalizing the province wide FLUP assistance and making it effective.

1. The capacities of the government agencies assigned to support the FLUP process and skills of the personnel assigned to the PFAT creates the first challenge. Based on the initial experience technical skills in mapping and handling of GIS data as well as technical report writing, required to support LGUs to come up with quality FLUPs, are not readily available in the provincial level DENR and the PLGU. Therefore to avoid long delays in FLUP preparation some technical skills might still have to be supplemented from outside, especially in the beginning, instead of solely relying on training of PFAT to in turn train and assist LGUs.
2. Secondly while bringing different agencies together has advantages, it also challenges the sustainability of the assistance beyond the period with external assistance from outside. The collaboration will reveal different organizational practices, leadership styles, priorities, and incentive systems, which hinder the operations of PFAT as a unified team. Besides supporting capacity building of the PFAT the external facilitator has a challenging role to facilitate the change process in the participating agencies. Nevertheless harmonizing different practices is usually impossible before the benefits from the collaboration can be demonstrated. Drafting of local policies can help to strengthen the sustainability, but probably only when benefits of the collaboration demonstrate land use change and better management of the forestland resources, as common objective or all participating agencies, the new practices will continue to be sustained.
3. Thirdly, the experience from Negros Oriental shows that it is not that easy to keep FLUPs in the agenda of the LGU even when a lot of resources have been used to prepare them. In the end the sustainability of PFAT depends on FLUPs and how well these will be recognized as overall

ANNEX of MOREFOREST

framework for all programs and projects implemented in the forestland areas.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the achievements can be one way to keep the FLUPs alive and transform them from initial situational analysis to living documents or information bases that change in the process of implementation to guide decision-making. Until now however it has been unclear **who** should lead the monitoring. The PFMC in the future could take this role and though PFAT and FPs monitor and evaluate FLUP implementation and also share and discuss the results publicly. This way LGUs might start competing on good performance, it would increase awareness on opportunities of joint forestland management and investments from outside could be targeted to those that have demonstrated a good performance.

Also through province wide monitoring those LGUs that have most challenges in managing public goods benefitting many beyond the municipal boundaries, such as the headwaters of the main watersheds of the Province, could be better supported. Nevertheless based on current experience from Negros Oriental whether this can actually be realized in practice is still too early to say.

The past experiences in FLUP assistance in Negros Oriental demonstrate that all LGUs with FLUPs needed some level of assistance from the development agencies to prepare and finalize the FLUPs besides the facilitation and technical assistance provided by the DENR. Many of those implementing FLUPs are also currently further assisted with technical or financial support by the development agencies in line with the FLUPs and besides the assistance provided by the government.

However this external assistance is available only for limited number of LGUs and especially when FLUPs will be rolled out nationwide, it is not possible to provide direct technical assistance to all LGUs. The current structure of PFAT in Negros Oriental provides an example how this assistance could be organized in partnership by the mandated agencies. The PFAT in Negros Oriental needs still strengthening to function as a quality technical assistance team, but if properly institutionalized it will be there, not only for the time of the FLUP preparation, but also for implementation of the agreed plans.