

## **Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project (CHARMP)**

Duration : June 3, 1997-June 2005

Funding Agency : Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Location : Abra, Benguet and Mountain Province

### **Project Description :**

The CHARM Project was executed by the Department of Agriculture (DA) as lead implementing agency, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), and the Local Government Units (LGU).

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the CAR regional and field offices, was primarily tasked to implement the Reforestation Subcomponent of the project in coordination with the Executing Agency (the DA) and the other implementing agencies. The financing of DENR thrusts on reforestation under CHARMP was enabled through direct access to reforestation funds available out of IFAD loan. The Reforestation Subcomponent aimed at developing a total of 6,150 hectares through reforestation, enrichment planting and agro-forestry.

### **Objectives :**

To reduce poverty in 82 barangays in 16 municipalities of three provinces (Abra, Benguet and Mt. Province) of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

### **Project Components:**

1. Community mobilization and resource management
2. Rural infrastructure development
3. Provision of agricultural support services
4. Project management and coordination

### **Lessons Learned:**

1. The Government should implement measures to enable LGUs to establish and enforce a land use plan around each subproject site. The deputization by DENR of PO leaders would be useful for enforcement of environmental laws and regulations at community level.
2. The financial sustainability of community-based approach to forest management remains at risk given the relatively low-levels of capital build-up by POs. DENR should formally tie-up with institutions that could assist the

POs in identifying, planning and managing alternative income sources. Formal tie-up with the DTI, TESDA or any local confederations of cooperatives could optimize present PO capital build-up funds into sound and sustainable investments.

3. Even though reforestation is just a subcomponent of the Project, provisions should have been made for studies establishing baseline economic and environment conditions specifically in reforestation areas and for the conduct of benefit assessment upon maturity of trees. Benefits in agriculture are almost immediately discernable and measurable after intervention, in contrast to reforestation and agroforestry. As such, the timing of benefit assessment must be considered to better judge efficacy of a project.
4. A project performance audit mission needs to be fielded in ten years when the planted trees are nearing maturity and a well-informed assessment of reforestation and agroforestry benefits can be made.
5. Further studies and modeling should be made on traditional land ownership systems prevailing in the Cordilleras. Some documentation has already been made on the LAPAT system of Abra but there were other systems in Benguet and other provinces that may also prove instrumental in ensuring beneficiary commitment to future similar projects.
6. An assessment of the relative benefits and efficiencies of different forest management or reforestation approaches would be useful for planning reforestation projects in the future. The CBFM approach, while inarguably strong in fostering community participation and employment generation, is heavily dependent on PO commitment and capability. Such dependence may be exhibiting a “drag-effect” on reforestation. CBFM as such needs to be evaluated specially in terms of effectiveness as forest restoration.
7. A forest management project that is allowed to employ a mix of approaches, and not specifically constrained to the CBFM model, may prove more effective in the future.