

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community-based Forest Management Program (CBFMP) revolutionized forest development and rehabilitation efforts of the government when it was institutionalized by Executive Order No. 263 in 1995. Communities living within or adjacent to the forestlands were given top priority in undertaking developmental activities on forestlands.

Whereas financial gains were the primary motivating factor of contract reforestation awardees before, the adoption of CBFM approach in the implementation of the Forestry Sector Project (FSP) to rehabilitate the critical watersheds empowered the beneficiary communities economically, socially, technically and politically while transforming them into environmentally responsible managers. The tenurial right to manage subproject sites alongside the various inputs from the Subproject deepened their commitment to collaborate with other stakeholders in the implementation of these subprojects.

Sicopong Watershed Rehabilitation Subproject is located in Barangays Pal-ew and Sto Nino of Tanjay City and Barangay Sab-ahan of Bais City, Negros Oriental. The subproject covers one third of the whole Sicopong Watershed which plays an important role in the economic and sustainable development of the whole province.

The peoples organization, Sicopong United Ecological Rehabilitators for Sustainable Development Association, Inc was organized by Philippine Agro Forestry Industries and Allied Services Inc. Under the Comprehensive Site Development contract, the PO rehabilitated a total of 2,012.95 hectares of forest and agro forestry plantations from October 1997 to June 2003 with a total cost of PhP 44.37 million. To assess the quality of established plantations and the socio-economic impacts of the project, Environway Foundation Inc. and VISCA Foundation for Agricultural and Rural Development were contracted to undertake Physical Validation and Institutional Project Benefit Assessment on the area. Based on the latest evaluation, the overall weighted average survival rate of the subproject is 82.88%.

To improve the accessibility of the project beneficiaries and the efficient transport of their farm products to the city proper in Bais City, O.R. Sarmiento Construction was contracted to rehabilitate 9.84 kilometers of farm- to-market road. The construction was completed a month ahead of schedule. This was attributed to the use of heavy equipments in the completion of the project. A portion of the rehabilitated road (400 meters) was cemented by the Provincial Government Office and a local market has develop in the area.

The project has created job opportunities for its members. They were employed as work force for the CSD activities and in the construction of the farm to market road. It was estimated that about 70,000 man days of employment was granted to

the members. The latest socio-institutional survey revealed that the average household annual income of the community members increased from PhP 39,000 to PhP 138,000.