

Three decades of community-based forest management in the Philippines: emerging lessons for sustainable and equitable forest management

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SUMMARY

This paper presents a comprehensive review of the policy and practice of community-based forest management (CBFM) in the Philippines over the last three decades - one of the longest experiences in Asia. As a form of structural policy reform, CBFM may be viewed as radical and progressive. It replaced the century-old corporate mode of forest utilization where benefits flowed directly to an elite minority and attempts to institutionalize a more "people-oriented," approach of forest management. However, progress on the ground in terms of achieving the CBFM's goals on sustainable and equitable forest management remains elusive. Unstable policy, overly bureaucratic procedures, CBFM viewed as a project and not as an approach to replacing commercial large-scale forestry, and weak institutional support system, deter effective implementation. Drawing from three decades of experience, the paper distilled emerging lessons for sustainable and equitable forest management that may be useful to other countries promoting community forestry.

Keywords: community-based forest management, sustainable forest management, social equity, Philippines, forest policy.

Rapport sur la gestion forestière basée sur la communauté dans les Philippines: leçons émergentes pour la gestion équitable et durable des forêts

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Cet article présente un rapport complet de la politique et de la pratique de la gestion forestière communautaire (CBFM) dans les Philippines au cours des deux dernières décennies- une des expériences les plus longues en Asie. En tant que réforme structurelle de la politique, la CBFM peut être perçue comme radicale et progressive. Elle a remplacé le mode corporatif d'utilisation de la forêt vieux de plus d'un siècle, a sein duquel les bénéfices s'écoulaient directement vers une élite minoritaire, et vise à institutionaliser une approche de gestion forestières plus orientée vers les personnes. Le progrès sur le terrain en terme d'atteindre les buts de la CBFM quant à la gestion forestière durable et équitable demeure vague. Une politique instable, des procédés trop bureaucratiques, la perception de la CBFM comme projet, et non pas une approche pour remplacer la foresterie commerciale à grande échelle, et un support institutionnel faible, sapent toute mise en pratique efficace. En puisant dans deux décennies d'expérience, cet article distille les leçons émergentes pour une gestion forestière équitable et durable qui pourrait être utile à d'autres pays désirant promouvoir une foresterie communautaire.

Perspectivas globales sobre la gestión forestal comunitaria en Filipinas: lecciones para una gestión forestal sostenible y equitativa

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Este estudio presenta una perspectiva global sobre las políticas y la práctica del manejo forestal comunitario (MFC) en Filipinas durante las últimas dos décadas, una de las experiencias de MFC más antiguas en Asia. Como método de reforma de política estructural, el MFC puede ser considerado radical y progresista. Al reemplazar el modo colectivo secular de utilización forestal en que los beneficios fluían directamente a una élite minoritaria, intenta establecer un enfoque de manejo forestal que se centra más en las personas. Sin embargo, el progreso sobre el terreno sigue siendo difícil de alcanzar en lo que se refiere al logro de los objetivos del MFC sobre la gestión forestal sostenible y equitativa. La inestabilidad política, los procedimientos excesivamente burocráticos, el concepto del MFC como proyecto y no como metodología de reemplazo de la gestión forestal comercial a gran escala, y la debilidad del sistema de apoyo institucional impiden la implementación eficaz del MFC. El estudio utiliza dos décadas de experiencias que brindan lecciones para el manejo forestal sostenible y equitativo que pueden servir a otros países que promuevan la gestión comunitaria.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, many countries have been actively engaged in reforms to transfer responsibilities and power from the centre to the periphery (e.g. state, province, district or local level). The manifest failure of state and market mechanisms to promote sustainable and equitable natural resource management in the developing world has stimulated the search for community-based alternatives (Li 2002) including community forestry and community-based forest management. Locally-managed forests have existed for centuries. Decentralization is viewed as an important element of forest management. It is assumed – as well as advocated – that people who live close to forests and may be dependent on them for a variety of products and services have greater interest in the proper management than distant authorities located hundreds of kilometres away.

High expectations related to the purported sustainability, equitability and efficiency benefits of decentralization have been raised. It is hoped that empowering people at the periphery to choose and implement “their” form of forest management can contribute to the advancement of sustainable development as promoted by the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development and the Millennium Development Goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability (Pulhin 1996). To what extent have the expectations and hopes been fulfilled and to what extent is “democratic decentralization” in forest management actually taking place?

A review of the recent history of decentralization in forestry indicates undeniably that the land area of, although not necessarily forests, managed under “decentralized” and community-based forest management systems has dramatically increased in many countries. It appears that a number of communities and individuals involved in forestry have grown exponentially and more pioneering forms of bringing local people – into forestry are being devised.

Are the numbers of people involved in forest management or aerial increases in tree cover suitable indicators of success, efficiency gains, improved equitability, social justice and achievements of conservation goals? Have the high expectations of the mid-1990s been overtaken by disenchantment about the stalling and sometimes reversal of rudimentary decentralization processes? A comprehensive review of the last three decades of community-based forest management (CBFM) in the Philippines, attempts to answer

these questions.

This paper provides a thorough examination of the evolution of the policy and practice of CBFM in the country over the last three decades, starting in the early 1970s, which have shaped today’s CBFM. It complements the paper of Dahal and Capistano (2006), also published in this journal, that deals on weaknesses in devolution policy as it affects CBFM in the Philippines.¹ It synthesizes the results of recent assessments, field studies and scientific papers. Based on the review, the paper concludes by distilling some emerging lessons for sustainable and equitable forest management that may be useful to other countries promoting community forestry.

The Philippines covers a total land area of around 30 million hectares. Much of the country is hilly and mountainous with 52% of the land area officially classified as “forestland” (FMB 2002). The term “forestland” refers to all property owned by the national government that is still in the public domain. It is a legal, not a botanical description. In reality, much “forestlands” do not contain forests (Pulhin *et al.* 2006).

The country’s forestlands and resources have vital national and global significance. Domestically, forestlands are important sources of water for irrigation, hydroelectric power, industrial use and household use (Lasco *et al.* 2001). They are also home to millions of indigenous peoples and migrants from the lowlands. The University of the Philippines Population Institute estimated a total of 25 million people in 2000 living in the forestlands, with an annual growth rate of 2.8 percent (Guiang 2001). The upland residents, including some 6.3 million indigenous peoples, are considered the “poorest of the poor” and are mostly dependent on these areas for survival.²

Until the late 1970s, forests have contributed significantly to the national economy. In 1959, the country’s market share in globally-traded tropical timber logs was above 30% (Quintos 1989). Forest products averaged 19% of the total value of exports from 1970 to 1973. In addition, the wood industry provided direct employment to many thousands of individuals. With the continuous degradation of the country’s forest resources, the contribution of the forestry sector to the Philippine economy has continued to decline. From around 2.17% in 1976, forestry’s contribution to the gross national product (GNP) has plunged to a meager 0.10% in 2004 at constant prices (FMB 2000 and 2004).³ It should be noted however, that existing valuation techniques

¹ Both papers provide the historical context of CBFM in the Philippines although they have different focus. Dahal’s and Capistrano’s paper situates their historical analysis in the context of devolution of forest management starting from the pre-colonial period to the present while this paper focuses in the last 35 years but covers more ground in terms of different policies, drivers and players that have shaped CBFM today. Also, while both papers discuss CBFM policy, the emphasis of Dahal and Capistrano is on policy articulation while this paper focuses on policy processes, content and impacts in relation to the attainment of CBFM policy objectives.

² The inability of the Philippines economy to address the high population growth rate and its failure to develop light and medium industries as “economic magnets” in the lowlands resulted to a situation where the only alternative of poor upland communities is to eke out a living by converting open access forest lands into upland cultivation and farms. With almost 50% of the population in urban areas, increasing pressure to expand agricultural production has also contributed to continuing deforestation and land conversion.

³ Constant or real prices take into account the inflation rate in a given year hence are computed by factoring in the inflation index (provided by the Philippine National Statistical Coordination Board) to the current prices.

for GNP contribution does not include contribution of forests and forestlands in watersheds and/or protected areas to the GNP contributions of agriculture – irrigation and coastal fisheries, ecotourism, and energy. It does not also include measurement of “savings” such as from reduced maintenance cost of infrastructure.

Despite its socioeconomic and environmental significance, the Philippine forests have degenerated over the years due to massive logging and conversion to agricultural land, including shifting cultivation. Forest cover declined from about 21 million hectares of forest cover (70% of the total land area) at the end of the 19th century (Garrity *et al.* 1993, Liu *et al.* 1993), to around 7.2 million hectares or about 23.9% of the total land area (FMB 2004). Of these, less than one million hectares can be considered primary forests (FMB 1997). The remainder has been logged at least once or has suffered degradation through other activities.

According to FAO (2006), the Philippines had the highest deforestation rate in all of South and Southeast Asia during the 1990s. Annually, it was about 2.8 percent. In comparison, for Indonesia and Thailand the annual rate was 1.7 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively. In Vietnam, the forest area expanded by 2.3 percent annually. Between, 2000 and 2005, the deforestation rate declined only marginally. Comparisons among countries are very difficult. Vietnam has certainly benefited from massive investments in reforestation, which is comparable only with China. Thailand, like the Philippines has also very few forest left. The nationwide logging ban imposed in 1989 has curtailed uncontrolled forest conversion to some extent. Indonesia on the other hand, has seen an increase in annual deforestation in recent years, mainly because of heavy investments in the plantation and estate sectors and widespread illegal logging.

Broader structural forces such as political patronage, poverty, inequitable access to forest resources, and graft and corruption in the forestry sector, have contributed to deforestation and forest degradation in the Philippines (Porter and Ganapin 1988, Kummer 1992, Broad and Cavanagh 1993, Vitug 1993).

Over the last two decades, efforts to reverse the downward trend of forest degradation and address the mounting socioeconomic and environmental problems in the Philippine uplands have received more attention. At the core of these efforts is the adoption of community-based forest management as the national strategy for promoting sustainable forestry and social justice in 1995.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND SOURCES OF DATA AND INFORMATION

The review was conducted at two levels of analysis: policy

and field levels (Figure 1). Different emphasis of analysis was adopted at each level (Table 1). The policy level centred on the historical context of CBFM by examining the evolution of different policies, programs and initiatives under three periods, i.e. pioneering, experimentation, and institutionalization and expansion. The field level review concentrated on the five core areas of CBFM, i.e. tenure and resource use, livelihood and enterprise development, forest conservation and protection, the capacity of people's organizations (PO) towards self-governance, and institutional support systems.⁴ In comparison to the policy level, most of the information used for the analysis at the field level comes directly from the field via cases studies, is contained in the grey literature and/or emerged during multi-stakeholder consultations held from 2005 to 2007. Table 1 presents the major sources of information used at the two levels of analysis.

Based on the analysis, the outcomes of CBFM were assessed according to improving the communities' socioeconomic well-being, advancing social justice and equitable access to forestlands and resources, achieving sustainable forest management and promoting a healthy environment for the Filipino people. These four criteria reflect of CBFM's main objectives. The overlapping circles representing the different objectives and the arrows indicate the interconnectedness and non-exclusivity of these objectives. Although the objectives might be considered as overly ambitious, the overall performance of CBFM has to be gauged nonetheless on the basis of the attainment of these stated objectives. Finally, emerging lessons for sustainable and equitable forest management were distilled.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: KEY POLICIES, DRIVERS AND PLAYERS

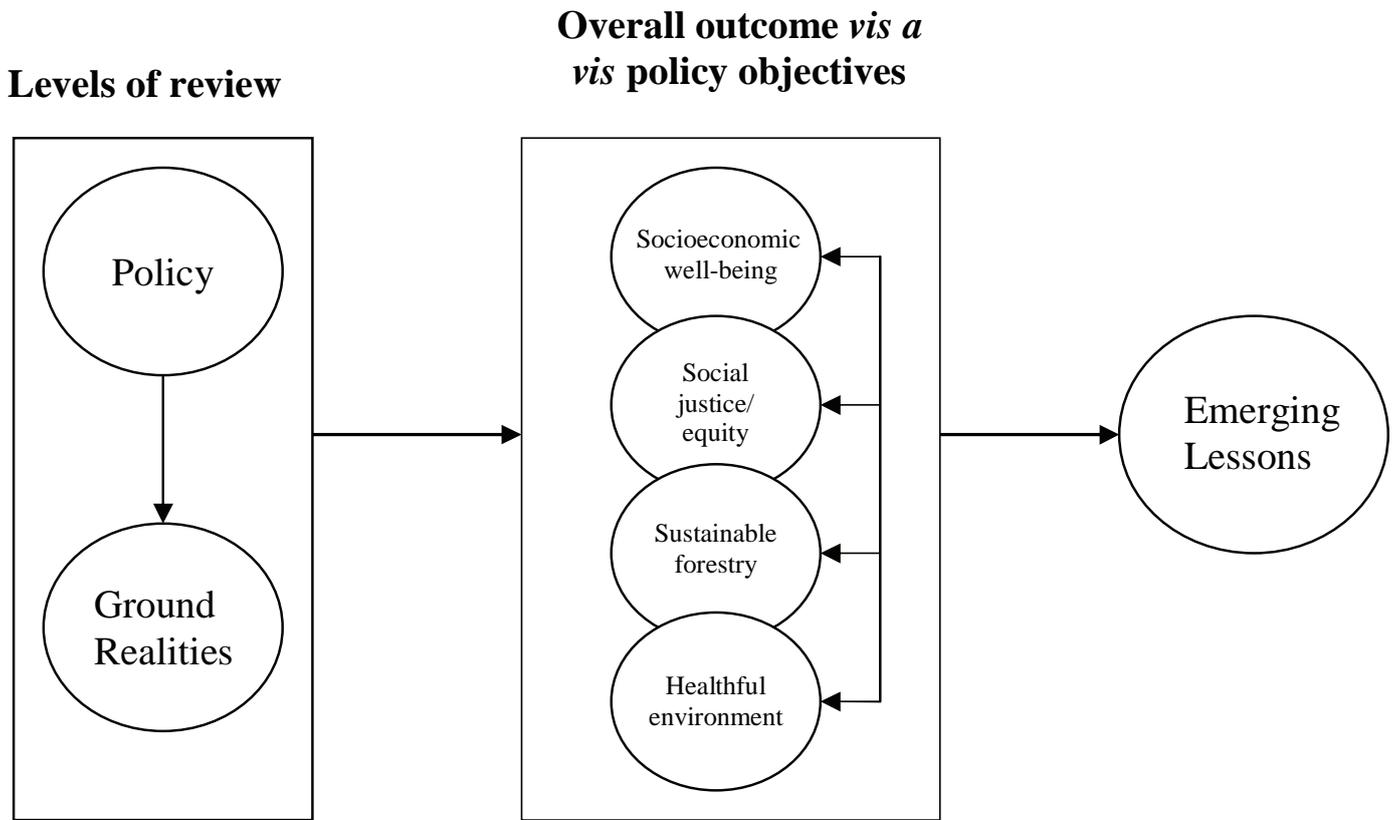
Several studies have analyzed the evolution of CBFM in the Philippines including the recent decentralization approach in forest management (Rebugio and Chiong-Javier 1995, Pulhin 1996, Borlagdan *et al.* 2001, Pulhin and Pulhin 2003, Magno 2003, Dahal and Capistrano 2006). While the previous studies focused on policies and practice of CBFM, this review builds on the previous ones by emphasizing more on key drivers and players that shape them. The historical review covers initiatives and developments in the last 35 years, which have shaped today's CBFM. The analysis period can be divided into “pioneering”, “experimentation” and “institutionalization and expansion”.

Pioneering period (1971-1985)

Until the end of 1960s, forest policies and programs of the

⁴ These core areas or themes were first used during the Ten Year Review of CBFM in the Philippines: A Forum for Reflection and Dialogue, held on 20 - 22 April 2006 and was debated on and adopted by the multi-stakeholder participants composed of POs, NGOs, DENR, private sector, academe, and donor agencies, during the National Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) Strategic Plan Update: A Consultative Workshop held on September 20-22, 2006. The new National CBFM Strategic Action Plan currently being formulated jointly by the different stakeholders also adopted these five areas as the key component strategies.

FIGURE 1 Analytical framework for the review



Philippine government favoured the commercial sector over local people. *Kaingineros* (or shifting cultivators) and other forest occupants were fined, imprisoned and evicted from forest areas, as a strategy to halt deforestation. The strict enforcement of the law and the alienation of the local people in the Philippine uplands could not slow down the massive deforestation (Pulhin 1996).

The 1970s marked a new phase in the development of forest policies and programs, which paved the way to the present CBFM program and strategy. The continuing over-exploitation of forests on one hand, and the political risk associated with the growing countryside insurgency on the other, triggered the formulation of new policies and programs under the President Marcos administration, which aimed to address and reverse the emerging environmental and political crisis (Pulhin 1996). Between 1973 and 1979, three “people-oriented forestry” programs were implemented, namely, the Family Approach to Reforestation (FAR) Program, Forest Occupancy Management (FOM) Program, and the Communal Tree Farming (CFP) Program. In 1982, a major program known as the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP) was established through the issuance of Presidential Letter of Instruction 1260. ISFP consolidated the three earlier programs, while recognizing the vested interests of the forest occupants through the provision of a 25-year

tenure security (Table 2). The provision of tenure security enabled the upland farmers to farm their lands and enjoy the benefits of their labour without the fear of being ejected in the government-owned forestlands.

The policies and programs developed during the pioneering period opened some space, albeit very limited, to accommodate forest occupancy. They also involved individuals and upland communities in soil conservation, forest protection, reforestation, and establishment of tree plantations. From a political economy perspective, it is clear that they mainly served the interest of the state in terms of using local people as paid labourers. Minor incentives and small concessions allowed the military regime to perpetuate its political rule by containing the insurgency in the countryside (Contreras 1989, Pulhin 1996). However, the initiatives are considered as “pioneering” since they departed from the traditional punitive approach and became more accommodating for forest occupants and their role in forest management (Rebugio and Chiong-Javier 1995). Indeed, for the first time foresters realized and admitted that deforestation was not merely a problem of a technical but rather socioeconomic nature (Pulhin 1998). Hence, the first seeds for CBFM were unknowingly, and in all likelihood also unintentionally, planted during the 1970s.

TABLE 1 Focus of analysis and major sources of information for different levels of CBFM reviewed

Levels/areas of Review	Emphasis/focus of analysis	Major sources of data/information
Policy	Historical context, key players and drivers of policy development in a given period	Government laws, rules and regulations; published and grey literature
Field/Site specific realities	Core areas of CBFM namely, land tenure and resource use, livelihood and enterprise development, forest conservation and protection, PO's capacity towards self-governance, institutional support	<p>Case studies and field review reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary assessment of CBFM involving analysis of 29 sites nationwide, commissioned by the Ford Foundation, Philippines (Borlagdan <i>et al.</i> 2001). The sites included 5 "self-initiated" (in which community-wide sustainable indigenous resource management systems predated any CBFM interventions in the area), 9 locally assisted (in which the growth of CBFM efforts was brought about largely by partnerships with external entities, sponsors, or facilitators), and 15 national program sites (all sites in which the DENR implemented various aspects of the CBFM program). • Synthesis of six in-depth case studies conducted in CBFM areas commissioned by the DENR under the FAO-managed National Forestry Program (NFP) Facility (Pulhin 2005) with the intension of improving the CBFM implementation strategy by crafting a new National CBFM Strategic Action Plan. • Field review of a total of 70 CBFM sites under the DENR- JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Project for Enhancing CBFM Program contained in two separate reports (Miyakawa <i>et al.</i> 2005, and Miyakawa <i>et al.</i> 2006). The review forms part of the policy component of the project. • Tenure assessment report of the Environmental Governance Project Phase 2 (EcoGov 2) involving the analysis of 212 tenure holders in forestlands located in 4 Regions and 30 LGUs using 12 criteria (Castillo <i>et al.</i> 2007). Of the 212 tenure holders, 155 are CBFM sites. <p>Outputs of multi-stakeholder assessments as enumerated below</p>
Overall outcomes	Impacts of CBFM policies and program in achieving the CBFM goals in terms of improving communities' socioeconomic well-being, advancing sustainable forestry and social justice and equity, and promoting a healthful environment	<p>Outputs of multi-stakeholder assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ten Year Review of CBFM in the Philippines: A Forum for Reflection and Dialogue", held on 20 - 22 April 2006 in Silang, Cavite. The review was jointly organized by the an international NGO, the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction and the University of the Philippines Los Baños, College of Forestry and Natural Resources' Environmental Justice Project. It was attended by representatives from DENR, POs/National CBFM PO Federation, NGOs, LGUs, academe, other government agencies, private sector, and development/donor organizations. An interesting feature of the review is the good representation of the PO leaders who presented 11 of the 20 papers based on their personal experiences of implementing CBFM in their respective sites. • "National Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) Strategic Plan Update: A Consultative Workshop" held on September 20-22, 2006 in Traders Hotel, Makati City. The workshop was organized to initiate the process of drafting the new National CBFM Strategic Action Plan. It was initiated under the NFP Facility and co-organized by DENR, NGOs, academe, and development and donor organizations. It was also attended by different stakeholders as enumerated above but especially by the officers of National and Regional PO Federation from different regions nationwide. <p>Case studies and field reports as enumerated above Published and grey literature</p>

TABLE 2 Historical Overview of CBFM in the Philippines (1971 to Present)

Periods/ Dates	Key Policies/Programs/ Projects/ Initiatives	Features
Pioneering Period (1971-1985)		
1971	<i>Kaingin</i> Management and Land Settlement Regulations (Forestry Administrative Order No. 62)	Focused on the containment rather than the punishment of forest occupants. <i>Kaingineros</i> or slash and burn cultivators were allowed to remain the public forestland provided they undertake soil conservation and tree farming activities in fixed sites
1973	Family Approach to Reforestation (FAR) Program (Bureau of Forest Development Circular No. 45, Series of 1973)	The Bureau of Forest Development entered into short-term contracts with families to set up tree plantations in public land.
1975	Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree No. 705)	<i>Kaingineros</i> , squatters and other occupants who entered forest zones before May 1975 shall not be prosecuted provided they do not expand their clearings and that they undertake forest protection activities.
1975	Forest Occupancy Management Program	Allowed bona fide forest occupants to develop the lands they were occupying or cultivating but with specific provision that the subject land should not exceed 7 ha per occupant. Renewable two-year forest occupancy permit issued to participating <i>kaingineros</i> .
1979	Communal Tree Farming (CFP) Program (Ministry Administrative Order No. 11. Series of 1979)	Every city and municipality on the country was expected to establish tree farms. Reforestation in open and denuded forestlands was to be undertaken through the involvement of forest occupants, civic organizations and municipal government units.
1982	Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) Program (Presidential Letter of Instruction No. 1260; Ministry Administrative Order No. 48, Series of 1982; Department Administrative Order No. 97, Series of 1988).	Designed to maximize land productivity, enhance ecological stability, and improve socioeconomic conditions of forest occupants and communities. Participants in the Program who have been residing in forestlands on or before December 31, 1981 were granted the right to occupy and develop their areas for a period of 25 years, renewable for another 25 years through the issuance of stewardship agreement.
Experimentation and Heavy Infusion of External Assistance (1988-1994)		
1988	ISFP Upland Development Project	A Ford Foundation-funded project in selected areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao that aimed to strengthen the implementation of the Integrated Social Forestry Program through the the provision of land tenure security, development of participatory methodologies in project planning, monitoring and evaluation, community organizing activities, and farm development through agroforestry promotion.
1988	Low Income Upland Communities Project (LIUCP) (DENR Administrative Order No. 35, Series of 1992)	A project undertaken by DENR to restore and sustainably manage the upland/forest resources in the islands of Mindoro Oriental and Occidental and alleviate poverty of rural communities, involving both the Mangyan tribes and lowland migrants.
1989	General Rules and Regulations on the Participation of NGOs in DENR Programs (DENR Administrative Order No. 120)	The DENR shall encourage and promote the participation of NGOs in natural resources development, management and protection. A National NGO Desk is tasked to accredit NGOs qualified to participate in DENR programs.
1989	Community Forestry Program (DENR Administrative Order No. 123 Series of 1989; DENR Administrative Order No. 22, Series of 1993)	The Community Forestry Agreement (CFMA) is awarded to organized upland communities for a period of 25 years, renewable for another 25 years. Forest utilization privileges are given to the communities which are expected to prepare a development plan and adhere to the principles of sustained-yield management.
1990	Forest Land Management Program (FLMP) (DENR Administrative Order Nos. 71, Series of 1990; 31, Series of 1991; and 23, Series of 1993.	Forest Land Management Agreements (FLMA) are issued which replace the former short-term contract reforestation systems. The program grants participants the sole and exclusive rights to occupy, develop, and manage specified areas of forestlands, subject to repayable financial assistance from DENR and to harvest, sell and utilize products grown on the lands.

1991	Local Government Code (Republic Act No. 7160)	The implementation of social forestry and reforestation initiatives, the management of communal forests not exceeding 5,000 ha., the protection of small watershed areas, and the enforcement of forest laws are devolved to local government units.
1992	Institutionalization of Master Plan for Forestry Development within DENR (DENR Administrative Order No. 23, Series of 1992)	The 1990 Master Plan for Forestry Development targets to place 3.4 million hectares under tenure under the different people-oriented forestry programs from 1990 to 2000.
1992	Integrated Rainforest Management Project (IRMP)	A community-based forestry project supported by the government of Germany implemented in the province of Quirino.
1992	National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) Act (Republic Act No. 7586)	Organized communities living in selected zones within or around protected areas may be given a 25-year tenure security provided this will not pose a threat to the environmental integrity of the protected areas. They may also be allowed to harvest non-timber forest products like rattan, bamboo, vines, etc., in non-restricted zones of these areas.
1992	Regional Resource Management Program (RRMP)	A community-based rural development project geared towards the protection, development and management of watershed and upland resources under the World Bank's Environment and Natural Resources-Sectoral Adjustment Loan (ENR-SECAL)
1993	Delineation of Ancestral Lands and Domain Claims (DENR Administrative Order No. 2, Series of 1993)	Provincial Special Task Forces on Ancestral Domains (PSTFAD) were mandated to meet with indigenous communities for the purpose of verifying ancestral domain claims and identifying forest boundaries. Once their claims are approved, indigenous communities are granted Certificates of Ancestral Domain Claims (CADCs)
1987 and 1995	Forestry Sector Project I and II (FSP) DENR Administrative Order No. 16, Series of 1993)	Established under the so called National Forestation Program that targeted to rehabilitate 1.4 million ha of denuded areas from 1987 to 2000. FSP II was implemented through Community-Based Forest Management.
1993	Coastal Environment Program (CEP) (DENR Administrative Order No. 19-93)	Encompasses all DENR concerns over habitat and ecological support systems of coastal communities and fisheries specifically pertaining to their productivity, biodiversity, integrity, sustainability and equitability of access to use.
Institutionalization and Expansion (1995 to Present)		
1995	Adoption of Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) as the National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Forestlands (Executive Order No. 263)	CBFM is the national strategy to achieve sustainable forestry and social justice. Organized communities may be granted access to forest resources under long-term tenure provided they employ environment-friendly, ecologically sustainable, and labour-intensive harvesting methods. CBFM integrates all people-oriented forestry programs and projects of the government.
1996	Rules and Regulations for the Implementation of Executive Order 263, Otherwise Known as the CBFM Strategy (DENR Administrative Order No. 96-29)	Local communities shall prepare their respective Community Resource Management Frameworks with the assistance of DENR, local government units, NGOs, and other government agencies. The CBFM program shall apply to all areas classified as forestlands including allowable zones within protected areas. It integrates all people-oriented forestry programs of the government.
1997	Indigenous People's Rights Act (Republic Act No. 8371)	Mandated the State to protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral domains to ensure their economic, social and cultural well being. Also recognizes the property relations in determining the ownership and extent of ancestral domain. Indigenous peoples whose ancestral domains have been officially delineated and determined by the National Commission on Indigenous People shall be issued a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) in the name of the community concerned, containing a list of all those identified in the census.

1997	Adopting the DENR Strategic Action Plan for Community-Based Forest Management (DENR Memorandum Circular No. 97-13)	Mandated the adoption of the DENR Strategic Action Plan for CBFM to guide its implementation from 1997-2020. The Memorandum Circular instructed the all the DENR Regional Offices to prepare their respective Regional CBFM Action Plan which will in turn be the basis for the preparation of the CBFM Action Plans for the PENRO (Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office) and CENRO (Community Environment and Natural Resources Office) levels.
1998	Manual of Procedures on Devolved and other Forest Management Functions (DENR-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 98-01)	This manual operationalizes and makes effective the devolution of forest management functions from the DENR to the LGU. It also seeks to strengthen and institutionalize DENR-DILG-LGU partnership and cooperation on devolved and other forest management functions.
2003	Strengthening and Institutionalizing the DENR-DILG-LGU Partnership on Devolved and other Forest Management Functions (DENR-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2003-01)	Guidelines and instructions for DENR, DILG and LGUs in accelerating collaboration, partnership, coordination and institutionalization of its working relations on forest management and related environmental concerns.
2004	Promoting Sustainable Forest Management in the Philippines (Executive Order No. 318)	Prescribed for the pursuit of sustainable management of forests and forestlands in watersheds based on six key principles including community-based forest conservation and development. CBFM shall remain the primary strategy in all forest conservation and development and related activities.
2004	Revised Rules and Regulations for the Implementation of the CBFM Strategy (DENR Administrative Order No. 29)	Improve on the 1996 CBFM Implementing Rules and Regulations by allowing more flexibility to participating communities such as the requirement of a Five-Year Work Plan instead of Annual Work Plan, etc.
2004	DENR Secretary's Memorandum dated December 8, 2004	Cancellation/suspension of logging and transportation of logs imposed by the DENR Secretary Michael Defensor to show government action after major landslide disaster in the provinces of Aurora and Quezon adversely affecting the CBFMA areas with operational Resource Use Permit.
2005	DENR's Secretary's Memorandum dated November 30, 2005	Cancellation of 233 existing CBFMA in 11 Regions (Cordillera Autonomous Region, Regions 1, 3, 4-A, 4-B, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11) accordingly due to CBFM PO's unsatisfactory performance ratings.
2006	DENR's Secretary's Memorandum dated January 5, 2006	Cancellation of all existing CBFMAs in 8 Regions (Regions 1, 4-B, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13) due to CBFM POs' alleged non-compliance/violations.
2006-2007	Formulation of 2 nd Decade Strategic Action Plan	Puts primacy on the ownership of the different CBFM stakeholders on the process of the Strategic Plan formulation but also commitment and support to its implementation.

Sources: Pulhin 1987, DENR, 1990, Rebugio and Chiong-Javier 1995, DENR 1996, Magno 2003, Miyakawa et al. 2006, <http://www.denr.gov.ph/section-policies/index.php>

Experimentation and infusion of massive external support (1986-1994)

The fall of the President Marcos regime in 1986 ushered a new epoch with considerable implications to forest management in the Philippines. The democratic government under President Corazon Aquino and the appointment of new Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) officials changed perspectives on forestry. A number of radical reforms were introduced. At the core of these reforms was the reorganization of the DENR, partly to remove corrupt officials and to significantly reduce the number of timber licenses despite intense opposition from companies in the logging business (Korten 1994). The

latter paved the way for liberalizing forest access to upland communities and the experimentation with more "people-oriented" forestry programs.

These changes were necessary to make the DENR attractive to the donor community. As aptly pointed out by Korten (1994:973), "The combination of the worldwide demand for more attention to environmental problems, Philippine pressing environmental needs, and a newly invigorated forestry agency operating within a recently restored democracy made the forestry projects in the Philippines an ideal target for foreign assistance." Added to these was the presence of a vibrant civil society which strongly lobbied for resource access democratization and people's participation in natural resource management (Broad

and Cavanagh 1993) offering great potential for policy and institutional reform. As a result, external assistance for forestry projects flowed into the country. Between 1988 and 1992, the country had obtained five forestry-related loans with a total amount of US\$731 million. This represented a more than 10-fold increase in comparison to prior loans for forestry (Korten 1994). In addition, an undetermined amount of other external assistance, e.g. grants and technical support, were provided by the Ford Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), German and Swedish governments, and other agencies.

With the government's new thrust to advance social justice and equity in the natural resources sector and the DENR's need to maintain political legitimacy in the governance of the country's forest resources (Pulhin 2004), external assistance was directed at "people-oriented" forestry programs, since these programs incorporate the core concerns of sustainable development such as advancement of social equity, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability (Pulhin 1996). From 1988 to 1993 alone, a total of at least nine major "people-oriented" forestry programs and projects were initiated (Table 2). Except for the Delineation of Ancestral Lands and Domain Claims project, all of these were funded through external support. These programs and projects provided fertile ground for piloting "people-oriented" forestry through applying several types of land tenure instruments, and experimenting with different project components and strategies, and various institutional and collaborative arrangements. They also stimulated the entrance of new players in the forestry sector, especially the NGOs, POs, LGUs, academe and research agencies.

The first Philippine Master Plan for Forestry Development in 1990 adopted "people-oriented" forestry⁵ as a major forestry strategy. The plan stipulated that 1.5 million hectares of residual forests (54% of the then remaining 2.8 million hectares of residual forest on slopes less than 50% steep) plus an additional 5.9 million hectares of "open access" areas would be placed under community forest management over a ten-year period (DENR 1990). Corporate or large-scale operations (e.g. timber license agreements, TLAs and timber production sharing agreements, TPSAs) were to be confined to 682 000 hectares or barely 24% of the total forests allocated for commercial timber harvesting.

Institutionalization and expansion (1995 to present)

By mid 1990s, advocates of CBFM from the government and

development agencies recognized the need to institutionalize the different people-oriented forestry programs and projects under one umbrella to ensure their continuity and enhance effectiveness and impacts. To effect the institutionalization, President Fidel Ramos issued on 29 July 1995 Executive Order No. 263 "Adopting Community-Based Forest Management as the National Strategy to Ensure the Sustainable Development of the Country's Forestlands Resources and Providing Mechanisms for Its Implementation". Section 3 of the order stipulates that local communities can obtain long-term tenurial rights to forestland "provided they employ environmentally-friendly, ecologically-sustainable, and labour-intensive harvesting methods. Indigenous peoples (IPs), also known as Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs), may also participate in the implementation of CBFM activities in recognition of their rights to their ancestral domains and land rights and claims (Section 4).

On 10 October 1996, DENR Secretary Victor Ramos issued Department Administrative Order (DAO) No. 96-29 (Rules and Regulations for the Implementation of Executive Order 263) for the implementation of the CBFM strategy. Section 1 of the DAO describes the title of the order as "Community-Based Forest Management Program". The Program "integrates and unifies" ten people-oriented forestry programs and projects (Table 2). To guide the implementation of the Program, a DENR Strategic Action Plan for CBFM was adopted on 18 July 1997 through Memorandum Circular No. 97-13 issued by the DENR Secretary Victor Ramos. In anticipation of the cancellation and expiration of some TLAs and considering the need to place "open access" areas under proper management, the plan envisioned to place about 9 million hectares of forestlands under community management by the year 2008, which included 2.9 million hectares that were already covered by people-oriented forestry projects and a further 6.59 million hectares considered as open and potential open access land.

Also in 1997, the Indigenous People's Rights Act (otherwise known as the IPRA Law) was passed into law by the Philippine Congress through Republic Act No. 8371. The law recognized the vested rights of the IPs/ICCs over their ancestral lands and thus entitled them to be issued with the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT)⁶ in the name of the community subject to official delineation and determination by the appointed agency, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). IPs/ICCs that were part of the CBFM Program and have been issued with CBFM Agreements or Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC)⁷ prior to the passage of the IPRA Law were enabled

⁵ "People-oriented forestry" was the general term used for earlier government-initiated forestry programs that involved the participation of local communities in forestry activities such as reforestation, agroforestry, timber stand improvement, and forest protection. It also involved the issuance of various land tenure instruments which entitled the holders (individuals or communities) their continuous occupancy in forestlands as well as cultivate their farms lands. After 1995, with the issuance of Executive Order 263, the "Community-Based Forest Management" (CBFM) replaced the term "People-oriented forestry".

⁶ Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) as defined by the IPRA Law "refers to a title formally recognizing the rights of possession and ownership of ICCs/IPs over their ancestral domains identified and delineated according to this law".

⁷ Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC) as defined by DENR Administrative Order No. 96-29 refers to "a certificate issued by the DENR to an indigenous cultural community/indigenous people declaring, identifying and recognizing their claim to a particular traditional territory which they have possessed and occupied, communally or individually in accordance with their customs and traditions since time immemorial."

to opt to retain these tenure instruments and remain under the CBFM Program instead of availing of CADT.

In 2004, President Gloria Arroyo issued Executive Order No. 318 entitled "Promoting Sustainable Forest Management in the Philippines" reiterating the government's confidence in CBFM as a means of achieving sustainable forest management. In the same year, DENR Secretary Elisea Guzon issued DENR Administrative Order No. 29. The order replaced the 1996 rules and regulations implementing the CBFM Strategy and provides more flexibility to participating communities by reducing some bureaucratic requirements.

The developments of the strategy and program were unfortunately accompanied by the decrease in foreign-assisted projects, especially since early 2000.⁸ The drying up of funds has particularly affected the participation of NGOs in CBFM activities. Only a limited number of local government units (LGU) have started playing a more active role in CBFM since the full implementation of the Local Government Code and the strengthening and institutionalization of the DENR-DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government)-LGU partnership for devolved and other forest management functions. This may be partly due to the marginalization of LGUs in the DENR-driven CBFM policy framework during the early years of CBFM resulting to their inability to provide support to community organizations – both IPs and upland migrants – after the decline in the donor assistance. Also, most LGUs have limited capabilities and are ineffective in providing assistance to local communities in the form of extension and capacity building support as well as social infrastructure (farm to market road, local water supply, nurseries, etc.) to promote successful CBFM implementation.

The institutionalization and expansion period saw a massive increase in CBFM areas primarily in response to the 1997 DENR Strategic Action Plan for CBFM and the Philippine Master Plan for Forestry Development. From a total area of less than 1 million hectares in 1995, CBFM coverage increased by more than six times to its present total coverage of around 5.97 million hectares (<http://forestry.dnr.gov.ph/statbook.htm>).⁹ Of the total CBFM area, 4 904 million hectares are under various forms of land tenure instruments. These include around 2.5 million ha (51%) under CADC, 1.57 million hectares (32%) under CBFMA, 0.631 million hectares (13%) under CSC, and the remaining 0.196 million hectares under Community Forest Management Agreement, CFSA, and other forms of land tenure arrangements (FMB 2006). In principle, these tenurial instruments provide the holders the right to occupy, cultivate and develop their areas

as well as utilize existing forest resources including timber, subject to the government rules and regulations.

As a form of structural policy reform in the forestry sector, CBFM may be viewed as radical and progressive (Pulhin 1998). It replaced the century-old TLA approach of forest utilization where benefits flowed to an elite minority and attempts to democratize access to and benefits from forest management by transferring certain management rights and responsibilities to forest communities. From more than 10 million hectares under the control of 422 TLA holders in 1973, timber concession areas have gradually declined to only 584 000 hectares at present with barely 15 license holders remaining. On the other hand, from virtually nothing in early 1980s, total CBFM coverage nationwide is now about ten times the size of all the existing TLAs combined (Figure 2).

The galloping expansion, especially during the late 1990s, was facilitated by donor funds and the presence of foreign-funded projects. While this helped to put CBFM on the map in the short terms, it also instilled in many people the belief that the CBFM Program was something like a project. A project mentality developed with significant negative implications for the CBFM Program since the beginning of the new millennium. The completion of a project and the pullout of NGOs basically led to the discontinuation of many activities.

The historical overview indicates that the willingness to accept local people as forest managers and to set up the CBFM Program was shaped by a confluence of many actors with diverse interests at local, national and international levels (Table 3). After more than 35 years, the journey to meaningful involvement in forestry, important especially to the millions of forest-dependent people¹⁰ living in the Philippines, continues, and as the following sections will show, every step forward can easily be followed by one or more steps in the opposite direction.

PROGRESS ON THE GROUND: FINDINGS FROM FIELD STUDIES AND MULTI-SECTORAL ASSESSMENTS

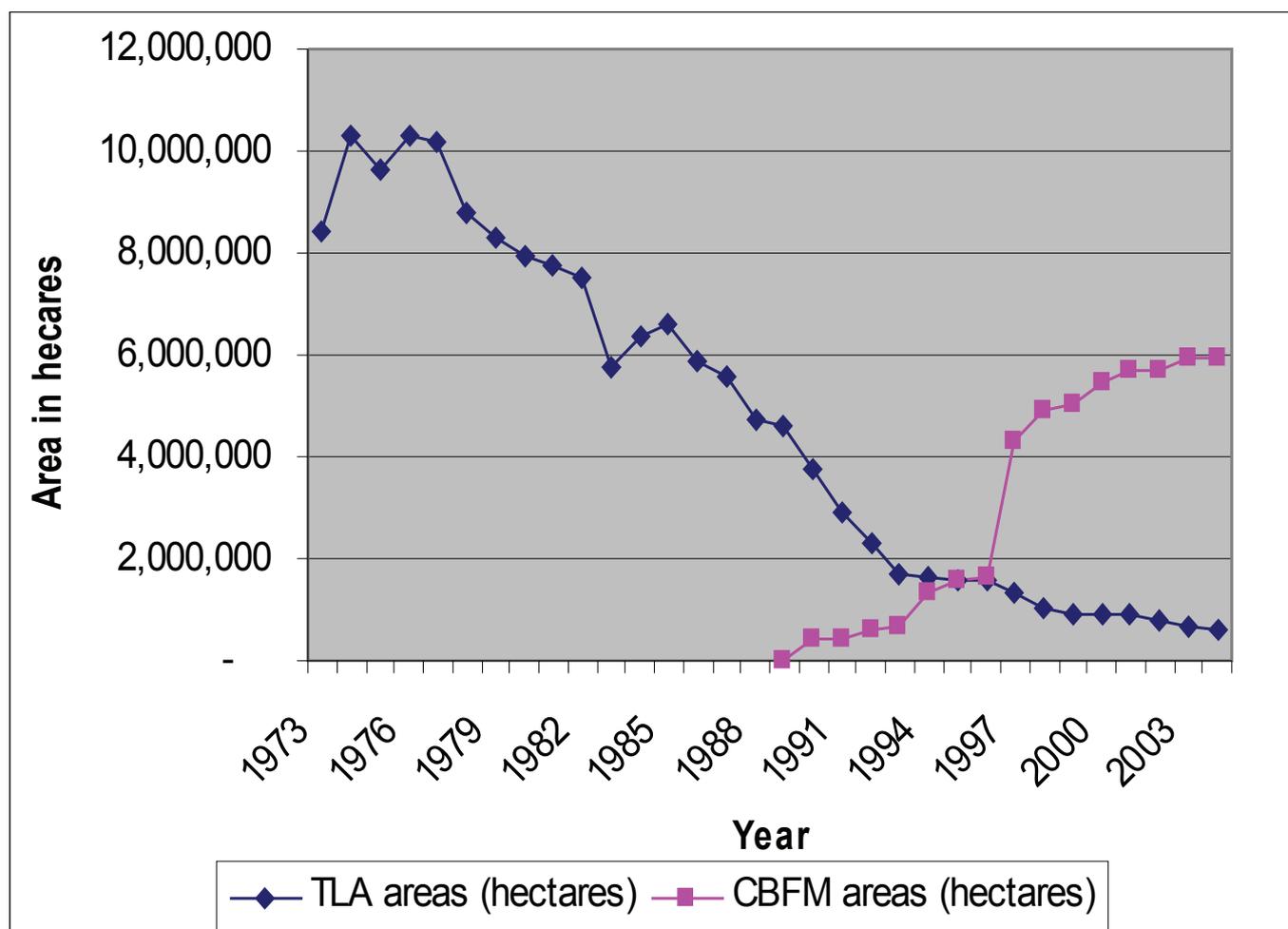
While the above-mentioned accomplishments may appear important and indeed impressive, the real effectiveness of CBFM strategy can be measured only on the ground. The reality in the five core areas of CBFM is discussed in detail below.

⁸ Some of the reasons for the decrease in foreign-funding include the permanent transfer of the Ford Foundation Office from Manila to China and hence the permanent stoppage of its long history of support to CBFM; poor performance of some reforestation projects (see for instance, Korten 1992); and changing priorities of some donor organizations.

⁹ Among these tenure instruments include the following: CBFMA, CADC, Forest Land Management Agreement (FLMA) under the Forest Land Management Program, Community Forest Management Agreement (CFMA) under the Community Forestry Program, and Certificate of Stewardship Contract (CSC) and Community Forest Stewardship Agreement (CFSA) under the Integrated Social Forestry Program.

¹⁰ Forest-dependent people in this context refers to both indigenous and migrant communities who live inside or around the state-claimed forest boundaries who depend on forestlands and their resources such as timber, water, non-timber forest products, etc., as main source of livelihood.

FIGURE 2 Coverage of TLA areas vs. CBFM areas (1973-2004) Note: Available data on CBFM only from 1990-2004



Sources: Forest Management Bureau Forestry Statistics (1990-2004)

TABLE 3 Key players and drivers in the evolution of CBFM by period (1971 to present)

Period/ Dates	Key Players	Major Drivers
Pioneering Period (1971-1985)	President Ferdinand Marcos, Secretary of Ministry of Natural Resources, Director of Bureau of Forestry Development, upland communities	Inability of punitive approach to slow down massive deforestation, need to contain insurgency problem in the country side
Experimentation and heavy infusion of external assistance (1986-1994)	President Corazon Aquino, DENR Secretaries, Various bi-lateral and multi-lateral funding institutions, Various civil society sectors such as Non-Government Organizations, Academe, and People's Organizations, Forestry professionals/ consultants	Global and national demands to address environmental problems and promote sustainable development, pressure from civil society to democratize forest access and benefits, need for political legitimacy in the part of DENR to govern forest resources
Institutionalization and Expansion (1995 to present)	President Fidel Ramos and Gloria Arroyo, DENR Secretaries, Forest Management Bureau, Non-Government Organizations, People's Organizations, Local government units, Academe, Various bi-lateral and multi-lateral funding institutions	Advocacy from various sectors to ensure continuity and enhance effectiveness of CBFM impacts, need to put in place proper management of open access forest areas formerly covered by timber license agreements, recognition of IPs' rights over their ancestral lands, government's continues confidence on CBFM as a major strategy for promoting sustainable forest management and social justice

Land tenure and resource use

The CBFM program in the Philippines is considered progressive because of its land tenure and resource use rights features (Utting 2000). In theory, the issuance of various tenure instruments under CBFM promotes a “win-win” strategy for both the government and the local communities. Granting of tenure to communities terminates the open access nature of forestlands. At the same time, it devolves the responsibilities of management and protection to the local communities at minimal costs. The “bundle of rights” that goes with the provision of land tenure includes the right of exclusion of others from using designated resources, which is a substantial benefit to communities.

A closer analysis of the situation on the ground shows that the potential “win-win” outcome is often not being realized. Local communities continue to experience a strong sense of insecurity over their CBFM areas despite the issuance of rights as a result of frequent government policy changes regarding timber utilization. This was a major concern when more than 1 000 CBFM agreements were cancelled nationwide by the former DENR Secretary because of irregularities in some areas (Miyakawa *et al.* 2005, Miyakawa *et al.* 2006, Pulhin 2006). Moreover, the associated bundles of rights have never been realized in most areas as a result of unstable policies exacerbated by excessive and tedious requirements and procedures associated with timber utilization (Dugan and Pulhin 2006). Instead of providing rights to local people, the different land tenure instruments, particularly CBFMAs, have enhanced the government control by limiting devolution to responsibilities of forest development and protection to local communities. Authority and rights to benefit from the resources that local communities manage are often undermined, left unclear or even broken, which can leave people worse instead of better off (Pulhin 2006).

Li (2002) notes that as a legal strategy for the majority of upland people, “sustainable” community-based natural resource management imposes some severe limitations. In numerous cases, it makes legal entitlements to resources conditional upon discriminatory and probably unenforceable environmental pre-requisites. The same can be observed in the Philippines. The combined effects of unstable policy and overly bureaucratic requirements and procedures associated with timber utilization is damaging to the local communities and the environment. A ban or suspension on timber harvesting often means the loss of an important income source.¹¹ In need of cash, some villagers have no option but to resort to the sale of household assets like working animals and motorcycles to cope with financial requirements. Another coping strategy is to engage in illegal timber harvesting, thus damaging the environment. The adverse impacts are very common in CBFM areas but are best illustrated in the case of Ngan, Panansalan, Pagsabangan Forest Resources

Development Cooperative (NPPFRDC) in the Southern Philippines (see Box 1, see also RINFAPADECO 2006 and CBFM Coop 2006 for additional examples).

Livelihood and enterprise development

At the core of improving the socio-economic well-being of the PO members are viable livelihood alternatives to timber harvesting and enhanced capacities in business and financial management. Yet, these important aspects of CBFM leave much to be desired. Miyakawa *et al.* (2005) show that 20 out of 47 POs lack income generating activities. Also, of the 11 POs that organized themselves into cooperatives, five went bankrupt due to poor management as reflected in the absence of accounting records, lack of transparency in decision-making, and very low or low profits.

Livelihood-support projects are generally ill conceived and often not sustainable. In two of the six cases analyzed, a total of 20 livelihood-related projects were initiated by POs but most were eventually discontinued due to a host of technical, managerial, and organizational problems (Pulhin 2005). An assessment of 155 CBFM sites indicated that 116 or about 75% have been rated not to meet the minimum criteria set in terms of support for non-forest-based livelihood activities (Castillo *et al.* 2007).

Adding value in upland villages is also very limited. Agroforestry products and timber are rarely processed locally, which means that significant opportunities for generating income are missed. Similarly, products are usually not linked to viable and stable markets, preventing POs from obtaining adequate returns for their products (Pulhin 2005).

While opportunities to harvest timber provide much needed income to finance a variety of livelihood activities, these have not been fully realized in CBFMA areas. Major obstacles include unstable policies on timber utilization and bureaucratic requirements as previously discussed. POs also lack the necessary capital for harvesting operations, which makes them vulnerable to the control of financiers and middlemen who dictate timber price. Also, the availability of illegally cut timber depresses prices of legally cut timber (Pulhin 2005).

One other aspect that has not received much attention is the issue of project mentality. Most POs use the income they generate for consumptive and not productive purposes. Investing in alternative livelihood activities is viewed as a project activity and not as a long-term productive investment. In many people’s mind, there cannot be any investments or efforts in alternative income generating strategies as long as there is no project. It is this project mentality and the lack of ownership in an activity that has led to the abandonment of numerous efforts.

¹¹ Among the major issues that led to logging ban in the Philippine natural forests as summarized by Guiang (2001) are: continuing loss of biodiversity; destruction of watersheds; graft, corruption and abuses of TLA holders; destruction of coastal and marine resources; increasing migration; and displacement of indigenous peoples.

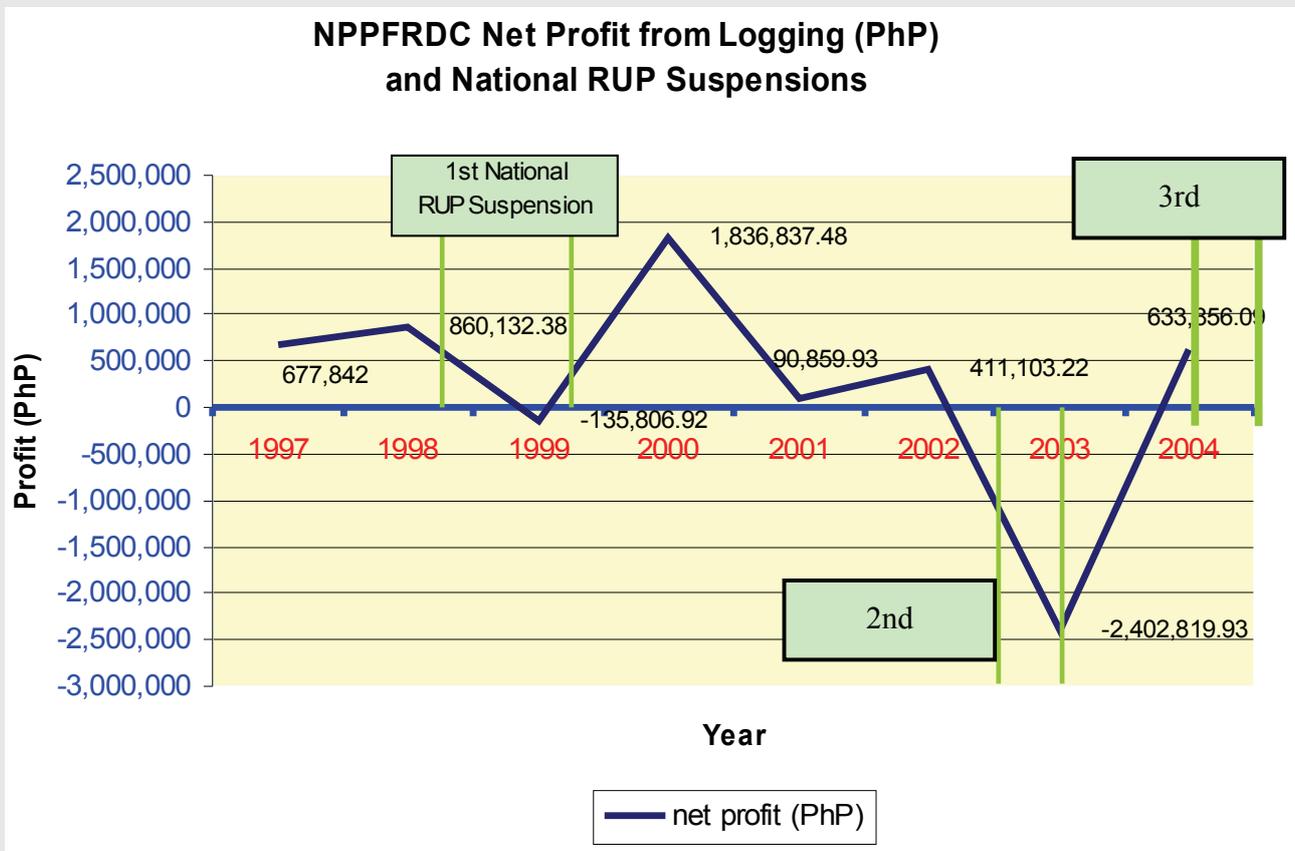
BOX 1 Impacts of unstable policy on timber harvesting: the Case of Ngan, Panansalan, Pagsabangan Forest Resources Development Cooperative (NPPFRDC)

NPPFRDC is one of the forty CBFMA sites in Region 11 managing a total area of about 58,000 hectares (DENR Region XI 2004). The NPPFRDC is the only wood producer in the country that has been certified by SmartWood - an internationally recognized standard setting body that accredits and monitors forest products coming from sustainably managed forest. The NPPFRDC was the first PO to be certified in the ASEAN Region in November 2000. Its area used to form part of a TLA area of Valderrama Lumber Manufacturers Company, Incorporated (VALMA), comprising 26,000 hectares.

Despite its “certified” status, NPPFRDC was not spared by the series of national cancellations of resource use permits (RUP) by the DENR Secretaries. As shown in the figure below, the cooperative has been on the losing end owing primarily to the three national RUP suspensions, which had disrupted its operations. In 2003 alone, it incurred a net loss of around PhP2.4 million, a huge sum that was badly needed by the cooperative (NPPFRDC 2004b). Comparing the net profit of the Cooperative with the forest charges that have gone to the coffers of government, it’s very evident that the government has gained more from timber harvesting than the Cooperative itself. This implies that the government has been in a win-win situation, as it has been able to achieve forest development and protection with only minimal costs, and has gained “profit,” to the detriment of the Cooperative.

The socioeconomic impact of the community-based timber enterprise is quite apparent in terms of employment generation among the residents of the three barangays. Many are also saying that without the cooperative, forest resources within the CBFM area may have been significantly reduced due to illegal logging, swidden farming, and timber poaching.

During an RUP suspension, however, the community experiences a domino effect. Given the on-and-off operations of the CBTE, some of the workers sell their properties in order to cope with household expenses. Worse, their children stop going to school because of the lost of food allowance. Some were also forced to engage in illegal cutting activities to eke out a living in the absence of alternative sources of livelihood. Moreover, forest destruction increased in the area since the Cooperative can no longer hire permanent forest guards to man the exit points of the illegal loggers.



Source: Pulhin and Ramirez 2006

Communities' capacity towards self-governance

In the context of CBFM, PO is an organized group of people, which may be an association, cooperative, federation or other legal entity which the government issued with tenure instrument for the development and sustainable management of a certain CBFM area. As the *de facto* forest resource managers at the local level, POs are the key stakeholders who ultimately determine the success or failure of the CBFM strategy. Therefore, POs need to have the appropriate organizational capacity to effectively perform the responsibilities as resource managers (outlined in the CBFM Agreement signed by the PO and the DENR), benefit from the rights transferred to them, and help achieve the objectives of CBFM.

At least 67% (104 POs) of 155 POs assessed in four regions of the Philippines are either weak or inactive (Castillo *et al.* 2007). Most of those reported to have functional organizations require more capacity strengthening especially in the preparation of resource management plans, sourcing of financial resources, and development of non-forest based livelihood activities. Similarly, Miyakawa *et al.* (2005), in their review of 47 CBFM sites, noted that membership number in most POs increased after the issuance of CBFMA, mainly as a result of high expectations. Most PO members became inactive after several years due to insufficient technical and financial support from the government and the resignation of fellow members.

A number of field assessments have also raised concern about the relatively small PO membership compared to the total population in the area (Miyakawa *et al.* 2005, Pulhin 2005, Miyakawa *et al.* 2006). In general, only 10%-30% of total population in the local area participates in CBFM activities as PO members (Miyakawa *et al.* 2005). A main reason cited for not joining POs is high membership and monthly fees in spite of low incentives expected from being PO members. Another possible cause is remoteness of residence from PO office or the centre of CBFM activities (Miyakawa *et al.* 2005).

At the aggregate level, the different PO Federations (composed of one National Federation representing 14 Regional Federations, 71 Provincial Federations, and a total of 1,691 POs nationwide) have not been effectively functioning due to limited financial resources and logistical support. Financial limitations have been a major limiting factor, especially since the nationwide ban on timber harvesting of 08 December 2004.

Despite the above problems, experiences of "old" CBFM sites, e.g., Labo-Capalonga (11 years), Bulolacao (16 years) and Guba (less than 16 years), indicate that communities are capable of learning to organize, plan, and work towards their own development and sustainable forest management given

sufficient time, support and incentives (Borlagdan *et al.* 2001). Similarly, the recent experience with the suspension of more than 1,000 CBFMAs nationwide¹² demonstrates that PO Federations can advocate and push for policy changes at the national level when they managed to mobilize political support from various sectors that compelled the new DENR Secretary to suspend the cancellation order.

Forest development and protection

CBFM appears to have attained some degree of success in forest development and protection among the five core areas. The development of forest production areas within forestlands is the CBFM strongest point at 70% of the 155 sites assessed by the Eco-governance project (Castillo *et al.* 2007). Similarly, the JICA-DENR policy component review team concluded, based on the field review of 70 sites, that "CBFM is very effective to control forest fires, illegal logging and other violations such as shifting cultivation committed within CBFM areas" (Miyakawa *et al.* 2006). Since the farms of PO members are located inside or adjacent to the forested areas, they safeguard the forests even without payment of allowances. The same review noted that more than 90% of POs in the 47 sites visited conduct foot patrol on voluntary basis.

Consistent with the above-mentioned field assessments, Pulhin (2005) noted that forest cover is maintained or extended and environmental quality improved the assessed in six sites. In three sites, a marked increase and improvement in forest cover was noted as a result of plantation establishment/ reforestation and the adoption of agroforestry. Additional plantation areas were also established in the other three sites. Moreover, despite limited resources, all the POs continue to conduct forest protection activities. However, as noted above, the cancellation of resource use rights have compelled some PO members to engage in illegal cutting activities that contribute to forest destruction.

Institutional support system

The CBFM strategy transfers the forest management and protection responsibilities to the local communities. Considering that the communities lack the necessary technical capacity and resources to perform these responsibilities, adequate institutional support needs to be provided to realize benefits. Unfortunately, all the available field assessments and in-depth case studies attest to the limited institutional support available to CBFM. The major problems include:

- Insufficient numbers of qualified staff both in the DENR and the LGUs to support CBFM. Exacerbating the problem is the shortage of resources, incentive/

¹² On January 5, 2006 the then DENR Secretary Defensor pursued a mass cancellation of all existing CBFMAs in 8 Regions, except for those with on-going foreign assistance, allegedly due to non-compliance or violations by POs. Later assessment done by the DENR Central Office itself showed that very few of these POs have really committed grave violations as far as the provisions of the CBFMA is concerned. On the contrary, Miyakawa (2006:2), a Japanese policy expert on CBFM, noted that "there are many observations indicating that CBFMP is very effective to control forest fires, illegal logging and other violations committed inside CBFM areas".

reward systems, and logistic support to provide adequate and meaningful assistance to participating POs (Pulhin 2005, Miyakawa *et al.* 2005, Miyakawa *et al.* 2006).

- Unstable policy on timber harvesting is compounded by complex procedures and too many restrictions imposed on timber utilization in areas issued with resource use permits (see Box 2 for example). The results are inefficiency, high transaction costs, and graft and corruption at the local level (Pulhin 2005, Miyakawa *et al.* 2005, Miyakawa 2006, SAROMCO 2006).
- Progressive policies for soliciting the participation of NGOs, LGUs and other sectors are not fully implemented. Reliable support from different sectors in CBFM implementation is yet to be achieved (Pulhin 2005).
- Monitoring and evaluation usually stops with the expiration of project assistance. The existing management information system (MIS) at DENR was not designed to support decision making at various levels of DENR to assist local communities and other stakeholders (Pulhin 2005).
- Appropriate mechanisms for community-private sector partnership to promote investments in CBFM areas are still lacking (Pulhin 2005, Miyakawa *et al.* 2005).

right of Filipino people to a healthful environment. To what extent the objectives have been achieved is discussed in the following section.

Improving socioeconomic conditions

The degree to which socio-economic objectives have been achieved varies and is not uniform (Pulhin 2005). Socio-economic improvement is evident where CBFM received long-term technical and financial support, although the percentage of people who actually benefited may be small. In many areas, short-term external support only provided temporary employment and additional income, which in most cases was not sustained after project completion. In some cases, dependency on external assistance is evident, relating also to the earlier described project mentality and its impacts. In general, sustaining and spreading benefits to a greater number of the people, particularly the poor, socio-economic benefits remains a key challenge for CBFM. Central to this is the need to further develop viable and resilient enterprises and other economic opportunities particularly for forest-dependent communities (Borlagdan *et al.* 2001, Pulhin 2005).

Promoting social justice and equity

Social justice and equity has been addressed by CBFM

BOX 2 CBFM's complex procedures and requirements: the SAROMCO experience

“The government speaks of so many community-oriented forestry projects but in reality, these are not community-friendly. CBFM has a complex implementation procedure that requires large financial capital and highly technical expertise that we do not have. Forest management programs such as this would only benefit forest businesses and technical experts. Our community does not have enough funds to pay for all the paper requirements, including bribes, of CBFM.

Efficient processing of documents and speedy approval is vital in the implementation of plans and programs. How could we expect fast compliance to the requirements from a less knowledgeable community when in fact, review and approval of our permits would take years for the DENR who are said to be experts?

We, CBFM holders, should be treated like the vegetable growers who deliver their produce to the market easily and without hassle. We should not be burdened with the complicated processing of papers.”

Source: SAROMCO 2006

ASSESSING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF POLICY OBJECTIVES

CBFM, as the national forest management strategy, has set a comprehensive and ambitious blend of socioeconomic, political and environmental objectives as expressed in the DENR policies. Specifically, these policies aim to: 1) improve the socio-economic condition of the participating communities; 2) promote social justice and equitable access to and benefits from the forest resources including respecting the rights of indigenous peoples (IPs) to their ancestral domains; 3) effect sustainable development of forestlands and resources; and 4) protect and advance the

through transfer of access and management of 5.97 million hectares of forestland to local communities and individuals, a privilege that used to be monopolized by well-off TLA holders. However, the unstable policy on timber harvesting and the recent cancellation of CBFMAs nationwide coupled with the complex procedures and requirements of timber utilization have jeopardized the early gains of advancing social justice and equity. At the local level, social equity and benefit sharing remain important concerns (Miyakawa *et al.* 2005, Pulhin 2005, Miyakawa *et al.* 2006, Pulhin 2006). The small number of members in many POs appears to have benefited mainly members of the villages' elite. Benefits are often captured by leaders and more educated members at

the expense of the poorer constituents (Dahal and Capistrano 2006). Strategic interventions are still needed to achieve the social justice and equity objective of CBFM. The first and important step forward is to abandon the practice of general and/or nationwide bans and punishments. After all, such actions are unlawful and can be contested in court according to the text of the CBFMA.

Advancing sustainable forest management

Appropriate CBFM strategies, if properly implemented, offer great potential to achieve sustainable forest management. Several studies have discussed the positive contribution of CBFM towards sustainable forest management in the Philippines (e.g. Borlagdan *et al.* 2001, Miyakawa *et al.* 2005, Pulhin 2005, Miyakawa *et al.* 2006), which include increase in forest cover, adoption of improved farming technologies, and sustained collective action in forest protection. However, threats to sustainability also exist. Among these are: 1) continuing pressure to engage in illegal and destructive practices to generate income; and 2) the pressing need to install effective local management by strengthening POs' capacity and institutional support.

Promoting healthful environment

Information on the impacts of CBFM on environmental quality is sparse (Lasco and Pulhin 2006), although anecdotal evidence is available (Pulhin 2005). While scientific evidence is lacking, people point out soil and water conservation efforts that purportedly have improved water supply, soil fertility and microclimate. Lasco and Pulhin (2006) also concluded that CBFM and technologies such as agroforestry and tree farming have led to the conservation of natural forests and biodiversity. Increasing the number of trees outside forests has conservation and carbon sequestration effects, although they have not been quantified, yet.

In summary, the above assessment indicates that achieving its socio-economic objective is CBFM's key challenge. At a national level, CBFM has achieved its political objective of promoting social justice and equity, but much work is needed to improve its impact at the local level. Finally, in terms environmental objectives, it appears to be advancing sustainable forest management and promoting healthful environment although social and institutional threats to sustainability remains to be addressed. Also, current anecdotal evidence on CBFM's contribution to environmental objective need further quantification.

CONCLUSION AND EMERGING LESSONS FOR SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The review of the Philippine experience over the last three decades indicates that the high expectations and hopes of advancing sustainable development and the Millennium

Development Goals through CBFM has not been achieved, as in many parts of Asia. Even if the area coverage and numbers of people involved in forest management have significantly increased and despite aerial increases in tree cover has been achieved, these are not suitable indicators to enhanced livelihood, improved equitability, social justice and achievements of conservation goals. At best, CBFM has replaced the century-old corporate approach of forest utilization where benefits flowed directly to an elite minority and provided more space for local communities to manage and protect forestlands and resources, in terms of improved lives and sustainably-managed forests, but the benefits from these are yet to be fully realized. "Democratic decentralization" in forest management has not really taken place – every step forward towards devolving rights to local communities is easily followed by one or more steps in the opposite direction. Indeed, the high expectations in the mid-1990s have been overtaken by disenchantment brought about by a confluence of factors. Unstable policy, complex procedures and requirements, CBFM viewed as a project and not as an approach to replacing commercial large-scale forestry, and weak institutional support system including from the DENR itself, all contribute to ineffective implementation and limited outcomes on the ground.

On the other hand, as one of the pioneers in Asia in implementing CBFM, the Philippines has a lot to offer to other countries in terms of lessons in promoting sustainable and equitable forest management through community forestry. Some of these key emerging lessons are as follows:

1. Enabling legislated policy provides the foundation of sustainable and equitable forest management.

As can be gleaned from the Philippine experience, the presence of legislated policy on community forestry should provide more stability and clear direction in implementing as well as securing incentive system to the participating communities. On the other hand, "soft rights" embedded in some land tenure instruments which are not legislated (e.g. Executive Order and Department Administrative Order in the Philippines), hence cannot be defended and can be withdrawn by the head of the forest department, do not provide sufficient incentive to encourage communities to invest on human and financial resources into forest management (Gilmour *et al.* 2005). These rights are very vulnerable to political pressures and changes and can easily result to adverse socio-economic and environmental impacts when immediately suspended or withdrawn. Moreover, legislated community forestry policy should be "enabling" rather than "enforcing" (Gilmour *et al.* 2005). It should be flexible enough to accommodate varying local conditions, facilitative rather than restrictive, and simple enough for community to understand and enforce.

2. Beyond policy reform, pursuing sustainable and equitable forest management through community forestry requires the forestry agency reinvention.

The adoption of community forestry strategy requires a whole

new set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitude within the forestry bureaucracy. This means a major departure from the traditional regulatory or policing function which the forestry agency has been playing for centuries towards a more supportive and facilitative role to assist communities to improve their livelihood and the condition of the forests (Nair 2006). As such, the forestry agency has to reinvent itself to be able to cope up with this new role and maintain relevance. In terms of governance, this requires devolving not only responsibilities but also authorities to local communities, changing outmoded regulatory policies and procedures, and retooling of staff to effectively perform negotiation, conflict resolution, extension services, and related developmental skills to better serve the local communities.

3. Sustainable livelihood is central to the achievement of sustainable forest management.

In countries like the Philippines where a significant number of populations depend on the forest as major or supplementary sources of livelihood, it would be illusory to even think of sustainable forest management not unless it is linked to the promotion of livelihood. This implies that in forest-rich areas, imposing a log ban is not a viable option in the absence of a viable alternative livelihood sources for the local communities. Similarly, in marginal sites and in protected areas where forest harvesting is not possible or allowed, community forestry efforts should have strong livelihood component. Indeed, as the Philippine experience implies, people can only accommodate high objectives of biodiversity and ecological balance when these can demonstrate direct and tangible benefits to their livelihood or if the costs are minimal.

4. Capacity building – community forestry’s major strategy towards sustainable and equitable forest management – goes beyond the community level to include the major supporting agencies.

As previously pointed out, communities as the *de facto* forest managers need a comprehensive and continuing capacity building encompassing the whole range of technical, managerial, financial, and organization aspects of sustainable forest management. Necessary support system should likewise be provided to them such as appropriate policies, incentives and logistic support to better perfume their forest management responsibilities. The challenge of continuing capacity building however, goes beyond the community level. The extent by which the capacity of the local communities may be built can only go as far as the capacity of the supporting agencies will allow. This implies that the competence of support-providing agencies like the forestry department (and LGUs in the case of the Philippines) should likewise be continuously enhanced. Adequate resources should therefore be allocated towards this end in planning for community forestry programs.

5. Sustainable and equitable forest management is a long and costly process but availability of financial support by itself is not a guarantee for success.

The 2005 “Status of Tropical Forest Management Summary Report” produced by the International Tropical Organization (ITTO) alludes to the fact that sustainable forest management is a long and costly process. The same report noted that “There is almost a universal lack of resources needed to manage tropical forest properly” (ITTO 2006:11). It was further stressed that the most debilitating weakness in tropical forest management is the “failure to develop an adequate and reliable system on global scale for funding the additional costs involved in putting sustainable forest management into practice in the forest” (ITTO 2006:13). While secured funding support is indeed necessary, the Philippine experience demonstrates that the availability of financial resources by itself does not ensure that sustainable forest management will be achieved. The major challenge is to effectively use these resources to build the local capacity and to put in place the necessary policy and institutional support system to effectuate a more sustainable and equitable forest management.

6. Social processes that ensure greater participation of local communities and other legitimate stakeholders in the management and sharing of benefits from forests should be adequately developed.

One of the unique features of the forest resources is the multiple stakeholders associated with its multiple uses representing local to global interests. Thus, efforts towards sustainable forest management need to consider these varying interests, without marginalizing the concerns of the local communities especially those whose lives depend on these resources for survival. This calls for the development and institutionalization of social processes that will ensure that local communities and other legitimate stakeholders are able to participate meaningfully in decision making concerning forest management and benefit sharing from forests.

In the Philippines, the development of these social processes has recently commenced. A multi-stakeholder core group composed of DENR, NGOs, POs, academe, and donor agency representatives is currently facilitating the process of preparing the new National CBFM Strategic Action Plan ensuring wider participation of the different sectors across the country. The multi-stakeholder planning process has started to generate renewed interests and energy on CBFM across the different sectors. It has also started to mobilize human and financial resources from the core group to support the completion of the new Strategic Plan with the long-term goal of institutionalizing a multi-stakeholder decision-making process in the planning, implementation and evaluation of CBFM. While the positive effects of this initiative remain to be seen, it offers a new glimmer of hope towards the long and costly process of sustainable and equitable forest management.

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