



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office
MIMAROPA Region
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December 7, 2023

MEMORANDUM

FOR : The Regional Executive Director
DENR MIMAROPA
1515 DENR By the Bay Bldg., Roxas Boulevard,
Barangay 668, Ermita, Manila

THRU : The OIC, ARD for Technical Services

FROM : The Provincial Environment and
Natural Resources Officer

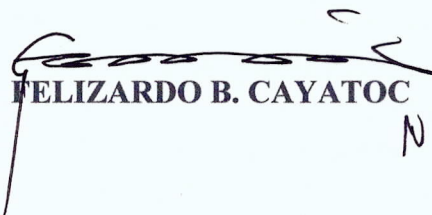
SUBJECT : **FORUM ON THE LESSONS LEARNED, GOOD PRACTICES,
INNOVATIONS AND SUCCESS STORIES (LGIS) FEATURING
THE FORESTLAND MANAGEMENT PROJECT (FMP) –
MODELLING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT: THE
FMP WAY ON OCTOBER 24-26, 2023**

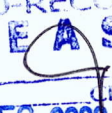
Respectfully forwarded is the Memorandum dated November 28, 2023, from CENRO Leonard T. Caluya of Brooke's Point, Palawan along with the report on the Forum on Lessons Learned, Good Practices, Innovation and Success Stories (LGIS) Featuring the Forestland Management Project (FMP). It is a ten-year foreign-assisted project of DENR-JICA which aimed to strengthen forestland management in three (3) critical river basins through the implementation of collaborative and comprehensive Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) strategies, is now nearing its completion. Building agroforestry support facilities, community organizing, reforestation and forest protection, enterprise development as well as policy initiatives are the major components of this project.

In addition, sharing the LGIS of FMP would bring out the significance of these learnings to positively influence the implementation of other on-going projects and policy formulation alike, specifically on Sustainable Forest Management.

For information and record.




FELIZARDO B. CAYATOC
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DENR-PALAWAN
PENRO-RECORDS
RELEASED
By 
Date: 11 DEC 2023 23-3415



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
MIMAROPA Region
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
Brooke's Point, Palawan

November 21, 2023

MEMORANDUM

FOR : The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer

FROM : The Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer

SUBJECT : **FORUM ON THE LESSONS LEARNED, GOOD PRACTICES, INNOVATIONS AND SUCCESS STORIES (LGIS) FEATURING THE FORESTLAND MANAGEMENT PROJECT (FMP) – MODELLING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT: THE FMP WAY ON OCTOBER 24-26, 2023**


**DENR PENRO
PALAWAN RECORDS
RECEIVED**

BY: [Signature]
DATE: 11/29/2023 ON 23-11370

Forwarding herewith is the report regarding the Forum on Lessons Learned, Good Practices, Innovation and Success Stories (LGIS) Featuring the Forestland Management Project (FMP). It is a ten-year foreign-assisted project of DENR-JICA which aimed to strengthen forestland management in three (3) critical river basins through the implementation of collaborative and comprehensive Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) strategies, is now nearing its completion. Building agroforestry support facilities, community organizing, reforestation and forest protection, enterprise development as well as policy initiatives are the major components of this project.

Further, sharing the LGIS of FMP would bring out the significance of these learnings to positively influence the implementation of other on-going projects and policy formulation alike, specifically on Sustainable Forest Management.

For your information, record and further instruction.

 **DENR-CENRO
BROOKE'S POINT**
RELEASED
DATE: 23 NOV 2023
BY: [Signature]
CN: 1129-5099

[Signature]
LEONARD T. CALUYA



November 17, 2023

MEMORANDUM

FOR : The Community Environment and
Natural Resources Officer

FROM : Project Evaluation Officer II
Asst. CDS/Unit Head SIU

SUBJECT : **FORUM ON THE LESSONS LEARNED, GOOD PRACTICES,
INNOVATIONS AND SUCCESS STORIES (LGIS) FEATURING
THE FORESTLAND MANAGEMENT PROJECT (FMP) –
MODELLING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT: THE FMP
WAY ON OCTOBER 24-26, 2023**

In compliance with your instruction to attend above-subject activity which was conducted on October 24-26, 2023 via zoom application, please find attached the activity report prepared by undersigned regarding the same.

The subject activity features the accomplishment of the Forestland Management Project. It is a ten-year DENR-JICA project which aimed to strengthen forestland management in three (3) critical river basins through the implementation of collaborative and comprehensive Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) strategies, is now nearing its completion. Building agroforestry support facilities, community organizing, reforestation and forest protection, enterprise development as well as policy initiatives are the major components of this project.

Consequently, sharing the LGIS of FMP would bring out the significance of these learnings to positively influence the implementation of other on-going projects and policy formulation alike, specifically on Sustainable Forest Management.

For information, record and further instruction.

Carina C. Manlapaz
CARINA C. MANLAPAZ

Modelling Sustainable Forest Management: The FMP Way
Forum on the Lessons Learned, Good Practices, Innovation,
and Success Stories (LGIS)-cum-Exhibit
featuring the Forestland Management Project (FMP)
October 23-27, 2023

I. INTRODUCTION

The Forestland Management Project (FMP), a ten-year DENR-JICA project which aimed to strengthen forestland management in three (3) critical river basins through the implementation of collaborative and comprehensive Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) strategies, is now nearing its completion. Building agroforestry support facilities, community organizing, reforestation and forest protection, enterprise development as well as policy initiatives are the major components of this project.

During project implementation, FMP introduces innovation and practices to achieve the objectives of the project, they also meet challenges and issues along the way. These challenges and issues can be transformed into lessons and can be used to further improve the implementation of the project or during project development. Also, initiatives and innovations introduced by the project may evolve into practices that can be replicated. FMP also boost their success stories for inspiration to others.

FASPS annually conducts a forum on Lessons Learned (L), Good Practices (G), Innovation (I) and Success Stories (S), dubbed as LGIS forum. It brings together insights during project implementation that can be considered in policy formulation and future project development. The trials and triumphs experienced throughout the project's life have given birth to identifiable Lessons Learned, Good Practices, Innovations, and Success Stories (LGIS), which are knowledge worth imparting, specifically on how it has managed to implement various project activities and initiatives.

Consequently, sharing the LGIS of FMP through this platform would bring out the significance of these learnings to positively influence the implementation of other on-going projects and policy formulation alike, specifically on **Sustainable Forest Management**. FASPS, together with the FMP Central Project Management Office (CPMO), shall organize a forum in (virtual and face-to-face) hybrid platform. This forum will not only showcase various LGIS, but will also give an avenue for knowledge-sharing through testimonies of the beneficiaries and reactions from the panel of experts. Additionally, opportunities for networking and partnerships may arise through exhibiting knowledge products and enterprises generated by the project.

II. OBJECTIVES

The forum has the following objectives:

- a. To identify and highlight valuable experiences of the project during implementation;
- b. To share the Lessons Learned, Good Practices, Innovations and Success Stories (LGIS) of the project, bringing out the significance of these learnings to positively influence the implementation of on-going projects and policy formulation, and
- c. To document and introduce these practices, techniques, mechanisms, and technologies from the unique experiences of the five (5) project sites highlighting the major components of the project, namely: agroforestry support facilities (infrastructure), community organizing, livelihood and enterprise development, policy initiatives and forest protection and conservation, that may stimulate and inspire future DENR program and project development and management.

III. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ACTIVITY

A. October 24, 2023

1. FMP EXHIBIT

The exhibit opening commenced with an opening prayer and singing of the National Anthem. This was followed by welcome remarks from the Chief of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PMED) of the Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS), Ms. Jeslina Gorospe, on behalf of Director Al O. Orolfo. Thereafter, Mr. Ide Soichiro, Senior Representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) delivered his message.

2. WELCOME REMARKS

Ms. Jeslina Gorospe
Chief, FASPS-PMED

On behalf of FASPS Director Al Orolfo, FASPS-PMED Chief Jeslina Gorospe delivered the welcome remarks for the exhibit opening. She highlighted that the exhibit is aimed to showcase the successes and fruits of the close to 11-year journey of the FMP and to celebrate its gains. She further emphasized the milestones that have been achieved by the project such as 71,300 hectares of tree and agroforestry plantation established; a total of 102 units of infrastructure projects established; 149 People's Organizations engaged; and 5 Watershed Management Bodies created.

Ms. Gorospe encouraged the participants to engage with the displays as each picture represents a story and weave a narrative of hope and sustainability. Lastly, she challenged everyone to sustain the legacy of the project and take meaningful actions to further protect and conserve our forestlands and watersheds.

3. MESSAGE

Mr. Ide Soichiro
Senior Representative, JICA

Mr. Ide Soichiro opened his message by acknowledging the officials and personnel of the Forest Management Bureau (FMB), Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS) and the Regional and Field Offices including the project personnel of the FMP. He expressed his excitement to hear about the experiences and success stories of the project and noted of the warm hospitality he received from his previous visits to project sites located in Ifugao, Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya and Iloilo.

Mr. Soichorio shared how he witnessed FMP contribute to socio-economic conditions and inspire communities to take action in forest protection. He extended his sincerest appreciation to the DENR for being a strong and good partner in promoting environmental conservation and strongly urged everyone to sustain project achievements. Mr. Soichiro also asked everyone to continue to remain active in the operation of the Agroforestry Support Facilities (ASF) and in protection activities. Despite the project coming to a close, he called on partners to continue strengthening partnership with relevant government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of Science and Technology (DOST). Lastly, he extended appreciation and congratulations to the DENR in successfully implementing FMP and for organizing the LGIS Forum to further inspire everyone to continue our efforts in forest conservation. He then ended his message by noting that JICA shall likewise remain a strong partner to the Department.

4. EXHIBIT OPENING/RIBBON CUTTING

To mark the official opening of the FMP Exhibit, a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was led by JICA Senior Representative Ide Soichiro, FASPS-PMED Chief Lindy Gorospe, DENR Region 6 RED Livino Duran, and FMB Assistant Director Edna Nuestro. Following the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, Ms. Ma. Andrea Palma of FASPS-PMED shared the FMP stories and milestones from 2012 wherein a pivotal moment took place when Ambassador Manuel Lopez of the Philippines and JICA Vice President Izumi Arai signed the Official Development Assistance loan agreement for the Forestland Management Project.

The FMP walkthrough led to the unveiling of the centerpiece which stands as a testament to the remarkable achievement of the Forestland Management Project. It encapsulates the very essence of the journey towards strengthening forestland management and in addressing watershed degradation and poverty and showcases the results of the collective efforts among the stakeholders: from site development plantations, agroforestry support facilities, fruits and products from the plantations such as coffee and cacao, to the partner people's organizations.

FORUM PROPER

5. WELCOME REMARKS

Mr. John Reburiano
Chief of the Management Services Division
PENRO Rizal

Mr. John Reburiano officially opened the forum proper by highlighting that our long term goals and vision will be efficiently achieved if we develop and inculcate good practices not just in our work but in our personal lives. He further goes on to state that this exchange of practices will lead to the success of achieving our endeavors and in the formulation of more good practices. On that note, Mr. Reburiano expressed his hope that everyone will be able to learn from this forum and be able to apply what is learned in our individual work.

6. MESSAGES

Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones
Policy, Planning and International Affairs

Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones delivered his inspirational message through a recorded message. He highlighted that this is the 5th forum on LGIS since 2018 and is grateful for this knowledge-sharing event. For DENR employees, he encouraged them to appreciate and apply the knowledge from these experiences to improve the packaging and implementation of foreign-assisted projects and other DENR programs and projects. For the stakeholders, to let them know that their efforts are not in vain, and that the Department is continuously doing its mandate. For the development partner, JICA, to let them know that their assistance has allowed DENR not only to strengthen forestland management but also enrich the lives of countless individuals and communities.

Undersecretary Leones expressed that the stories that will be shared today are not just anecdotes but living testimonies to the power of collective action, and of unwavering commitment and determination. They are stories of communities taking ownership of the project, and emerging as champions of sustainability. He then ended his message, by encouraging everyone to engage in the discussions and share their thoughts as this is an opportunity to connect, to learn, and to collaborate.

Assistant Secretary Noralene Uy
Policy, Planning and Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects

Assistant Secretary Noralene Uy delivered her message through Zoom highlighting the need to be science- and evidence-based in the Department, as these are not just boxes to check but compasses that guide projects. She emphasized that the FMP exemplifies this commitment and has demonstrated the value of thorough pre-implementation assessment, which was instrumental in the formulation of the 24 Sub-watershed Management Plans that were used as the operational plan for implementing project initiatives onsite.

Assistant Secretary Uy said that FMP's dedication to survey, mapping and planning has not only ensured the success of the project but has also set an example for others to follow. She ended her message by expressing her thanks to FASPS for this forum and hope for a fruitful discussion.

7. OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM FLOW

Director Al O. Orolfo
Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service

Director Al O. Orolfo presented the objectives and flow of the forum program. The objective of the activity is to identify and highlight valuable accomplishments of the project and to share the Lessons Learned, Good Practices, Innovations and Success Stories of the project. The activity also aims to establish the interconnectedness of the projects in various regions and bring out the significant learnings, mainstream these initiatives through policy formulation and document and introduce the practices, techniques and strategies from the project sites, as well as check the intersectionality of these strategies. Director Orolfo hopes that the participants could learn from the insights of the project managers, implementers and stakeholders to inspire project development and management.

8. INTRODUCTION OF THE FORESTLAND MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Mr. Marlon Atienza
Project Manager, FMP

Mr. Marlon Atienza expressed his gratitude to FASPS for featuring the story of FMP and stated that he is proud of the project's achievements. As the project comes to a close, the project is intended to be recommended as a model for sustainability to be adopted by the Forest Management Bureau (FMB).

Mr. Atienza presented the implementation milestones and success of the project and shared how the project started, what went on and how concerns are addressed. There are two key project components. One of these components is the comprehensive site development (CSD) which has seven major subcomponents.

Mr. Atienza noted that the grassroots structure of the project can already be considered a good practice as it is closely connected to the partners / beneficiaries. In 2018, construction of the ASF was initiated along with the roll out of the project's enterprise development interventions. This was followed by the development of policy initiatives in 2019 and 2020 wherein the creation of the NWMC took peak. The development of policy initiatives was primarily facilitated through online platforms such as zoom because of the pandemic. Nevertheless, the PO federation created through the project was successfully integrated in the Council.

In 2021, the Save Our Watershed campaign was launched with the aim of encouraging participation of other stakeholders to sustain the initiatives of the project. As part of the campaign an Executive Order on Sub-watershed

Management was drafted. This was followed by the Agroforestry value chain which was initiated in 2022. One innovation under the value chain is the clustering POs to increase negotiating capacity in terms of the monetary value of the livelihood.

The project was also able to formulate the management plan for the sub watersheds, some of which were already adopted by the council. Aside from this, community plans and community management framework (for CBFMAs) were also facilitated in support of community organization. These plans already contain the vision of the community in terms of how their lands will be utilized. It basically contains what the people want and what the DENR requires, which is a win-win for both. Relative to this, the site development initiative of the project complemented and connected the agroforestry value chain and livelihood interventions.

Mr. Atienza shared that the project was able to provide livelihood to 149 Peoples Organizations (POs). Micro-enterprises were provided as the project acknowledges that POs need to start small then work their way up in the agroforestry value chain. Though not all livelihoods were successful, the POs were nonetheless capacitated on how to implement a business. Part of the value chain is the provision of processing facilities in Ifugao, Region 6 and Region 2. Off the plantations, coffee succeeded up in the value chain and this is because the project made sure to not just to create plantations but connect them to the market. The identification of the project ways forward started as early as 2020 as part of the sustainability mechanisms and as a way to mainstream all project initiatives.

Session 1: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

9. INTRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING IN REGION 6

ARD Ivane Reyes

FMP RPMO Focal Person

ARD Ivane Reyes thanked FASPS and acknowledged the participants present. He provided a brief background on Jalaur River Basin covering 10 sub-watersheds. He then provided an overview of the project components: (1) Survey, Mapping and Planning in 2013-2014; (2) Community Organizing; (3) Land Tenure Instrument Acquisition; (4) Site Development wherein 13, 027 hectares of plantation were established and maintained; (5) Agroforestry Support Facilities with a total of 32 units constructed composed of hanging bridges, access roads, pathway and irrigation pipeline systems; (6) Policy Initiative wherein the JRBMCM was strengthened with established Manual of Operations, Strategic Direction and Cost-Sharing Mechanism; (7) Project Management and Supervision wherein 3 SUSIMOs were established.

On their experiences, ARD Reyes shared that during the project start the communities had reservations, particularly to DENR projects. However, the DENR personnel continued in convincing the communities. Further, he recalled the following strategies that they employed to gradually introduce the FMP in the community: (1) organization of "Organizing Team"; (2) knowing of beneficiaries; (3) make a localized Community Organization Plan; (4) execute the CO Plan; (5) periodic analysis of results and adjustments; and (6) community visibility by building trust. He further highlighted the need for social preparation such as hiring and deployment of barangay focal person; creation and deployment of IEC team; organizing a core group in the community; adherence to cultural norms of the Indigenous Peoples (IPs); and strong collaboration with the IPs and Barangay Officials. As for strategies that did not work well are the deployment of untrained community organizing workers ; and the conduct of surveys without IEC.

As for the notable milestones and outcomes, ARD Reyes highlighted the following: stable, active and dynamic POs; gaining enterprise development projects; significant reduction of “kaingin” and increase in vegetative cover by 16.44%.

In terms of project sustainability, ARD Reyes said the following are needed: tenure; mainstreaming; technical assistance; continuing POCB; preparation of second liners; and strengthened collaboration and linkaging.

ARD Reyes then presented the Lessons Learned, Good Practices, Innovations, and Success Stories of community organizing in their region:

- Lessons learned were regarding the time and schedule, the intricacy of the FPIC process in terms of funding and procedure, the need to capacitate POs, the need for training agency personnel and developing guidelines, the need for social preparation to improve CO, and improvement in the monitoring systems.
- Good practices that were highlighted were the provision of on-site offices or SUSIMOs; localized hiring; bottom-up planning; cultural sensitivity; collaborative approach/complementation; and regular personnel to handle accountable tasks.
- As for the innovations, Region 6 hired barangay focal persons; a local IEC team was engaged in support to field survey; a radio communication system was installed; and tools and equipment for permanent agriculture was provided.
- As for the success stories, ARD Reyes shared the Marandig Story wherein in 2014, PO MUSPAD established the vision of having a pathway, school, health services, and livelihood with the FMP, this was realized. Another story shared was the efficient management of the SWC area providing income equivalent to salary grade 15 in government employment. Another story was regarding a PO member acquiring around 3.5 hectares of land and converting it into a coffee plantation that is now producing berries. Lastly, there was a changed “mindset” among the PO members against kaingin thru appropriate upland farming system.

Takeaway - Established sense of dignity and restored people’s sense of significance and relevance. Every single community has its own development potential. It would only take a serious practical community organizing work to gear it up.

10. LGU TESTIMONIAL

Ms. Mitzi Peñaflorida

**Supervising Environmental Management Specialist,
PGENRO, Province of Iloilo**

Ms. Mitzi Peñaflorida initially shared that they conducted numerous initiatives to engage the communities for the project. She then provided the provincial profile of Iloilo. She shared the initiatives of the provincial government such as the construction of the Jalaur High Dam and the Tanum Iloilo, a tree growing activity under the Action for Rehabilitation and Transformation of the Environment Program in support of the National Greening Program. From 2020 to 2022, more than 5 million seedlings were planted with an 85% survival rate.

Some of the challenges present prior to the implementation project include the lack of infrastructure support for hard-to-reach communities needing assistance, presence of insurgency and rampant kaingin. Through FMP’s assistance these challenges were appropriately addressed, as fire occurrence and wildlife trade were minimized as a result of PO empowerment. Further, alternative livelihood options also provided additional income to upland communities.

The FMP with the PLGU also formed a technical team that immersed with the community, had close coordination and developed linkages with partners (i.e. LGUs, NGAs, NGO and academe), and the organization of other partners and empowerment of the POs. Walk through, FGDs and livelihood training were also conducted by the project.

Major Takeaway: Multi-stakeholder governance in development and strong leadership

11. PO TESTIMONIAL

Mr. Celso Arca

**President, Asosasyon sang Magagmay nga Mangunguma
sang Bukid sang Janiuay (AMMABUS), Janiuay, Iloilo**

Mr. Arca opened his testimony with a brief backgrounder or profile of the PO. He mentioned that the CBFM area was expanded to 346.80 has. which provides a source of income to the PO, currently composed of a total 116 members (94 male and 24 females).

Prior to the project, transporting products in the market was one of the major challenges encountered by the PO since they are located in a mountainous area with rugged and high terrains. This also means that they have limited access to infrastructures and other services available.

Through the assistance of the FMP, the PO was provided with livelihood opportunities and was capacitated in organizational and financial management. The construction of the access roads has also improved the accessibility in the area and eased transportation of products to the market.

As an example, Mr. Arca shared that the PO was able to provide lemon grass to local businesses in the market. In fact, they deliver around 500 kg of lemon grass per week. As a result of the livelihood initiatives, the PO was able to procure vehicles as well as help with the education of the children of its members. The establishment of the linkages with business was made possible through the technical assistance of FMP.

To close his testimonial message, noted that it is always important to trust in ourselves and in our members to achieve success in our endeavors.

12. REACTION TO TOPIC

Dr. Edmund Acosido of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) pointed out the similarities of the FMP to the structures of cooperatives, wherein social preparation plays a vital role. He then raised the following points:

- It is vital to immerse ourselves in the field to fully understand the knowledge, cultures and values;
- Communities must identify their needs and should be active participants in decision making;
- The challenges presented by the resource persons can be considered as opportunities;
- Cooperative comparatively offers more incentives;
- CDA can help transform POs into full blown cooperatives;
- Consider including the CDA in the NWMC;
- Concerted and coordinated efforts among LGUs and NGAs are important in the implementation of such initiatives (FMP)

ARD Reyes committed to do their best to assist the POs to level up into a cooperative. Likewise, a representative from the LGU added that they can connect

the PO to the local investment and promotions office to aid the organization in further developing their and also noted that the government of Iloilo shall provide hundred percent support to the POs

Mr. Arca likewise agrees that the PO needs to be involved in activities of the LGU and CDA.

Mr. Labrador along with Ms. Katherine Guluman of NCIP raised some of the following points:

- Community consultation is necessary to determine which areas are communal and how this can be managed in the future;
- In some areas, LGUs and IPs have conflicting interests. Hence is it important to facilitate discussions with the community and other stakeholders before implementing a project (consider consulting IPs and elders);
- We also need to take into consideration the spiritual and traditional rituals or practices of the IPs, as some groups consider kaingin as a way to thank their ancestors;
- NCIP is enhancing the FPIC guidelines and process to address delay in project implementation;
- Most of the ancestral domain are overlapped with CBFMAs, hence strengthening collaboration with the DENR and ensuring IP consultations are documented will help streamlining the FPIC process;
- Consider implementing cultural sensitivity orientation activities with NCIP as the resource person;
- NCIP promised to issue the 17 FPIC to the project beneficiaries of FMP, even if the project has already closed;
- IP communities must be considered in project conceptualization;

ARD Reyes responded that they are open to discuss and consider conducting a survey to determine which areas are under CADT, so long as the DENR and NCIP and stakeholders concerned keep an open communication, for the benefit of the organization. He further goes on to state that we in the DENR always respect the rights of the IPs.

13. OPEN FORUM

Ms. Julie Ibuan provided further insights and thoughts in the discussions which are as follows:

- Government needs to have synergy;
- CDA's presence is vital in the forum;
- Research and development is key component that needs to be considered in the forum discussion;
- Instead of striving to be globally competitive, it is more appropriate that we strive for our comparative advantages in forestry, agriculture and fisheries.
- Interventions should be aligned to produce and address the needs of local companies and corporations
- After the FMP what comes next? How do we sustain these livelihoods for instance?

In response to Ms. Ibuan's query as to the sustainability of the livelihood initiatives, ARD Ivane mentioned that the coffee products of the FMP are now being supplied in supermarkets, since the Peoples Organization producing it is already part of the coffee association in Iloilo. ARD Ivane is confident that the POs received sufficient capacity building or training from the project to be able to sustain their livelihood.

Mr. Celso Arca added that they will continue to apply what they learned from the project and in caring for the farm forest.

RED Livino Duran shared further thoughts and insights in the discussion and emphasized that FMP was implemented to be a model for sustainable forest development. He went on to enumerate the following points:

- We want to highlight the significance and relevance of the project interventions.
- For the PO to have a legal identity we must allow them to engage with the government.
- We also need to look into the tenure applicability and acceptability to the PO
- A benefit sharing is important to sustain the PO operations.
- ASF significantly helped the PO.
- Product standards and packaging already have value adding.
- FMP is now gaining ground, but we still need to do more improvements. FMP as a model for replication.

Ms. Mitzi noted that activities, particularly livelihoods, should be anchored in the protection of the environment.

14. AWARDING OF CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION AND TOKENS

Director Al O. Orolfo awarded the certificate of appreciation signed by Assistant Secretary Noralene Uy to the following:

- Mr. Augusto Valles, CDA
- Dr. Edmund Chris Acosdio, CDA
- Mr. Edgardo Labordo, Jr. NCIP
- Ms. Katherine Guluman, NCIP

15. SYNTHESIS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Director Al O. Orolfo presented the synthesis and key takeaways from the presentations and discussions.

For the key takeaways, he highlighted the following points:

- Through community organizing, there is an established sense of dignity and restored people's sense of significance and relevance;
- Every single community has development potential, it would only take serious and practical CO work to gear it up;
- People in the upland is the main actor that will be treated as partner in every development;
- Bottom up approach in development; and
- Balance between people and environment.

As for the recommendations on sustainability, he provided the following points:

- POs to consider registering as cooperatives to increase economic activities, with assistance from the Provincial Government and the CDA;
- For product development, connect the POs with the Provincial Local Investment and Promotions Office;
- Strengthen collaboration and ensure coordination with NCIP, IPs and elders when implementing projects;
- Consider IPs in the project conceptualization and identification;
- Strengthen collaboration and open communication between DENR and NCIP to streamline FPIC;
- Conduct cultural sensitivity orientation on the ground with NCIP as the resource person; and
- Improve comparative advantages and strengthen research and development.

B. October 25, 2023

Session 2: AGROFORESTRY SUPPORT FACILITY

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE FMP

Ms. Cherica Ruby Claudio

PPMO Focal Person, Nueva Ecija

The presentation started with a short introductory video of the FMP in Nueva Ecija, highlighting the accomplishments of the project and the impacts to the community. A total of 14 agroforestry support facilities (ASFs) were developed for the Carranglan, Nueva Ecija through FMP, as follows: six (6) farm-to-market roads (FMRs), four (4) irrigation pipeline system (IPS), two (2) reinforced concrete deck girder (RCDG) bridges, and two (2) hanging bridges. Prior to the project implementation, the DENR Region 2 experienced challenges, such as delayed implementation due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and occurrence of natural disasters, and multiple issuances of variation orders due to unforeseen activities. To address these challenges, the field office immediately implemented suspension of resume orders, prepared catch up plans, and issued variation orders. Notable milestones and outcomes attributed to the ASF component of FMP include better access to basic services, i.e., markets, health and education facilities; availability of water supply for the tree plantations and agroforestry plantations, and generation of employment and income to the community. Among the strategies highlighted to sustain the gains of the project are the i) conduct of workshop for the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Plans, ii) issuance of a Sangguniang Bayan (SB) Resolution signifying the inclusion to the Annual Investment Plan and annual budget of the Pantabangan-Carranglan Watershed Forest Reserve (PCWFR), iii) Regional Special Order regarding the constitution of ASF sub-project monitoring committee, and iv) creation of a tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between DENR, LGU and PO specifying the roles and responsibilities for the O&M of completed ASFs.

The PPMO Focal Person also shared the following lessons learned, good practices, innovations and success stories, relative to the implementation of the ASF component of FMP.

- Lessons learned include close monitoring of daily work accomplishment of the contractor, as well as the construction schedule and provision of catch-up plans, securing of preliminary documentary requirements and permits, establishing strong partnership and maintaining open communications among concerned offices, and it was also mentioned that designation of one (1) organic personnel (preferably an Engineer to oversee ASFs) may facilitate success of the project.
- Good practices cited are engaging expert contractors to ensure timely sub-project completion, conducting monthly contractors' meetings and emergency meetings to address issues and concerns, and active participation of POs in each stage of the sub-project's cycle.
- Innovations identified in ASF implementation are validation of the design turnbuckle to pulley with flange as connector between anchorage and cable, and participatory planning workshop with non-engineers for the implementation of ASF.
- Success stories relative to the implementation of ASF subprojects include the timely completion of the ASF construction. The ASFs contributed greatly in the mobilization of goods, products and services in the implementation of activities with the FMP site development areas. Another success story is the creation of ecotourism opportunities (e.g., Caloformia Sea of Clouds in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija), contributing to inclusive development.

2. LGU TESTIMONIAL

Engr. Ariel Palomo

Municipal Planning Development Officer, Municipality of Carranglan

MPDO Engr. Palomo first shared the demographic profile of the municipality of Carranglan, Nueva Ecija, and explained that the municipality is home to the PCWFR. In relation to this, the municipal LGU is grateful that they are recipient to 14 ASF subprojects from FMP, as these resulted in numerous positive changes in the municipality, especially to the upland communities. The municipality experienced similar challenges presented by the PPMO Focal Person of Nueva Ecija. To address these challenges, the municipal LGU of Carranglan ensured safety and protection of materials and equipment, and conducted public consultation and dialogue, recognizing that good ideas often come from them. In addition, MPDO shared that in the turnover of the ASF subprojects to the municipal LGU, it issued a SB Resolution as an expression of commitment to include ASF maintenance in its AIP and annual budget. Through the ASF subprojects in Carranglan, there have been notable milestones and outcomes, such as increased access to basic services, increased crop yield of POs due to the availability of water supply, and improved ecological balance in the community. Moreover, the project eased the financial burden of the LGU, which the MPDO sees as a step towards alleviating poverty in the municipality.

3. PO TESTIMONIAL

Mr. Melchor Dela Cruz, Jr.

President, La Gracia Planters Association, Inc. (LGPAI)

In his testimony, the LGPAI PO President shared the challenges faced before the project was implemented, such as limited access to basic services, e.g., food products, medical services, education, limited access to public transportation and long travel period caused by rough and uneven roads, difficulty in hauling and transporting seedlings to site development areas, limited source of water supply to irrigate site development plantations, long construction period due to bad weather and unforeseen events which hampered delivery of services, road closure during construction phase without alternative route. These challenges were addressed by coordination and consultation with concerned stakeholders, public information dissemination, installation of signages in the construction area, provision of detours and alternate routes and motor lanes, and engaging the participation of PO members as hired laborers under the project. The ASF subproject of FMP resulted in easier access, reduced travel duration, easier hauling and transportation of seedlings to the site development areas, and generation of income to the PO members as hired laborers.

4. REACTION TO TOPIC

Mr. Jezreel De Guzman

Environmental Specialist B, National Irrigation Administration (NIA)

The reactor from the NIA thanked the DENR FASPS for the invitation to the LGIS Forum as one of the reactors. Being previously involved with FMP Region 2, Mr. De Guzman recognized how difficult it was to implement the project, and thus extended his appreciation to the efforts in project implementation, particularly in the provision of livelihood opportunities to upland areas, improving vegetative cover, and construction of ASFs that are aimed at improving socio-economic and environmental conditions of the upland communities. Mr. De Guzman shared that NIA is mainly responsible for providing irrigation for agricultural productivity, and recognizes the role of watersheds in fulfilling their mandate. In line with this, the NIA representative shared the ongoing effort of NIA in crafting a MOA to provide

watershed management plans for 13 critical watersheds. The plans are formulated in collaboration with other stakeholders like DENR, LGUs, and POs, taking note of their inputs to be considered in the developing the plans. Additionally, high value crops are also being considered in the formulation of policy instruments. Moreover, the NIA representative also expressed their commitment to intervene, if requested, and work in the areas covered by FMP, and tap the POs involved on how to sustain the initially implemented ASFs. In the same manner, NIA is hoping for the same acceptance from DENR and other government agencies on the NIA-initiated plans. To conclude his insights and impressions to the presentations, Mr. De Guzman posed a question for the resource persons, whether the established irrigation facilities can provide water supply to the whole agroforestry plantation, or if not, up to what extent/percentage. As an advance response, Mr. De Guzman said that NIA can provide additional irrigation facilities if there is insufficient water supply.

Responses from the Resource Persons:

- DENR PENR Officer of Nueva Ecija Mr. Gerry Fernandez stated that a Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) was created which intends to procure and install 500 drums in the upland areas that will serve as water reservoirs and source of water supply not just to the FMP project sites but to other plantation sites (i.e., NGP sites). In line with this, PENR Officer Fernandez thanked the NIA for its offer to provide support.
- LGPAI PO President Dela Cruz shared that they have previously requested NIA to rehabilitate the access road in their area, which were constructed in a previous NIA project (prior to FMP) and have already been and remains damaged up to this day. PO President Dela Cruz emphasized that the rehabilitation of the access roads will greatly help in the installation of impounding drums. Relatedly, the Municipal Administrator of Carranglan offered fire trucks that will supply water for the impounding drums. In response to this, the NIA representative confirmed that they are part of the operation and maintenance of NIA-generated project outputs. Moreover, Mr. De Guzman will coordinate with the responsible office in NIA and will give feedback on the pending request.
- MPDO Engr. Palomo of LGU Carranglan attested that there are more POs that need more irrigation systems for their plantations. In response, Mr. De Guzman confirmed that these are part of the service area of NIA. In this regard, NIA requested the LGU to identify the areas that would need irrigation systems to help increase agricultural production.
- Lastly, PPMO Focal Person Ms. Claudio expressed gratitude to NIA, highlighting that the rehabilitation of the old access roads constructed under the NIA project would facilitate the materialization of the plan of supplying water to the proposed impounding drums, that is ultimately intended for irrigating upland plantations.

Atty. Jenaira Mae Jalasco
Director, Department of Finance (DOF)

DOF Director Jalasco underscored that official development assistance (ODA) projects are governed and supported by several government approvals. In line with this, there is a need to make sure that there is complete awareness and understanding of the terms and obligations under legal agreements and government approvals before implementation of any project. Relatedly, it was shared that it is helpful to hold workshops at the beginning of a project, in terms of setting expectations, reporting, financial requirements, as well as hitting targets. In terms of project implementation, Dir. Jalasco commended the good sharing of the project's accomplishments and its impacts to the beneficiaries, but also noted that project implementation was greatly affected by unforeseen events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and natural calamities. As such, there is a need to quickly adapt and

prepare catch up plans. Further, it is important to have the discipline of having regular monitoring through meetings to create awareness. In relation to this, Dir. Jalasco raised that there is an existing NEDA guideline identifying the requirements should there be any changes in project, such as change in project scope, extension of loan validity, financing reallocation or cancellation. These cases call for approvals that need to be secured before implementing such changes. Hence, it was recommended that project implementers be proactive and be guided with NEDA guidelines, in which DOF is likewise involved. Lastly, Dir. Jalasco highlighted that during project closing, it is important to review agreements and approvals and properly close accounts. In general, Dir. Jalasco expressed DOF's support to projects such as FMP, and stated that the agency is open to guide implementing agencies. Lastly, the Director conveyed that they are proud of the success of the project.

Responses from Resource Persons:

- PENR Officer Fernandez reaffirmed that the turnover of infrastructure facilities to the Municipal LGU of Carranglan, Nueva Ecija is documented through a MOA. However, the PENR Officer conveyed that there is a need for assistance to properly close accounts.
- MPDO Engr. Palomo supported the statement of PENR Officer Fernandez, adding that the infrastructure facilities will form part of LGU assets, and thus would need proof; hence, the MOA was created.
- In relation to DOF's comment on securing approvals, FMP Project Manager Atienza clarified that there have been regular meetings with the Project Steering Committee, and these concerns are regularly discussed and clarified.

Mr. Jaymar Bareng
Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB)

Mr. Bareng of GPPB commended the strategies of DENR to overcome the challenges cited in the presentations. One of the strategies noted was the suspension of resume orders that were immediately implemented in light of the occurrence of natural disasters and the emerging pandemic during the time of project implementation. According to Mr. Bareng, such action is based on existing guidelines and is commendable as natural disasters and the pandemic situations are considered extraordinary fortuitous events that are covered by the guidelines. Another action noted by the GPPB representative is the approval of variation orders, which is covered by the Board's guidelines although there are certain limitations. Moreover, in cases of poor performance of the contractor, the guidelines entitle the procuring agency to terminate the contract, which was the action taken by FMP.

Responses from the Resource Persons:

- PPMO Focal Person Ms. Claudio that the DENR field office followed the rules and guidelines in undertaking actions, and are also approved by an infrastructure specialist.
- In support of the first response, PENR Officer Fernandez said that the fact that they did not receive any Audit Observation Memorandum (AOM) or disallowances means that the approval of variation orders is in accordance with the guidelines and policies set by GPPB.

5. OPEN FORUM

The discussions for the Open Forum were facilitated by Mr. Rolando Carbon of FASPS-PMED.

1. Mr. Kessey Reyes of JICA asked for DENR's impression on the shift from having a consulting firm to an individual consultant.

Responses from Resource Persons:

The PENR Officer of Nueva Ecija responded that, despite the shift from the originally planned consulting firm to an individual consultant, the targets have been nonetheless achieved and the implementation of the ASF subprojects in the Province of Nueva Ecija went well. At the same time, there are advantages of engaging an individual consultant as they are regularly on the ground, noting that they have a table at the Sub-watershed Site Management Office (SUSIMO). Engaging a firm may pose difficulties in terms of monitoring their progress, compared to having an individual consultant

FMP Project Manager Atienza explained in the context of the national level, there are advantages and disadvantages for shifting to individual consultancy services. On one hand, the shift to individual consultancy yielded savings, but on the other hand, there was difficulty in terms of contract management because it will go through a tedious procurement process, which in effect, will cause delay.

2. On another note, Mr. Reyes of JICA noted that the presentations mainly highlighted how the ASFs lessened travel time. However, Mr. Reyes wanted to know the impact (in terms of quality and quantity) of ASFs in terms of i) improvement of plantations, ii) activities of PO, and iii) promoting environmental awareness.

Responses from Resource Persons:

Ms. Claudio highlighted the improvement of water supply in the community, although the statement was not supported by any numeric data.

PO President Dela Cruz reiterated the positive impact of the ASFs to their community in terms of reduced travel time.

MPDO Engr. Palomo focused his response on environmental awareness, and shared that the community has increased awareness and understanding.

As a counter reply, Mr. Reyes of JICA suggested that the DENR provide environmental indicators related to ASFs, and should be included in the development of Project Completion Report.

3. Mr. Cesar Miranda, Jr., Forest Ranger from the DENR Region 8 CENRO Baybay City directed his question to MPDO Engr. Palomo of LGU Carranglan, and inquired about the evaluation instrument or assessment tool used that led to the LGU's conclusion that there was improved ecological balance in the community.

In response, MPDO Engr. Palomo responded that ecological balance was measured in terms of increased awareness and having access to forest and freshwater ecosystems, as well as urban ecosystems.

4. Ms. Julie Ibulan asked if DENR considered having a direct link to DPWH in constructing ASF.

PENR Officer Fernandez responded that the question will be best answered by those who conceptualized. Nonetheless, the ASF subprojects constructed

under FMP are not big-ticket infrastructure facilities that would necessitate the participation of DPWH. Plus, JICA approved the project design.

In support, FMP Project Manager Atienza added that the project design used a holistic collaborative approach. In addition, Mr. Atienza reaffirmed that the sizes of the ASF infrastructure did not need DPWH to intervene, except for being involved in the participatory planning. Nonetheless, the construction of the ASFs is in accordance with DPWH guidelines, and LGUs made the engineering design of ASFs.

5. Ms. Ibuan asked whether the development of ASFs infused climate change perspectives?

Mr. Atienza responded in the affirmative, stating that the ASF subproject implementation underwent a feasibility study.

6. AWARDING OF CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION AND TOKENS

FASPS-PMED Chief Gorospe awarded the certificate of appreciation signed by Assistant Secretary Noralene Uy to Mr. Jezreel De Guzman. Meanwhile, electronic copies of certificates were presented to Director Jalasco and Mr. Bareng as they joined the Forum online.

Session 3: LIVELIHOOD AND ENTERPRISE

7. INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT COMPONENT

Mr. Arnel Bilibli

Assistant PPMO Focal Person

Mr. Bilibli showed appreciation of FASPS and acknowledged the presence of the DENR officials and participants. He provided a brief overview of the FMP in CAR in the province of Ifugao covering 8 watersheds in 7 municipalities covering 18,762 hectares Site Development Areas (SDs). The Project assisted 47 partner POs with an estimated total of 3,800 members. He also mentioned that the Project has 13 implementing units. Out of these 47 POs, 20 are in upscaling, 21 are in losing status because of high cash receivables while 6 are in break-even.

47 POs were provided with Php100,000 each as a start-up capital benefiting 3, 170 members. Some of the PO micro enterprises enumerated are as follows: 1) production of ginger, pineapple, taro/cassava; 2) poultry and hog raising; 3) food/product processing such as cacao, coffee, muscovado, taro chips; 4) non-timber products such as honey production; 4) handicrafts include soft broom production and other rattan-based products such as bags and belt; 5) trading of agricultural inputs (rice and palay).

To highlight the changes brought about by the interventions of the Project, Mr. Bilibli presented the experiences of the POs prior to the Project's implementation alongside some of the strategies employed. Among the enterprise-related challenges presented include: 1) majority of the POs are practicing traditional production methods; 2) have inadequate capability to venture into enterprise development; 3) half of the total POs are already into lending business; 4) long crop cycle in the case of ginger, pineapple and coffee production affects the financial liquidity of the PO; 5) long waiting period for the approval of change of enterprise; 6) crops prone to diseases and pests resulting in poor harvest; 7) high transport cost due to far distance in market ; 8) unstable market price; 9) sell their crops to local traders on site resulting in low market price.

Some of the effective strategies that contributed to the success of the enterprise include: 1) provision of various training on Financial Management, Bookkeeping, Organizational Management, etc.); 2) conduct of market study for the specific enterprise; 3) introduced diversification of enterprise; 4) intercropping of other crops; 5) ASF to for easy transport of products and reduced transport cost; 6) linkage with LGUs and DTI.

As for the notable milestones, he shared that the PPMO focused on designing enterprise development (EnDev) monitoring tools that paved the way for the realization of the following initiatives: 1) implemented guidelines in enterprise development; 2) conducted assessment and analysis of 47 PO micro enterprise; 3) conducted PO enterprise development capacity buildings; 4) facilitated PO Enterprise Development Sustainability Action Plan; 5) conducted feasibility study for Agro-forestry Value Chain; 6) constructed 1 coffee processing unit and 2 tramlines in support to coffee value chain

Equally given emphasis in the presentations are the following outcomes derived from the FMP interventions: 1) POs established owned PO building and processing areas for cacao, coffee, and ginger; 2) POs accredited by LGUs and other agencies; 3) 3 POs were able to register brand names of their enterprises; 4) improved ability of POs to scale-up and expand into more viable enterprise; 5) contributed to the increase of 111% annual household income; 6) capacity-building activities and equipment of POs on enterprise development were funded by other agencies; 7) promoted DENR collaborations with other stakeholders

In terms of the sustainability actions related to the FMP's implementation, Mr. Bilibli enumerated the following: 1) continuous monitoring to PO activities; 2) formulation of benefit sharing policy for POs; 3) continuous provision of enterprise development through trainings and assessment; 3) implementation of PO Sustainability Action Plan; 4) formation of PO Federation as consolidator of PO products including agroforestry product; 5) establishment of coffee value chain.

The PPMO Focal Person also shared the following lessons learned, good practices, innovations and success stories, relative to the implementation of the enterprise development component of FMP.

- As for the lessons learned, he mentioned the need for further study and develop livelihood types that are most appropriate across community and cultural environment; consider components that are only in line with the mandate and expertise of the agency; staff in-charge of enterprise monitoring should be technically knowledgeable; need to conduct feasibility study of the proposed PO enterprise; organizational capacity development and leadership building need to be continuous process in building PO technical and organizational management skills; strengthen PO participatory approach is a must at the beginning of the enterprise development;; need for the DENR policies on permitting (especially for ancestral lands) be simplified and for staff to be capacitated on permit monitoring.
- In terms of good practices, these include: provision of certificate and cash incentives to best performing POs; creation of PO federation, among its functions is to assist low performing POs in their enterprises.
- As for the innovations, these include: collaboration with other government agencies (DTI) for PO training on packaging, labeling and branding; PO federation adopted a 1-hectare coffee experimental/demo site in support of the coffee Value Chain project.

- Success stories as shared are as follows: 1) improved capacities of POs to venture into other livelihood projects; acquisition of own brand name of their PO products (cacao, tablea, coffee and wines); certificate of recognition from other agencies; accreditation of POs by the LGUs and other agencies; contribute to increase income of PO members and stakeholders including increasing PO membership.

8. LGU TESTIMONIAL

Ms. Phebe Lois Dulawan

She opened the presentation with the challenges encountered prior to the project. She stressed that there was no road access, the mode of transportation was difficult. Also, the presence of armed groups in the area also disrupted the community's livelihood. In addition, she also stated that there were few encounters between rebels and this impacted their livelihood and plantations. Evacuation centers are also utilized as a venue for the training and enrichment activities to relieve the traumas affecting families as a result of rebel conflict. Another challenge is low education attainment of some PO members as a result of lack of access to educational institutions and access to educational tools/equipment. In terms of economic challenges, the fluctuating market price due to oversupply of PO goods in the market e.g., dumping and spoilage of vegetables on farm; lack of resources of POs to acquire planting materials and skills and capabilities as in the case of coffee processing.

To address the mentioned challenges in her previous presentation, following are the strategies that were conducted by the LGU:

- Collaboration of LGU and DENR which was instrumental on the road improvement, paving the way in access and linkages of the community to social and economic services, helping LGU in addressing insurgency in the area. The LGU also assisted the Project in identification and survey of potential FMP sites and assisted in the monitoring of established plantations. This also included construction of agro-forestry support facilities (ASF) such as road improvement and construction of bridges for easier access to bring in inputs and outputs (goods). The LGU also provided technical and maintenance of agroforestry support facilities; assistance in terms of equipment; facilities, capability building and beneficial management training in preparation of sustainability action plan; allocate funds for the regular repair and regular clearing of ASF. Moreover, some LGU facilities are also utilized as nursery for seedling propagation and to distribute planting materials for POs.
- Inclusion of the DENR-FMP during LGU Management Planning (sub-watershed management plan, updating of Comprehensive Development Plan, CLUP, Tourism Planning Workshop)
- Delivery of Ayuda during pandemic, displacement of evacuated committees during calamities and military encounters.

Ms. Dulawan proudly presented the notable milestones and outcomes of the LGU's efforts which include: piloted 2 successful PO enterprises and rolled-out the best practices and lessons learned of these POs to encourage other POs to improve their enterprises; equipped POs with tools, training and proper resources. The turning-over of ASF also brought great changes in the community as this shortened the travel time, reduced transport cost, reduction in the occurrence of rebel and military encounters.

As for the key takeaways, Ms. Dulawan emphasized how working together will create results; the continued harmonious partnership for the sustainable development of the municipality and the DENR; collaborative identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects ensuring access of services for the communities.

9. PO TESTIMONIAL

Ms. Gladys Tumiguing

President of the Greener Pasture Ad Holnad, Inc. (GPAHI)

Ms. Gladys Tumiguing presented the background about enterprise development as part of the project component. Initially, the POs were given a capital amounting to PhP100,000.00 as start-up livelihood. The POs in Ifugao were engaged in various enterprises which generally were from agricultural production, namely: ginger production, poultry and livestock raising, food products such as cacao, coffee, taro chips and muscovado; timber and non-timber products, milled corn, among others. The PO FRAMEI also ventured into vermiculture and composting.

While these enterprises were of various types and interests, challenges were also present as a beginner running a PO enterprise. Per her report, she stated that factors such as entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of the POs were limited. Included in the challenges mentioned were the low production of ginger, which needed change of plantation area and learning on inter cropping and cash crop to maximize the limited space. Inadequate storage area, farm to market access also posed a problem in the transportation of the PO produce, overlapping activities on enterprise development (EnDev) and SD, late implementation guidelines of the EnDev and mobility restrictions brought by the pandemic.

Despite the challenges that the POs encountered, various agencies and NGOs have recognized the efforts of the POs as they were empowered by the project. POs were involved in CEPA activities and inspired other POs as evident-based project outputs were manifested through the increased income of POs. Apparently, these POs were able to produce their very own branding of agri products. These enterprises helped in uplifting and improving the lives of the POs.

Through the interventions of the FMP, intensive training and capacity building were beneficial to the POs. A strategy shared was that the PO members also invested their own money in the enterprise. The aim was to spur the ownership among the PO members and also to strengthen the commitment of the community in participation in the project. She quoted, 'Working together is progress.' Agroforestry support facilities (ASFs) were also provided in support to their enterprise such as Tramline system, and Coffee Processing Facility.

Ms. Tumiguing also cited other numerous notable milestones and outcomes of the PO such as empowering POs through trainings and cascade these trainings to other POs that need support to improve their enterprise; reaching out to less successful POs; sharing of PO income for charity works; The PO also entered MOA with BJMP as rice supplier; giving cash assistance to the bereaved families of PO members. She also shared that the PO has received numerous awards from other government agencies in due recognition of outstanding performance as a rural-based organization in the municipality.

For the key takeaways, she highlighted the importance of continuous partnership and networking with other funding agencies; the implementation of PO enterprise sustainability plan; through PO enterprise, this brought changes in the social and economic conditions of the local community.

In her final statement, she also expressed her appreciation of the project and hope

that other line agencies will replicate similar projects and looking forward to working again with the DENR as a partner in the community.

10. REACTION TO THE TOPICS

The forum was facilitated by Ms. Melissa Ann Garcia of the FASPS-PMED. Before the discussions, she commended the presentations of the resource speakers. Ms. Julie Ibulan, reactor on the presentations together with the resource speakers on stage were joined by PENRO Malana, and Mr. Biliblin of the PPMO.

Ms. Julie Ibulan

**Chief of the Stakeholders Management and Conflict Resolution Division
DENR-Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service**

Ms. Ibulan expressed her appreciation of the livelihood from the project gains. She expressed hope for more presentations on poultry and hog raising such as piggery and goats. She suggested natural feeds supply to be able to expand the animal raising enterprise and also maximize the profit. Through this, she opined that it will possibly improve the enterprise. Basic research should also be conducted to improve coffee, mushroom production and even hog raising; to safeguard the livelihood component of the project and could be a reference for comparative advantage of PO products. Considering the huge FMP investment on the project, there is a need to improve the livelihood, linkages with companies will improve and sustain the products in terms of market coverage. There is a need to capacitate and train the members which should be the role of the agency to link the POs to other government agencies. She also mentioned exploring promotion of products via local festivals and also via social media platforms as a way of bringing the product to the companies and closer to the market. As an example, she cited the locally produced garlic as a potential commodity, considering that there were exports from China.

Responses from the Resource Speakers

Ms. Phebe Lois Dulawan of LGU Ifugao responded that the POs are always invited in cultural festivals and by establishing hubs, their products are being displayed, also in pasalubong centers. The PO has a joint venture with the DA, DTI and other government agencies. Ms. Dulawan believed that the POs have built resilience particularly when the province was hit by the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak affecting the livelihood of the communities. She added that the LGUs have assistance to access the programs of DA. Same with livestock, fund assistance is available to the POs. Labor/employment staff also explore other possible assistance in case that the funding assistance from the LGU is insufficient. With regard to emphasis on research, the LGU acknowledged the need and shared that they have partnership with academe, DTI and DOST for feasibility studies.

PO representative, Ms. Gladys responded that they are promoting products by establishing hubs during cultural festivals. Also, exploring promotion via social media. She also mentioned that they have market partners such as DTI and DOST for a wider market and are slowly taking one step at a time. She added that some POs have goat raising and that silviculture serves as feed and are looking forward to a wider market of products.

**Mariam Frances Malana
PENRO Quirino**

PENRO Mariam Frances Malana congratulates the CAR for the collaboration on the improvement of the livelihood, as well as on their sustainability actions on

livelihood given the calamities and pandemic, not to mention also the PO being an awardee.

PENRO Malana also recognized the good partnership of the LGU and PO to achieve further and became more competitive in support of the PO's enterprises. With this, she commended the stakeholders in the implementation of the FMP.

11. OPEN FORUM

Questions were raised regarding the sustainability of enterprise, POs that were not performing well, benefit sharing, and ecological balance with the agricultural expansion during the forum. Responses were provided by the resource speakers and from the concerned focals of the project.

1. Questions on PO's sustainability actions on livelihood/enterprise especially during pandemic were raised.

PENRO Malana shared her insights particularly in hog raising, until such time that the PO will have the Return of Investment (ROI). She opined that the PO has envisioned progress, as compared to their previous situation, she believed that the POs have improved their status.

Mr. Bilibli of PPMO responded that African Swine Fever (ASF) has affected some of the area in CAR, resulting in losses of investment for some POs. Demands and prices may be high but the strategy was on diversification of the livelihood activities. The POs also have different types of livelihood activities. The POs also have access to other funding sources.

He also shared about assisted natural regeneration as support to the Muyong system which provides ecological services and was later accepted as one of the components of the project. This was recognized as the ENR innovation of the project.

2. Question 2 - Ms. Jeslina Gorospe, Chief of the FASPS-PMED commended the presentations of the resource speakers. She raised concern about the other POs who's not gaining much from the enterprise, and how was this being addressed by the project?

PPMO explained that there are factors behind their lapses. For instance, the POs divert to other enterprises and also because of debts. However, the POs may take advantage of their membership of the CRMF for continuous assistance from the CENROs.

Ms. Dulawan underscored that in every business, there are possibilities of failure. The LGU hoped that resilience among the POs were built through capability building. The LGU expressed that the POs were encouraged to register in order to have access to insurance from the DA and in case of untoward incidents such as calamities. Along with DA, the DTI and DOLE were partners of the LGU to assist the POs.

As per PO, the POs with higher level of income also reached out to POs with low to average income. This is why Ifugao has a federation of POs under the FMP project. POs with slow progress were given assistance by another PO.

3. Question 3 - How does the enterprise contribute to forest protection? How do we maintain the ecological balance between the livelihood/enterprise without intensive agricultural activity?

PPMO admittedly shared those areas of forest converted to agricultural use. Conservation farming was a strategy introduced by the Department of Agriculture to ensure the fertility of the soil. At the same time, buffer trees planted were also agroforestry species which ensured the forest cover. He cited the coffee value chain as an example. The coffee served as a source of livelihood to the community and contributed to forest cover, ensuring the ecological integrity of the forest.

4. Question 4 - Forester Tony Latoza of Provincial Focal Person of Region 6. He inquired about the management of POs in reinvesting a portion of the retention, which was also based on the recommendation of a third-party evaluator - the CELPA. How would this be acceptable by the POs? Mr. Latoza further explained that this investment would assist in the sustainability of the project.

In response to this question, Ms. Gladys responded that the POs in the Ifugao are risk takers, they didn't rely on the DENR alone but sought assistance from the other agencies because they are already empowered. PENRO Malana suggested applying soft skills by changing the mindset of the POs. She added that the PO were not only focused on the money matters but by continuing the livelihood despite the challenges. Also, she mentioned visibility of the DENR as essential actions in ensuring monitoring of the project.

PPMO added that the Ifugaos' roots in the land are seen not only as a commodity but a way of life connected to their culture. Mr. Marlon also added to the discussion that the retention among the POs is encouraged to reinvest in the cooperative. Investment on the carbon market/ carbon crediting is also a possibility.

Regional Director Livino Duran reiterated that the project retention payment is a common fund for the PO. The retention could be used for enterprise development as recommended by the CELPA.

Forester Dumangin from CAR supported the statement of Ms. Gladys that the independent PO should craft the policy on how to use the retention but also encouraged the POs to use it as an investment, to become a cooperative.

Ms. Cherica Claudio of PPMO Nueva Ecija expressed that the Ifugao POs have attained higher enterprise level compared to Nueva Ecija. She wanted to know the mechanism in terms of benefit sharing among the POs. Ms. Gladys responded that their organization shared the profit equitably and also a part of the profit goes to the management for their continuous registration process. This share is set individually by PO members.

5. Another question from Forester Jose Saguiot from Quirino asked how to ensure that the access road will not be an access of the migrants for destruction, or could not be used for illegal activities?

The LGU expressed that the hardest challenge encountered by the LGU was degradation. The main strategy of the LGU was to strengthen the enforcement of environmental laws from all sectors biodiversity, forestry,

etc. Although these national laws are available, the LGU tempered localized laws fit to the cultural activity of the people, also educating the community on the impact of environmental loss, and degradation. Eventually, the people appreciated the effort of the government. Provide a sort of alternative, such as sustainable farming, producing high value crops with lesser impact to the environment and continually seek assistance from other government agencies to provide alternative livelihood.

Before the morning forum is concluded, Ms. Jeslina Gorospe and Mr. Marlon Atienza led in the awarding of certificates and token of appreciation to Ms. Julie Ibulan of the DENR-SCIS, and PENRO Mariam Frances Malana of PENRO Quirino of the DENR Region 2.

12. SYNTHESIS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

FASPS-PMED Chief Gorospe presented the synthesis and key takeaways from the presentations and discussions.

For Session 2: Agroforestry Support Facility, she emphasized the ASFs in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija contributed to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the upland community, as well as the environmental aspect, particularly the reforestation and agroforestry activities within the Pantabangan-Carranglan Watershed Forest Reserve (PCWFR); and highlighted the following points:

- Good relationship among DENR, LGUs, POs and other stakeholders is key to successful project implementation;
- Project beneficiaries have a crucial role to play in the maintenance of all ASF subprojects, and in the overall continuity of the project; and
- The desire of upland communities to improve their socio-economic and environmental conditions can contribute to the project's sustainability.

As for the recommendations on sustainability, she provided the following points:

- Forge partnership and collaboration with relevant agencies, i.e., National Irrigation Administration (NIA);
- Be proactive and ensure that strategies and actions are properly guided by policies and guidelines set by oversight agencies, especially if there are changes like loan validity extension, change in project scope, financing reallocation, etc.; and
- Determine and set environmental indicators related to ASFs.

For Session 3: Livelihood and Enterprise Development, the following key takeaways were highlighted:

- Enterprise development shifted the community's perspective through provision of livelihoods, benefiting from agricultural production. A win-win and an effective evident approach to the project.
- Enterprises are key to improved lives of POs, spur the ownership among the community;
- Harmonious partnership and commitment of the stakeholders ensures the sustainability of the gains from the project; and
- Provision of roads paved the way to access basic services such as education, healthcare and other basic services, essential for the improvement of the quality of life in the communities of Ifugao, CAR.

As for the recommendations on sustainability, she provided the following points:

- Continuous implementation of the agreements and responsibilities as indicated in the Sustainability Action Plan

- Continuous collaboration and networking with various relevant agencies and institutions, including academe (in terms of research and development on commodity improvement)

C. October 26, 2023

Session 4: FOREST PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT COMPONENT

Mr. Jose Saguilot
FMP Quirino

The presentation commenced with a short introductory video highlighting the outcomes of FMP in Quirino. Mr. Saguilot thanked the FASPS and acknowledged the presence of the DENR officials and participants. Mr. Saguilot then presented the outline of his presentation. He began by presenting the overview of FMP. The project site is located in the Ganano Subwatershed in Diffun, Quirino. Within the subwatershed, there are ten (10) existing People's Organizations. The FMP project implementation comprehensively has two main components that include comprehensive site development and consultancy services.

As for their experiences, FMP Quirino rehabilitated a total of 5,158 hectares of degraded forestlands through site development; empowered 10 local People's Organizations (POs); bolstered forest conservation efforts by promoting eco-friendly business enterprises; and established the Ganano River Sub-watershed Management Committee (GRSMC).

Mr. Saguilot shared that conduct of capacity building of POs on forest protection and management activities; establishing agreements among stakeholders; implementation of LAWIN; and implementing penalties for those who engaged in uncontrolled burning of site development plantations are among the activities that worked well towards the project's success.

Moreover, as for the strategies implemented to produce output, FMP Quirino organized and trained POs and LGUs on operation and maintenance of agroforestry support facilities, encouraged stakeholders to participate, conducted drone shots on SD areas to aid in real-time monitoring for the survival of the plantation, organized and trained fire brigade volunteers of the POs, encouraged POs to participate in business enterprise as livelihood using raw materials, complied to social and environmental safeguards related to activities and project implementation, updated the Ganano River Integrated Watershed Management Plan and presented it to the watershed committee for adoption and implementation, and promoted active participation of POs in conserving, protecting, and managing potential tourism sites.

In his presentation, Mr. Saguilot highlighted the FMP Quirino's notable milestones and outcomes. A "Save our Watershed" advocacy campaign was conducted by the LAWIN Team. In addition, patrolling efforts and enhanced information, education, and communication (IEC) efforts such as IEC sessions on spot clearing through dialogues are among the initiatives done by the FMP Quirino.

To ensure project sustainability, FMP Quirino established the Ganano River Sub-watershed Management Committee (GRSMC). Further, the project integrates the sustainability action plan into the relevant units of the DENR; conducts regular monitoring and enforcement mechanisms; and transfers appropriate responsibilities to local stakeholders (e.g. PO, LGUs) for the implementation of the developed cost-sharing mechanism.

The following are the mentioned Lessons Learned, Good Practices, Innovations and Success Stories (LGIS) from the project implementation:

Lessons Learned

- Collaborating with partners and stakeholders and the creation of a Multisectoral Forest Protection Committee is crucial for success as it provides a diverse range of resources, expertise, and support necessary for effective project implementation.
- Regularly monitoring the compliance of the POs with the Community-Based Forest Management Agreement within the subwatershed.
- External support, including funds and capacity building guides the action of the POs toward sustainable forest development.
- Ensuring the members of the POs understand the role of the forest in their lives and livelihoods.
- Leadership succession and continuity play a pivotal role in achieving smoother transitions and project continuity.

Good Practices

- Effective Partnerships and Collaboration with government agencies, LGUs, NGOs, and other relevant organizations to maximize the collective resources, facilitate exchange of insights, and synchronize initiatives to achieve a greater impact in conservation and management efforts.
- Implement measures to protect and enhance biodiversity and ensure sustainable coexistence of diverse ecosystems within the project area.
- Inclusive stakeholder engagement in planning and decision-making to promote transparency, accountability, and a diversity of perspectives.
- Identify degraded areas and employ restoration and rehabilitation strategies.
- Ensure that POs and local communities directly benefit from the project as this ensures a sense of ownership and fosters sustainability in the long term.

Innovations

- Introduction of sustainable innovation by crafting “bayong” baskets made from pandan leaves woven together, which are culturally significant and made environmentally responsible.
- Deployment of forest guards from among PO members.
- Provision of mobile applications and advanced technological tools that enable the real-time monitoring of forest resources and reporting of illegal activities.
- Leveraging cutting-edge technology such as satellite imagery, drones and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that allows for precise forest mapping, continuous monitoring and comprehensive data analysis which contributes significantly to the project’s success in preserving and managing the forest ecosystem.

Success Stories

- The active participation and assistance of stakeholders in supporting the POs have led to remarkable achievements such as 9.28% increase in forest cover in the subwatershed and a 15% increase in forest cover within the land tenure instruments from 2015 to 2021.
- Improved soil stability and productivity in the cultivated area through strategic introduction of soil and water conservation measures.
- The traditional craft of Bayong weaving championed by Macate Diffun Upland Farmers Association has gained popularity for its quality and wide range of purposes.

For the takeaway, Mr. Saguilot emphasized that effective forest protection and conservation efforts are anchored in collaborative partnerships, biodiversity

preservation, stakeholder engagement, restoration strategies, and community-centered benefits. These practices not only safeguard vital ecosystems but also empower local communities, promoting sustainable coexistence with nature.

To conclude his presentation, Mr. Saguilot left a note to continuously strengthen collaborative partnerships, preserve biodiversity, maintain inclusive stakeholder practices, restore and rehabilitate degraded areas, and ensure community-centered benefits.

2. LGU TESTIMONIAL

Mr. Jessie Delio Vaquilar

Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer (MENRO), Diffun, Quirino

Mr. Vaquilar acknowledged the presence and thanked the partners of FMP Quirino. He started the presentation with a short profile of Diffun, Quirino. Mr. Vaquilar then proceeded to the challenges faced by their municipality in implementing FMP which include the inactive and scattered People's Organizations (POs), forest degradation, community distrust, mountainous and muddy project site, non-institutionalized MENR office and insufficient staffing. In response to the challenges, strategies implemented by the LGU involve the following: revitalization and reorganization of inactive People's Organizations (PO), forest degradation mitigation through vigilant monitoring and proactive measures, communication, education and public awareness, infrastructure improvements and strengthening the MENR office to ensure effective forest management.

With these efforts, some notable milestones and outcomes were achieved such as:

1. Reduced incidents of landslides,
2. Significant infrastructure enhancements (i.e. construction of hanging bridges and the concreting of roads have facilitated smoother vehicular traffic, providing communities with quicker and more convenient transportation options),
3. Rice and vegetable cropping, and
4. Constructed essential infrastructure with minimal impact on forests and wildlife.

For the takeaway, Mr. Vaquilar stated that forest conservation, protection, and management in Diffun depend on everyone's participation, and it's a duty passed down to the next generations. To ensure our work continues, we collaborate with Quirino State University and welcome new ideas and research. He assured that the LGU will always remain committed to improving strategies for strong forest protection and conservation.

As for the MENRO's conclusion, he pointed out that as current stewards of the forest, we acknowledge that we don't own it; we merely care for it. It's our responsibility to safeguard it and pass it to the next generation in its pristine state. We trust that future generations will continue the legacy of preserving and enhancing the Diffun forest, a testament to the collective efforts of those before us. We hope that, someday, they too will fulfill the noble duty of handing over this precious forest in good condition to the next generation. The LGU of Diffun remains committed to this vision through its ongoing annual investment program, ensuring a consistent allocation of funds for forest protection and conservation.

3. PO TESTIMONIAL

Ms. Brenda Ignacio Diola

Board of Trustee, Baguio Village Integrated Cultural Association, Inc.

Ms. Diola started her presentation by a short trivia that the members came from

Baguio City and migrated to Quirino thus, the name of the People's Organization. In her presentation, Ms. Diola shared the following major challenges experienced by the PO vis-a-vis the strategies the PO employed to address these challenges:

1. **Landslides** which disrupted the transportation of materials, equipment, and personnel, leading to delays. This was overcome by the PO through soil and water conservation, reforestation, and agroforestry.
2. Second challenge was on the **Kaingin system** which resulted in the clearing of forested areas for agriculture, causing deforestation and habitat destruction. This challenge was addressed through constructing fire lines and designated controlled burning zones for locals.
3. The **community's unreceptive and hostile behaviors** such as believing that the government would only reap the benefits was another hurdle. The PO was able to conduct communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) efforts to change the behaviors of the community with the help of the FMP
4. **Boundary conflicts** between locals halted the project implementation's continuity. These conflicts are being settled at PO-level before escalating to the barangay.
5. **Wildlife challenges** such as the abrupt rise in the local monkey and wild boar population posed challenges in the project continuity. This was addressed by developing a comprehensive wildlife management strategy that includes planting of natural food sources such as bignay within protected forest areas to divert.
6. The **absence of proper carabao routes** resulted in the destruction of certain plantations. To address this, an ordinance designating proper carabao passages was enacted.
7. There is a **conflict or differences on personal preference of locals** in terms of cultivating specific crops. A CEPA on the concept of intercropping was conducted to shift this misconception.

Ms. Diola also presented the PO's notable milestones and outcomes, to wit:

1. **Increased forest cover change by land tenure instrument.** The most significant increase in forest cover was observed in Baguio Village Integrated Association (BICAS), with a 30% gain equating to 403.52 hectares
2. **Sustainable income stream with agroforestry.** The introduction of agroforestry has provided the local community with an additional and dependable source of income
3. **Sinong communal forest.** Seven (7) hectares of forest area within BICAS was officially designated as a protected forest zone. The establishment of this protected zone signifies a commitment to safeguarding its natural resources, biodiversity, and ecological balance.
4. **PO-initiated tree planting.** Utilizing the funds accrued from the benefit-sharing agreement, the PO successfully launched and executed tree planting activities within the designated forest-protected eco-site in the Ganano sub-watershed.
5. **Enhanced eco-tourism due to forest conservation and protection.** As of 1st quarter of 2023, a total of 6,655 guests were reported to visit the site which corresponds to PhP 94,329 income.
6. **Increased income of household PO members.** Based on the assessment conducted by FMP, there is a 65.71% increase in annual income of PO household members.
7. **Transformation of community mindset.** The community has become receptive, conscientious and proactive on forest protection and conservation.
8. **Increased production in agroforestry estimated annual harvest.** There

is an estimated increase of 23.63% in annual production of agroforestry products (in kg) from 2022 to 2023

9. **Creation of 608 hectares of forest plantations.** The establishment of 608 hectares of forest plantations, represents a major contribution to reforestation and environmental conservation efforts. These newly planted areas play a crucial role in mitigating deforestation, enhancing biodiversity, and protecting the ecosystem.

The heartfelt takeaway of Ms. Diola was delivered this way, *“Kapag inalagaan at minahal natin ang kalikasan, ito’y magbabalik ng mga biyaya na hindi lamang sa atin kundi pati na rin sa mga darating na henerasyon. Ang maayos na estado ng kalikasan ay magbibigay daan sa masaganang kabuhayan at magandang kalusugan para sa ating lahat. Ito ay isang pamana na hindi lamang para sa ngayon, kundi isang yaman na itinatago natin para sa kinabukasan ng ating mga anak at apo.”*

Lastly, the concluding statement was summarized, “As a testament to our unwavering commitment and the collective dedication of the PO members and our community, we aspire to carry forward the vital work of forest rehabilitation, protection and conservation. Our vision is one of hope and continuity, where the torch of knowledge and awareness, illuminated by our dedicated PO Officers through Communication, Education & Public Awareness (CEPA) programs, continues to shine brightly within our community. Together, we envision a future where the legacy of safeguarding our forests remains a source of pride and sustains the well-being of generations to come.”

4. REACTION TO THE TOPIC AND OPEN FORUM

The open forum was facilitated by Ms. Khasmer Marbella. She commended the presentation of the resource persons. As she continued, she first asked Ms. Gemma Agagas for her reactions followed by Ms. Imee Hacla and Ms. Marites Odojan.

Ms. Gemma Agagas
Chief Economic Development Specialist
Monitoring and Evaluation Staff, National Economic and Development Authority

Ms. Agagas commended the presentation and the testimonials from the PO and LGU. She then presented some questions and clarifications regarding the presentation such as: number of POs capacitated, survival rate of the plantation, data that shows a decrease in illegal activities and the actions taken based on the results of real-time monitoring

In response, the PPMO, LGU and PO representative answered, (1) The 10 capacitated POs do not depict the actual area of the barangay since those areas represented the small portions of the barangay, (2) Out of 95 contracts, 14 remaining contracts are yet to be evaluated. The evaluated ones achieved the 85% survival rate, (3) The indicators on forest rehabilitation, specifically on soil erosion, were provided by the UPLB. These indicators were specified and indicated in the project completion report and (4) There were data records regarding illegal activities which involve illegal logging and illegal charcoal making.

Ms. Imee Hacla
Supervising Economic Development Specialist, National Economic and Development Authority

Ms. Hacla commended the project outcomes as she noted that FMP has helped in addressing issues such as boundary conflict biodiversity management and forest

management. The reactor shared that she visited the FMP sites in Qurino and Nueva Viscaya last 2022 and she was amazed to see some of the project achievements. She further commented on how to improve the presentation of the resource persons such as indicating concrete figures depicting before and after FMP intervention in Qurino to really see the progress.

In response, Ms. Diola reiterated that before FMP, the situation in Baguio Village was really challenging as the roads were not concrete and established yet. She then thanked DENR for being given the opportunity to be chosen as project partner implementer and beneficiary. Further, the MENR officer pledged the LGUs full support as he highlighted that rain or shine, the LGU is available to help and guide them.

Ms. Agagas then commended the LGUs support in sustaining the project specifically in the creation of Ganano River Sub-watershed Management Committee (GRSMC). In response, MENRO Vaquilar reported that the committee has helped in the implementation and contributed in the protection of the watershed. He added that they also received an award for their good practices in forest protection and conservation.

Ms. Hacla, on the other hand, saw that behavioral change among the community is the key to continue the efforts in protecting and conserving the forest. She asked the resource persons if it could be translated to non-beneficiaries and other local communities nearby. MENRO Vaquilar answered that BICAS actually became a most-visited or sought-after PO as they became famous for their forest protection initiatives. Thus, PO BICAS served as the role model and their efforts motivated and challenged other locals.

Ms. Marites Odtojan

Director III of the Cluster 8 - Agriculture and Environment, National Government Audit Sector, and Supervising Auditor for DENR 1 & 2 Commission on Audit

Ms. Odtojan thanked DENR for the invitation. As a former supervising auditor of DENR from 2019 to 2022, she audited the FMP for two (2) years. Listening to the presentation, she was amazed as she stated that the FMP way is what she is looking for in the DENR-initiated National Greening Program (NGP). She shared as well that when they audited NGP, they found that these are the areas they should improve: capacity building, project management after project completion, guidelines, policies and/ or memorandum of agreement among PO, LGU and DENR. She emphasized that: DENR should (1) craft a customized procurement method for reforestation projects since the community-based procurement manual is generic, (2) create mechanisms and agreements on the maintenance of established concrete roads/ infrastructures and (3) determine or set performance indicators so the auditors could conduct a sound performance assessment.

In response to the mentioned concerns, Marlon Atienza, the project manager, emphasized that sustainability is embedded in all of the FMP project components. The sustainability plan is good for twenty-five (25) years, the POs involved were capacitated, the tenurial instruments encouraged ownership and legality of claim within their area and the site development has shifted/ upgraded into enterprise development. It was also reiterated and highlighted by the FMS Director, Ms. Imee Dela Cruz, that only the management of the Foreign Assisted Projects (FAPs) (e.g. reforestation project) is being turned-over to the partner POs; the ownership is not being turned-over (e.g. infrastructures are being turned-over to LGU).

5. AWARDING OF CERTIFICATES

FASPS-PMED Chief Jeslina Gorospe and FMP Project Manager Marlon Atienza awarded the Certificate of Appreciation to the following guests for sharing their impressions and insights:

- Ms. Gemma Agagas, National Economic and Development Authority
- Ms. Imee Hacla, National Economic and Development Authority
- Ms. Marites Odtojan, Commission on Audit

Session 5: POLICY INITIATIVES

6. INTRODUCTION OF POLICY INITIATIVES IN NUEVA VIZCAYA

Mr. Robert Campanero
FMP Nueva Vizcaya

The presentation commenced with a short introductory video highlighting the outcomes of FMP in Nueva Vizcaya. Mr. Campanero thanked the FASPS for inviting them in the LGIS forum and acknowledged all the DENR officials and also the participants on-site and online. He provided a brief background on the Nueva Vizcaya FMP. He then provided an overview of the project components: (1) Survey, Mapping and Planning; (2) Community Organizing; (3) Site Development; (4) Agroforestry Support Facilities; (5) Policy Initiatives for Watershed Management; (6) Project Management; (7) Monitoring and Evaluation; and (8) Consulting Services.

On their experiences, Mr. Campanero shared that during the project implementation certain MLGU officials were not receptive or supportive of the DENR-FMP; some POs claimed that the FMP budget for site development was significantly lower than the NGP budget; 24 of the covered barangays are under Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) which requiring a Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC); most of the project sites have no organized and SEC-registered POs; stakeholders have low level of awareness regarding the FMP; deployment or change in assignment of SMDs impacted operations; and some MLGUs insisted that the project funds be downloaded to LGU accounts and that they be the implementers, particularly for ASF sub-projects.

Furthermore, if given a chance to start over again the project, Mr. Campanero rundown some activities that they should have done differently. First was that the community mapping and ground truthing on potential SD areas should have been undertaken during the planning stage. Next is for the project management officers to have a clear set of standard and enforced qualifications. Lastly, the project's initial phase should only focus on community organizing, PO formation, and capacity building, including technical training to equip and adequately prepare the POs for site development as well as enterprise development.

Mr. Campanero also shared some experiences that have worked well and did not work for them during the project implementation. For what have worked well, (1) it is more effective to hire Community Development Officers (CDOs) from the locality with the same dialect and culture, as POs are more open to communicate their concerns and issues regarding the project; (2) there is a higher chance of success when there is collaborative efforts between POs and barangay officials; (3) SD areas with occupants or claimants are highly maintained and protected because there is a sense of ownership; and (4) the visibility or presence of FMP staff at the project sites encourage people's mobilization and facilities completion of project targets. On the other hand, the following were the experiences that did not work well, (1) POs were given SD targets beyond their capacity (manpower) to implement, resulting in delayed accomplishment; (2) the outbreak of COVID-19 hampered the timely completion of the project targets; (3) there was a fast turnover

of trained staff (i.e., from COS to permanent position, some resigned or transferred to other agencies); and (4) negative behavior of some PO officers, especially on financial matters caused organizational problems (i.e., inactive members and officers).

Moreover, strategies implemented to produce project outputs were discussed specifically on community consultation, immersion and IEC, collaboration with NCIP for the conduct of FPIC, assistance in PO formation and SEC-registration, lobbying with MLGUs, management quick response on staff recruitment and training, and inter-collaboration among POs on SD establishment on areas with low SD accomplishment (i.e., manpower, seedlings)

As for the notable milestones and outcomes, Mr. Campanero highlighted the following: (1) developed eight integrated/sub-watershed management plans; (2) organized, formed and capacitated 35 partner POs; (3) issued land tenure instruments (LTIS) to 35 POs; (4) established 20,201.98 hectares of tree and agroforestry plantations with 85% survival rates; (5) operationalized 35 PO micro-enterprises; (6) constructed 37 units agroforestry support facilities and 1 coffee processing center; (7) created/strengthened 1 watershed management committee; and (8) 10 CRMF/P, 1 CRMP and 24 CMP formulated, updated and affirmed.

For the project's sustainability with regards to their policy initiative, FMP Nueva Vizcaya ensure the implementation of the Manual of Operations, strategic directions and cost sharing, lobbying with PLGU to sustain the financial support for personnel and other operational cost requirements of the NVWMC (NOCU), officially designate a focal person for the NVWMC (NOCU) coming from the DENR, and to strengthen the collaboration and partnership with all the stakeholders in the governance and management of watershed.

The following are the mentioned Lessons Learned, Good Practices, Innovations and Success Stories (LGIS) from the project implementation:

Lessons Learned

- The project achieved its goal of creating a localized watershed management body involving multi-stakeholders who were willing to collaborate to address watershed issues and challenges while sharing knowledge, resources, and expertise.
- The project was completed within the budget because activities such as meetings, orientations, workshops, and trainings were all held within the province. Also, the project did not cover the travel expenses of the participants (counterpart).
- The engagement of consultants was efficient and produced high-quality results. Quality outputs were also the result of a clear project framework with defined success indicators to assess project performance.
- Despite the short implementation term (which began only in the early part of 2019) and some delays caused by the pandemic, all project milestones were achieved within the project's timeline.
- The procurement of consultants was effective and helpful. They provided the road map, served as resource persons, and facilitated the attainment of project goals and targets.
- Despite the pandemic, where face-to-face interactions were prohibited, there was still a constant stream of communication. Alternative channels including teleconferences, group chats, emails, phone calls, SMS, etc., were used to routinely update the project team, consultants, and stakeholders. The project's activities were also carried out according to schedule via online meetings, conferences, and webinars.
- There was strong leadership and collaboration within the organization. The roles or tasks of project management from the national down to the

provincial and SUSIMO levels were clearly defined and delineated. The staff involved performed their roles efficiently in tandem with the consultants.

- Though there's already a functional watershed management body to deal with watershed issues, it lacks the power and authority to resolve inconsistent and conflicting ENR laws and legislation among NGAs like DENR, DAR, NCIP, and P/MLGUs. The good thing is that there is a body willing to take risks and could serve as a forum for discussions to amicably resolve issues and concerns related to watersheds.

Good Practices

- Engagement with watershed champions and environmental advocates as lobbyists and influencers for sustainable watershed management.
- The mobilization of a technical working group to craft the EO, MOO and MOA facilitated the preparation of the necessary documentary requirements for the formation of the watershed management body (WMB).
- Technical assistance from consultants and specialists provided a clear sense of direction to project management and staff.

Innovation

- The inclusion of multisectoral interest groups (developers, regulatory bodies, user groups, non-profit sectors, and business entities) on the watershed management body broadened stakeholders participation.
- Creation of a small unit within the PLGU structure with funding and full-time staff to provide NVWMC not just secretariat but also operations and coordination services.
- Expansion of the governance responsibilities of the watershed management body (from governing only the sub-watersheds covered by Magat watershed to governing all watershed areas in the province).
- Instead of a watershed management council chaired by DENR, a provincial watershed management committee chaired by the provincial governor was established.

Success Stories

- Institutionalization of a Watershed Management Body in Nueva Vizcaya was successful due to the following factors:
 - Collaboration and partnership among all stakeholders in watershed management strengthened
 - Development and adoption of guidelines on co-financing and cost-sharing mechanisms for watershed management was developed, approved, and adopted for implementation. (Feb 21, 2020)
 - Strategic directions and policy agenda from which to base actions for watershed management developed, approved, and adopted for implementation. (Feb 21, 2020)
 - A full-time secretariat cum operations and coordination unit, or NVWMC OCU, was established and institutionalized within the PLGU structure through EO 145-2022 (July 6, 2022)

For takeaways, Mr. Campanero mentioned that the institutionalization of the watershed management body in Nueva Vizcaya was successful because of the following factors: a) it has a legal basis (the Provincial Environment Code) and is consistent with the PLGU's 12-point agenda; b) presence of a loose coalition of environmental advocates for sustainable watershed management; c) the former administration provided a strong leadership and support, which the current administration has maintained; d) timely implementation of FMP to respond the call to form a watershed management body; and e) the availability of resources (i.e., technical and financial) and a clearly defined project design on policy initiatives.

Lastly for the “Habilin”, Mr. Campanero stated the following: 1) regular review and updating of the Manual of Operation (MoO); 2) continue capacity building and strengthening of the NVWMC including the secretariat or NOCU; 3) craft the strategic watershed management plan as roadmap of the committee; 4) institutionalize the state of the watershed reporting for awareness raising and informed-decision making of the committee; 5) create a legally enforceable agreement, execute MOA signing; 6) seek membership in the Cagayan River Basin Management Council (CRBMC); 7) monitor and document the process and effect of stakeholders’ interventions on the improved health of the watershed; and 8) secure long-term funding to support the watershed management body’s operations, set up a trust fund if possible.

7. LGU TESTIMONIAL

Mr. Henry Patricio

Head Secretariat, Nueva Vizcaya Watershed Management Committee

Mr. Patricio presented in his presentation the introduction, challenges, strategies, notable milestones and outcomes, takeaways, and “habilin” in relation to the policy initiatives of the Nueva Vizcaya LGU for watershed management.

Some of the challenges presents prior to the implementation of the project include fragmented data on watershed governance and management, weak partnerships and collaboration among local stakeholders, inadequate knowledge and skills of some implementing agencies on watershed management and development, no definite specific strategic direction on watershed management and governance, and limited resources (i.e., technical and financial). On the other hand, he shared some strategies that they have done in addressing the challenges, this includes a collective environment and natural resources agenda policy formulation, collaborative to other stakeholders, and implementing a watershed management committee.

For the major takeaways on the project is that the institutionalization of Nueva Vizcaya Watershed Management Committee was expanded due to the following factors: 1) strong political will and leadership of PLGU Nueva Vizcaya; 2) back-up support of major projects (i.e., FMP, NGP, and CBFM) which opens an opportunities for the development and conservation and protection of our forest and forestland; 3) mostly the direction and trend set forth by the PLGU and MLGUs has a legal basis; 4) strong ties between and among the stakeholders; and 5) availability of resources and clearly defined project design.

Lastly, his “habilin” were the following: 1) the need to improve watershed management is still a long way to go, that is why creation of the NVWMC is a Herculean task for us now; 2) when it becomes imperative then we should started a collaboration between and among the member agencies; and 3) provision for a centralized watershed information system to meet the need for collection, collation and analysis of data of relevant watershed resource management.

8. PO TESTIMONIAL

Mr. Valentin Descalzo

President, Federation of Vista Hills, Kalongkong and Kakilingan Upland Farmers Association, Inc. (FVHKKUFI)

Mr Descalzo acknowledged everyone in the forum and proceeded to present their testimony about the FMP project in Nueva Vizcaya, the content of his presentation were challenges, strategies, notable milestones and outcomes, takeaways and the “habilin”.

He shared that the challenges they have experience were the following: 1) there is no enough water supply in their area; 2) the people in the community has a different cultural diversity and beliefs; 3) low enforcement of environmental related rules

and regulations; and 4) the “kaingin”/slash and burn farming that leads to forest degradation. The strategies to address these challenges was to change the system in their community. He also added: “Sa kabila ng mga pagsubok, natagpuan ng komunidad ang isang magkasamang layunin - ang ibalik ang kanilang kalikasan. Sa pagkilala sa agarang pangangailangan para sa kolektibong aksyon, tinanggap nila ang suporta ng Kagawaran ng Kalikasan at Kalikasan (DENR) at iba pang ahensya.”

In his presentation, Mr. Descalzo also shared their notable milestones and outcomes which includes the following: 1) secured land ownership; 2) education on environmental aspect; 3) support from the local and national government; 4) strict compliance to rules and regulation; 5) abundant supply of water; 6) unity of the community; 7) access to education and transportation; and 8) increased income for the people in the community.

For the major takeaway, he then said that the Vista Hills Federation’s journey is a testament to the power of community unity, government support, and sustainable practices. And added that they have transformed their environment, improved their lives, and continued to work towards a more prosperous and sustainable future.

Lastly for his “habilin”, he talked about four things: 1) continuation of CBFMA; 2) business growth; 3) sustainable use of water; and 4) forest improvement.

9. AWARDING OF CERTIFICATES

FASPS Director Al O. Orolfo, FASPS-PMED Chief Jeslina Gorospe and FMP Project Manager Marlon Atienza awarded the Certificate of Appreciation to the all-resource persons for sharing their knowledge and experiences in the Forum.

10. SYNTHESIS

Director Al O. Orolfo presented the synthesis of the discussion on policy initiatives at the end of the session.

For Session 4: Forest Protection and Conservation, he emphasized the following key takeaways:

- Effective forest protection and conservation efforts are anchored in collaborative partnerships, biodiversity preservation, stakeholder engagement, restoration strategies, and community-centered benefits;
- As current stewards of the forest, we acknowledge that we don't own it; we merely care for it. It's our responsibility to safeguard it and pass it to the next generation in its pristine state; and
- The unwavering commitment and the collective dedication of the members of the local community is to carry forward the vital work of forest rehabilitation, protection and conservation.

As for the recommendations on sustainability, he provided the following points:

- Continue the initiatives and efforts of PPMO, PO and LGU in forest protection and conservation;
- Encourage non-beneficiaries and other local communities to take part in these efforts with the project’s gains and achievements;
- Strengthen communication, education and public awareness activities to help stir behavioral change among the communities, particularly for non-beneficiaries; and
- Determine and set indicators for measuring success/gains related to forest protection and conservation.

For Session 5: Policy Initiatives, Dir. Orolfo emphasized the institutionalization of Watershed Management Body in Nueva Vizcaya increased governance functionality, development and adoption of guidelines on co-financing and cost-sharing mechanism for watershed management; and highlighted the following key takeaways:

- The success of the institutionalization of the watershed management body in Nueva Vizcaya was because of its legal basis, presence of environmental advocates, strong leadership, timely implementation, and availability of resources;
- The institutionalization of the NVWMC forge strong ties among and between stakeholders; and
- The Vista Hills Federation's journey is a testament to the power of community unity, government support, and sustainable practices.

As for the recommendations on sustainability, he provided the following points:

- Ensure the implementation of the Manual of Operations, strategic directions and cost sharing mechanisms;
- Officially designate a Focal Person for the NVWMC (NOCU) coming from the DENR;
- Lobbying with PLGU to sustain the financial support for personnel and other operational cost requirements of the NVWMC (NOCU); and
- Strengthen the collaboration and partnership with all the stakeholders in the governance and management of the watershed.

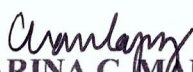
11. CLOSING REMARKS

To officially close the LGIS Forum, Director Orolfo delivered his message by sharing a note that the knowledge gained, connections drawn, and inspirations drawn from the forum should serve as a foundation for future actions and making informed decisions. It is through the application of this knowledge and information that tangible impacts on the forestlands can be made. He hoped that the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and dedication that has filled the forum will be carried by the participants to their respective workplaces and communities.

He also expressed appreciation to the resource persons and guests, the people's organizations' exhibitors, the organizer, and to all the participants that shared their time, energy, and expertise during the forum.

He concluded his message with a thought - "Our journey does not end here; it continues as we take these lessons and apply them in our quest for a more sustainable future."

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