

Agroforestry Program and Policy Analysis in the Municipalities of Cabagan, Tumauini, and San Pablo, Isabela: A Self-Assessment Workshop

Rationale

The project entitled “**Resilience-Building Among Smallholder Farmers of Selected Upland Farming Communities in the Province of Isabela, Philippines**” is funded by the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN). It is being implemented by the University of the Philippines Los Baños-Institute of Agroforestry (UPLB-IAF) and the Isabela State University (ISU), Cabagan Campus in collaboration with the Local Government Units (LGUs) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office, Isabela (DENR-PENRO), and City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO). The project primarily aims to enhance the resilience of smallholder upland farmers in Isabela who are considered vulnerable to external shocks/risks such as pandemic, climate change and natural calamities. As external shocks are inevitable, there is a need to build the resilience of the agricultural sector specially in developing nations such as the Philippines, particularly its upland farming communities. This can be done through redesigning of their agricultural production systems that are based on the sustainable use of natural resources such as agroforestry system. Hence, the necessity to determine the current status of agroforestry program and policy in selected municipalities as well as the gaps, issues and concerns that need to be addressed. This APN-funded project employs a participatory approach thus, the evaluation of the current state of Agroforestry Program and Policy was done using the Self-Assessment Workshop. These information will serve as an input for policy recommendations that can serve as the instrument of the project collaborators and stakeholders in lobbying with local policy makers towards mainstreaming agroforestry programs in their local development programs/agenda.

Objectives

1. To evaluate the status of agroforestry program and/or policy in Cabagan, Tumauini and San Pablo, Isabela;
2. To determine the strengths and weaknesses of stakeholders in implementing agroforestry program/agenda in local development program;
3. To identify the opportunities and threats in implementing agroforestry program/agenda in local development program; and
4. To formulate policy recommendations for effective and efficient implementation of agroforestry program/agenda of LGUs and agencies in the Province of Isabela.

The analysis workshop was conducted on 19 April 2023 at Bulwagan ng Katutubo, Environmental Information Center Building, ISU Cabagan Campus, Isabela. The workshop was attended by 18 representatives from City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) and Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA), Environment and Natural Resources Office (ENRO) and Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) of the Provincial Local Government Unit (LGU), representatives from various Offices of the Municipal LGU (Municipal Agriculture, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources, Municipal Planning and Development), Barangay LGU, Masipi East Upland Farmer Organization, Sierra Madre Farmers Association and Ambavi Greners Association (**Figure 1**).



Figure 2. Participants of the Policy Analysis Workshop welcomed by Dr. Emerson V. Barcaellano



Figure 1. Participants of the Policy Analysis Workshop

The participants were welcomed by Dr. Emerson V. Barcaellano, Dean of the College of Forestry and Environmental Resources (CFEM), Isabela State University (ISU) Cabagan Campus and project collaborator (**Figure 2**).

To evaluate the current conditions of the Agroforestry program, project and policy in Masipi East, Cabagan; Limbauan, San Pablo; and Dy-Abra, Tumauin, a Self-Assessment Workshop was undertaken (**Figure 3**). The self-assessment centered on SWOT analysis (strength, weaknesses to include gaps, opportunities and threats) with respect to current status of agroforestry program and policy of LGUs and government agencies in the Province of Isabela. The workshop aims to formulate policy recommendations to enhance the resilience of smallholder upland farmers in Isabela through effective and efficient implementation of agroforestry program/agenda of LGUs and agencies in the Province of Isabela. Enumerated by the stakeholders are the strategies that would help overcome identified weaknesses and threats and maximize and improve the strengths and opportunities towards achieving their main goal. The policy recommendations will serve as the instrument of the project collaborators and stakeholders in lobbying with the local policy makers towards mainstreaming agroforestry

programs in their resilient-building agenda or development programs. Amongst the recommendations by stakeholders include clear designation of office within the Municipal LGU as well as technical staff that will spearhead the implementation of agroforestry program/agenda,

craft resolution for agroforestry program by the LGU, harmonize agroforestry program/project within various levels of LGUs from provincial down to barangay level and allocation of funds by LGU for the agroforestry program or agenda.



Figure 3. Participants during the self-assessment workshop