**Targeted Support: Developing REDD-plus Readiness in the Philippines – Developing Options for Benefit Distribution and Addressing Corruption Risks**

**A Concept Paper**

**Background**

The Philippines has a total land area of 30 million hectares broken down into certified alienable and disposable land (14.195 million hectares or 47%) and forestlands (15.805 million hectares or 53%). Out of the total forestlands, 15.050 million hectares are already classified and the rest are still unclassified. (FMB, 2007).

Forest cover within the forestlands is approximately 6.5 million ha (22% of the total forest land area). Open forest is the largest type of forestlands cover, amounting to 3.6 million ha (12.12%), a major portion of which were logged by timber license agreement holders, while others are affected by timber poaching, fires and other human disturbances. Closed forest account for 2.5 million ha (8.45%), and include forests that have not been logged and logged forests whose vegetation has regenerated to reach the closed canopy stage. Approximately 646,852 ha (2.19% of the total land area) are located in alienable and disposable (A&D) lands, and include 452,055 hectares of open forest (1.53%).

In total, approximately 2.56 million hectares (35.7% of forests in the Philippines) are classified as closed forest, and approximately 4.03 million hectares (56.2%) are classified as “open forest.” Mangrove forest covers 247,362 hectares (3.4%), and forest plantations cover 329,580 hectares (4.6%). Broadleaf forests are the most common, covering approximately 6.30 million hectares (88%). Mixed forests cover 94,477 hectares (1.3%), and coniferous forest (composed primarily of Pinus kesiya and P. merkusii) covers 200,833 hectares (2.8%) (FMB, 2007). An analysis of the forest cover data between 1988 and 2003 shows that the Philippines has increased its forest cover by about 700,000 ha (11% increase) (Natividad, 2009). This corresponds to a net annual increase of approximately 47,200 ha.

**General Approach**

When the global initiative on REDD-plus came to the forefront of international climate change mitigation policy, the country with its civil society organizations and government key agencies implemented pilot projects to serve as building blocks for an enabling environment for REDD-plus Implementation. Already ingrained in the government-civil society partnerships is a strong research community and national capacity to engage with forestry projects, relatively decentralized natural resource management capable of instituting local-level REDD-plus projects, enabling environmental, social and rights-based policies and frameworks, a robust civil society capable of supporting REDD-plus development and implementation at multiple scales, and significant opportunities to generate social and environmental co-benefits.

In early 2009, key government agencies and civil society organizations worked together to discuss climate change mitigation actions and start-up REDD-Plus planning. The civil society groups spearheaded the consultations, mapping and capacity building throughout the country. These gathering of stakeholders brought about the birth of CoDe REDD as government counterpart in ensuring that national REDD-plus developments yield co-benefits for biodiversity conservation and community development.

After a series of workshops and increased interest from Government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Forest Management Bureau (DENR-FMB), CoDe REDD partners developed the Philippine National REDD-plus Strategy or PNRPS. The PNRPS offers an overview of the forestry sector in the Philippines, a legal review of national policies in the context of REDD-plus, and a strategic outlook for REDD-plus development. It then specifies REDD-plus strategies and activities to facilitate REDD-plus development over a 3-5 year Readiness Phase, and gradual scaling up to a 5 year Engagement Phase. These strategies are presented within 7 overlapping components: Enabling Policy; Governance; Resource Use, Allocation and Management; Research and Development; Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of emissions reductions and review procedures for non-carbon social and environmental impacts and benefits; Sustainable Financing, and Capacity Building and Communication. The involvement of the Climate Change Commission in the process led to the integration of REDD-plus into Section 8.5 of the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change and to Executive Order 881 on REDD-plus planning and development.

In February 2010 the Philippines was granted an “observer” status in the UN REDD Programme. The Philippines then developed and submitted an Initial National Programme proposal to the UN-REDD in September 2010. The initial national programme proposal is a one year undertaking which aims to develop the Philippines REDD readiness by putting in place the enabling environment. The UN-REDD Initial National Programme was approved during the UN-REDD Policy Board during its 5th meeting held on November 4-5, 2010 in Washington D.C. with a funding support of USD500,000.

The approved project aims to achieve the over-all objective of “increasing capacity of forestland, protected areas and ancestral domains managers & support groups to implement REDD+ projects and activities.” It also identified the following outcomes as it commitment to paving the way of the coutry to REDD-Plus readiness:

* Outcome 1: REDD+ readiness support by effective, inclusive and participatory management process.
* Outcome 2: Systematic and structural approach to REDD+ readiness identified through concrete studies of options and inclusive consultation.
* Outcome 3: Capacity to establish reference baselines increased.

While the approved project will contribute to setting up the enabling environment and building capacity of key stakeholders to manage REDD-Plus initiatives, there are still gaps in terms of support to actually safeguard both human and financial investments on the programme. A parallel effort of ensuring that benefits accrue equitably to all key stakeholders becomes increasingly a must.

Objectives

In this context, this proposal seeks to have the following objectives:

1. Contribute to the initial REDD-Plus Strategy by supporting activities that will help identify and characterize corruption risks related to REDD-Plus and consequentlyiidentify mechanisms that will mitigate, if not totally eliminate, and then manage the identified corruption risks.
2. Contribute to the crafting of institutional frameworks for equitable, transparent and accountable benefit distribution systems in REDD-Plus.

Activities

In order to achieve the stated Objective, the following indicative activities are anticipated:

1. Undertake a corruption risk assessment (CRA) for REDD-Plus implementation in the Philippines;
2. Conduct inclusive stakeholder consultation process to validate and assess the likelihood of these risks actually occurring, and then craft corresponding programmatic and policy recommendations that will address the identified risks;
3. Expand the capacity building programme and media plan of UN REDD and PNRPS to include trainings and awareness raising on anti-corruption for REDD-Plus in the country
4. Conduct awareness raising and for anti-corruption at the National Multi-Stakeholder REDD-plus Council (NMRC) level and in ongoing pilot sites of REDD-Plus in the country.
5. Organize discussions, fora, and seminars to discuss and generate proposed measures to ensure equitable, transparent and accountable benefit distribution systems in REDD-Plus.
6. Document and submit discussion proceedings, policy recommendations and programmes addressing corruptions risks and equitable benefit distribution in REDD-Plus.

Budget

The total budget for the above activities is estimated at $75,000 covering activities that are targeted for implementation in a period of one-year:

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| Activity | TOTAL |
| Participatory Corruption Risk Assessment | 10,000 |
| Nationwide Workshops, Validation, and Consultations | 20,000 |
| Stakeholder consultation process to review and validate the results | 10,000 |
| Support to Capacity Development and Media Plans of PNRPS | 20,000 |
| Documentation and Production of KM products | 5,000 |
| Personnel and Overhead Costs | 10,000 |
| TOTAL | 75,000 |