

Chapter IV

Bottlenecks and recommended actions: Stakeholder perspectives from Regions III, VII and XI

Rodel D. Lasco¹, Antonio P. Carandang², Unna Chokkalingam³, Juan M. Pulhin⁴, Ramon A. Razal⁴, Romeo T. Acosta⁵, Mayumi Q. Natividad⁵, Rose Jane J. Peras⁴

¹ World Agroforestry Centre, 2F CFNR, University of the Philippines Los Baños, College, Laguna, Philippines

² Main Ave., Marymount Village, Anos, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines

³ Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), P.O. Box 6596 JKPWB, Jakarta 10065, Indonesia

⁴ College of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of the Philippines Los Baños, College, Laguna, Philippines

⁵ Forest Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Quezon City, Philippines

As part of CIFOR's regional research project "Review of forest rehabilitation: Lessons from the past", workshops were held in the three study regions, Region III (Central Luzon), Region VII (Central Visayas) and Region XI (Davao) in October 2003. These workshops provided a platform for stakeholders to share their experiences and perspectives on key forest rehabilitation¹ problems and issues. The workshop in Region III also served as a national workshop.

Each workshop had 16-27 participants. Participants came from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), local government units (LGU), the private sector, non-government organisations (NGO), 'people's organisations' (PO) or the community, and other government agencies (OGA) such as the Philippine National Oil Company and the National Power Corporation (Table 1). In Regions VII and XI, participants divided into working groups to discuss issues of concern and make recommendations to improve and sustain the rehabilitation efforts of different sectors. In the national workshop, only government representatives from Region III discussed issues pertinent to that region.

¹ See Chapter I for details on rehabilitation terminology.

Table 1. Summary of workshop participants, October 2003

Initiatives	Region III	Region VII	Region XI
Government [DENR]	9	11	9
Local Government Units [LGU]		1	1
Private Sector	5	5	4
Non-Government Organisations [NGO]	2	4	1
People’s Organisation /Community [PO]		1	1
Other Government Agencies [OGA]	11		
TOTAL	27	22	16



Group discussions in Region III (Left) and Region XI (Right) workshops, October 2003. (Photos by Philippines rehabilitation study team)



Plenary discussion in National workshop, October 2003. (Photo by Philippines rehabilitation study team)

We first provide a brief overview of the background of the three study regions. We then present and discuss the key problems and concerns raised by different stakeholders, followed by their recommendations.

1. Background

Region III or Central Luzon which lies just north of Metro Manila is rapidly industrialising, while also producing most of the country's rice on the largest plain in the Philippines (Figure 1). Region VII or Central Visayas has a strategic location and has been the predominant destination for direct foreign investment, export industries, trade and urban support services Its capital, Cebu City, is the second largest urban economic center in the country and the economic center

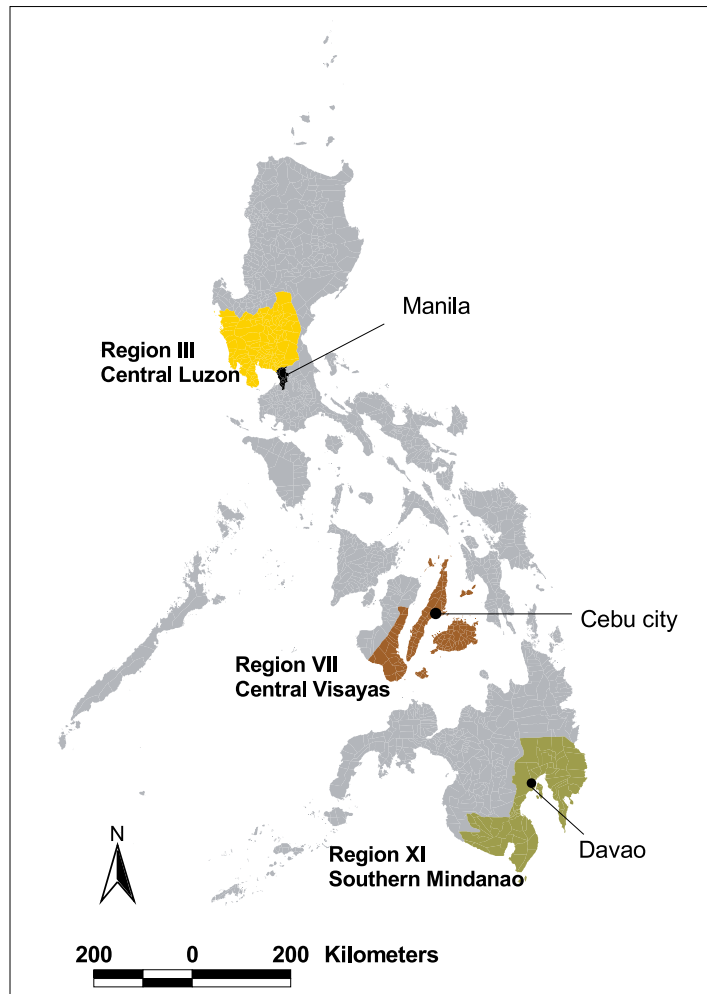


Figure 1. The three study regions (Regions III, VII and XI). Data source: Center for International Earth Science Information Network

for the Visayas and Mindanao areas. Region XI or Davao, with its administrative centre at Davao City, is largely rural and agricultural.

Regions III, VII and XI cover the most urbanized parts of the Philippines' three major island groups (while Region 3 does not cover Metro Manila, it is adjacent). However, significant portions are still classified as official forest lands² (36, 42 and 60% respectively). Regions III and VII contain more Alienable and Disposable lands³ compared with forest lands, and have little remaining forest (Table 2, FMB 2001). In contrast, Region XI has more forest land and relatively high forest cover, reflecting its less urbanized state.

Table 2. Forest, rehabilitation and socio-economic data

Rehabilitation rate and socio-economic variables	Region III	Region VII	Region XI
Absolute forest rehabilitation rate ha (1993-2001)	30522	23619	45446
Relative rehabilitation rate as % of forest land (1993-2001)	3.9	4.4	2.8
Forest land (FMB 2001)	771,174	535,919	1,634,235
Forest cover ha (FMB 2001)	194,500	19,000	704,790
Population (million) (2000)	8.0	5.7	5.2
Population density per km ² (2000)	437	359	183
Population growth rate (1995-2000)	3.17	2.76	2.54
Population in forest land	90,799	355,167	412,865
Population density in forest land per ha	0.12	0.66	.021
Human Development Index	High	Low	Low
Percent poverty incidence 2000	17	32	32
2002 Gross Regional Product	316,000	286,000	220,000
Percent of families dependent on forestry and hunting	0.17	0.24	0.19
Percent of households using fuelwood	14	60	56

Source: Forest and rehabilitation data (FMB 1993-2001), Socio-economic data (National Statistical Coordination Board 2002)

About a quarter of the families in Region VII depended on forestry and hunting, slightly higher than in the other two regions (Table 2). More than half the families in Regions VII and XI used wood as fuel compared with less than 15% in Region III. This suggests that families in Region VII depend the most on forest resources. Regions VII and XI were poorer and ranked lower on the Human Development Index⁴ compared with Region III (National Statistical Coordination Board 2002).

² The term "forest land" refers to all property owned by the national government that is still in the public domain. It is a legal, not a botanical description. In reality, much "forest land" does not contain forests.

³ Alienable and disposable lands refer to lands that have been officially classified as not needed for forest purposes. They are open for conversion to alternative use.

⁴ Human Development Index is a measure of human well-being that aggregates several development indicators.

The relative reforestation rate (area reforested over total forest land) from 1993-2001 correlates inversely with the regions' remaining 2001 forest cover and with the population density (Table 2). Region XI with the highest forest cover and low population density had the lowest rehabilitation rate as a proportion of forest land. Region VII with the lowest forest cover and high population density overall and on forest land, had the highest rehabilitation rate. This implies that the incentive to rehabilitate may be stronger in regions with less forest cover and higher population density. Other regional socio-economic variables are not well correlated with the relative rehabilitation rate.

Cumulatively from 1993-2001, the non-governmental sector (particularly the private commercial sector) has been the dominant player in rehabilitation efforts in Region XI (Figure 2), given the favourable agro-climatic conditions and low population density on forest land. But in Region VII, with its very low forest cover and high population density living on forest land and depending on forest products, the DENR has been the main player.

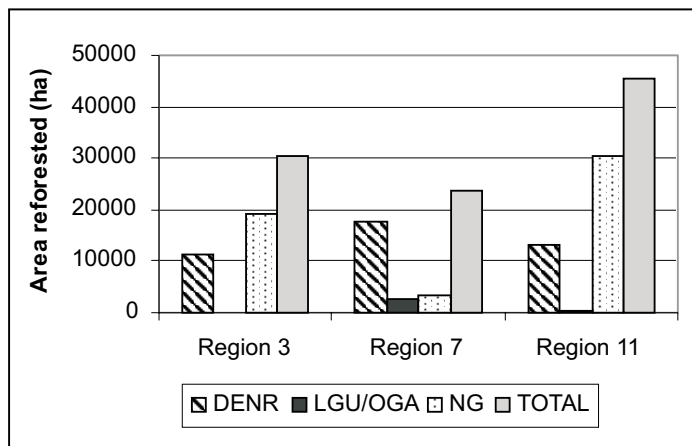


Figure 2. Total area reforested 1993-2001

Source: Forestry Statistics (FMB 1993-2001)

NG: The non-government sector includes timber license holders, industrial and socialised industrial forest management agreement holders (IFMA and SIFMA), NGOs and POs

2. Rehabilitation issues raised by regional stakeholders

2.1 Technical problems and concerns

Workshop participants from each region raised about five technical issues needing to be addressed (Table 3). Government project representatives in Region III cited

Table 3. Technical problems and concerns

Issues	Region III	Region VII					Region XI			
	Gov ⁵	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv ⁶	Gov	PO	LGU/ NGO	Priv
1. Implementer lacks technical capability				X	X	X		X	X	X
2. Site/tree growth problems. Improper species-site matching	X					X	X	X		X
3. Pest infestation	X		X							
4. Fires	X		X							
5. Monocultures, exotic species					X		X			
6. Silvicultural treatments not applied, low quality products	X						X			
7. Improper handling of seedlings								X		
8. No source of quality seeds & planting materials	X									
9. Areas allocated not suitable for growing timber trees										X
Total	5		2	1	2	2	3	3	1	3

the most number of issues. Despite facing many technical problems, government agencies felt technically competent while the other actors felt they had inadequate technical capability and needed support.

Species-site matching was another commonly cited problem, perhaps related to the fact that a few dominant species such as *Gmelina arborea*, mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) and narra (*Pterocarpus indicus*) are planted irrespective of the site conditions. This has led to a high mortality rate and poor performance of seedlings, particularly in Region XI.

2.2 Policy problems and concerns

Inconsistent or contradictory policies were the most common problem affecting rehabilitation across sectors and regions (Table 4). For example, tree planting is promoted in the uplands and yet harvesting and transport regulations are

⁵ Gov – Government agencies

⁶ Priv – Private sector

Table 4. Policy problems and concerns

Issues	Region III	Region VII					Region XI			
	Gov	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv	Gov	PO	LGU/ NGO	Priv
1. Inconsistent or contradictory policies	X	X		X				X		X
2. Non-continuity of policies				X				X		
3. No clear policies on utilising products from the rehabilitated areas & harvesting mature plantations		X					X			
4. DENR project goals oriented to physical planting targets	X						X			
5. Poorly-defined objectives							X			
6. No investment incentives										X
7. Good policies but poor implementation									X	
8. Government share of harvest returns too big						X				
9. Higher taxes/ha for large land holders – no incentive to rehabilitate						X				
10. IPRA law very powerful & may pose constraints to efforts								X		
11. Non-issuance of NCIP* clearance for rehabilitation activities								X		
Total	2	2		2		1	3	4	1	2

*NCIP – National Commission for Indigenous People

prohibitive. Government representatives in two regions raised concerns about project goals being oriented towards physical planting targets without clear harvesting guidelines. Poor policy continuity was pointed out by LGUs in Region VII and POs in Region XI.

The private sector in Region VII found that the large government share of harvest returns and higher taxes per hectare for large landholders provided little incentive to rehabilitate. Region XI had a wide range of policy issues negatively affecting rehabilitation: poor policy implementation, limited incentives for the private sector and constraints posed by the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA).

2.3 Management problems and concerns

Government representatives in Regions III and XI cited the most management problems, such as poor knowledge of project implementation, low capability of organizations assisting the POs, inadequate information and education campaigns (IEC), nepotism in hiring laborers and staff, high DENR project staff turnover and poor maintenance and protection (Table 5). POs also mentioned high DENR staff turnover, besides inadequate social preparation to ensure viability and problems with distributing benefits among members.

Table 5. Management problems and concerns

Issues	Region III	Region VII					Region XI			
	Gov	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv	Gov	PO	LGU/ NGO	Priv
1. Poor maintenance; Limited funds and staff; Monitoring not sustained after project ended	X	X			X		X	X	X	
2. High turn-over of DENR project staff	X							X		
3. Poor knowledge of project implementation							X		X	
4. Poor social preparation								X		
5. Inequitable sharing of benefits among PO officers and members								X		
6. Inadequate IEC* leading to negative attitudes	X									
7. Nepotism in hiring laborers, staff							X			
8. Low capability of assisting organizations & failure to meet their commitments	X									
Total	4	1			1		3	4	2	

* IEC - Information and education campaign

An issue cited across all groups except the private sector was poor maintenance and protection. This is because rehabilitation is equated with tree planting. After planting, there is little emphasis on maintenance. Also many government and foreign-assisted projects including the Forestry Sector Project Loan I *contract reforestation* sites were allocated funding for only a few years. Monitoring was not sustained after the project ended and many areas became open access again.

Within a short time, they were cleared for agriculture or left to burn.

2.4 Financial problems and concerns

The most common financial problems were limited funding or poor access to funding for rehabilitation and continued maintenance, as well as delayed funding releases from the government (Table 6). Timely funding releases are crucial because planting has to be done during the few wet months. The absence of a mechanism to make projects financially viable was recognised in Region VII.

Table 6. Financial problems and concerns

Issues	Region III	Region VII					Region XI			
	Gov	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv	Gov	PO	LGU/ NGO	Priv
1. Limited funds for rehabilitation	X			X	X		X	X		
2. Delayed release of funds	X			X	X			X		
3. Improper utilisation, allocation of funds	X						X			
4. Poor access to credit, high interest rates						X				
5. No mechanism to make projects financially sustainable, to generate income & reinvest		X								
Total	3	1		2	2	1	2	2		

2.5 Socio-economic problems and concerns

Region VII cited many socio-economic issues, followed by Region III (Table 7). This matches with Region VII's high population density on forest land, coupled with high poverty levels and dependence on forest products. The most notable social issue stated by POs and other sectors was the lack of livelihood opportunities for upland farmers. The farmers are more concerned with earning a living from the land now rather than waiting for trees to mature. Interestingly, non-PO sectors were concerned about the apathy of villagers to rehabilitation projects, encroachment, peace and order problems and population pressure. The perception that upland communities do not support rehabilitation could be due to the fact that their interests are not taken into account when planning projects. NGO/LGU representatives in Region XI specifically mentioned that indigenous communities living in the forest areas were not officially recognized.

Table 7. Socio-economic problems and concerns

Issues	Region III	Region VII					Region XI			
	Gov	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv	Gov	PO	LGU/ NGO	Priv
1. Lack of livelihood opportunities; poverty	X		X		X				X	
2. Indifference & apathy among some villagers towards rehabilitation projects	X			X	X					
3. Peace & order	X			X		X				
4. Absentee claimants; encroachment				X		X				
5. Population pressure for grazing & farming	X	X								
6. Indigenous forest communities not recognized									X	
7. No marketing support for forest & farm products, low prices	X		X		X		X			X
8. Lack of infrastructure, roads & transport to market			X		X	X				
9. Need to study product development						X				
Total	5	1	3	3	4	4	1		2	1

Almost all sectors were concerned about marketing. The government did not provide much marketing support for tree plantations and the lack of farm-to-market roads makes transporting logs difficult.

2.6 Governance problems and concerns

Different sectors in each region raised governance problems in the workshops (Table 8). NGO participants in Region VII strongly cited lack of LGU support, local political unwillingness to enforce forestry laws, political interference and corruption as factors undermining rehabilitation success.

Region III government participants mentioned insufficient support for LGUs, political interference and corruption. The private sector in Region XI raised issues such as insufficient support for LGUs, lack of legal support during litigation against violators, and bureaucratic delays and expense in processing documents.

Table 8. Governance problems and concerns

Issues	Region III	Region VII				Region XI					
	Gov	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv
1. Political interference	X				X						X
2. Corruption	X				X						
3. Some local chief executives lack political will to enforce forestry laws & regulations				X	X						
4. Lack of awareness and support from some LGU officials					X		X				
5. Insufficient support for LGUs	X										X
6. Support for project uncertain with changes in political leadership				X							
7. Lack of legal support during litigation against violators											X
8. Non-payment by POs of government share of harvest benefits							X				
9. Some POs misuse CBFM projects	X										
10. Bureaucratic delays & expense to process documents											X
11. Weak enforcement of contracts	X										
Total	5			2	4		2				4

All regions cited political interference, which, coupled with corruption among local leaders, can stifle civil society initiatives. Changes in political leadership also lead to changes in priorities, negating the efforts of the previous administration, as stated by the LGU sector in Region VII.

3. Recommendations

Workshop participants provided many recommendations to address the key rehabilitation bottlenecks they identified (Tables 9-14). Common recommendations across sectors and regions were to:

- Build implementers' capacity.
- Provide alternative livelihoods or livelihood assistance.
- Allocate more funds for plantation development and long-term protection.
- Strengthen POs; provide social preparation to manage the resources.
- Provide technical assistance.
- Strengthen policies.
- Strengthen community awareness.
- Improve roads, transport, infrastructure.
- Undertake proper species-site selection.
- Release funds in a timely manner.
- Develop marketing systems and links to domestic and foreign markets.

Table 9. Technical recommendations

Recommendations	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv
1. Provide technical assistance		2X*			2X
2. Undertake proper site selection	X**				2X
3. Promote indigenous species use and allow land to regenerate for non-commercial forest rehabilitation					X
4. Establish regional seed centre and clonal nursery	X				
5. Use tried and tested species	X				
6. Strengthen silvicultural research and transfer the technologies to end users	X				
7. Provide funds for silvicultural treatment and management	X				
8. Provide fire-fighting tools and equipment	X				
9. Build biodiversity conservation into all rehabilitation projects				X	
10. Use chemical and other methods to control pests		X			
11. Plant some species as fire breaks		X			

* PO groups in two regions made the recommendation

** A Government group in one region made the recommendation

Table 10. Policy recommendations

Recommendations	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv
1. Review and modify existing policies to make them acceptable and effective	2X	X			X
2. Establish a policy to facilitate marketing			X	X	
3. Ensure tenure security	X				X
4. Private investors must be given incentives to sustain development					2X
5. Make rules and regulations easy to follow					X
6. Reduce government share in harvest profits					X
7. Enact local ordinance to sustain project despite leadership changes			X		
8. Formulate policies that would address erring contractors	X				

Table 11. Management recommendations

Recommendations	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv
1. Build implementer's capacity	2X	2X	X	X	2X
2. Strengthen POs; provide social preparation to manage the resources	2X	2X			
3. Choose assisting organisations from the local area	X	X			
4. Select NGOs rigorously based on technical capability and commitment	X				
5. Retain government staff and personnel handling the project	X				
6. Conduct resource surveys, mapping and planning	X				
7. Ensure transparency among PO members		X			

Table 12. Financial recommendations

Recommendations	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv
1. Allocate more funds for plantation development and long-term protection	2X	2X		X	
2. Release funds in a timely manner	X	X	X		
3. Provide financial assistance					X
4. Use funds for allocated purposes	X				
5. Improve financial management			X		
6. Reduce paperwork for fund release				X	
7. Treat reforestation as a business so that marketing, employment, benefits and sustainability will be addressed	X				

Table 13. Socio-economic recommendations

Recommendations	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv
1. Provide alternative livelihoods or livelihood assistance	2X	2X		X	
2. Create vested interest for communities to protect area				X	
3. Encourage local community participation	X				
4. Issue land titles to long-term residents for forestry purposes	X				
5. Strengthen community awareness	X	X	X	X	
6. Solve the insurgency problem					X
7. Improve roads, transport, infrastructure	X	X		X	X
8. Develop marketing systems and links to domestic and foreign markets	X	X		X	
9. Help with product development					X

Table 14. Governance recommendations

Recommendations	Gov	PO	LGU	NGO	Priv
1. Establish strong partnership with LGU		X		X	
2. Provide incentives for local leaders to support and protect rehabilitation area				X	
3. Strengthen forestry law enforcement				X	
4. Minimize corruption				X	
5. Make LGU aware of DENR programs and guidelines					X
6. Create ENROs ⁷ in LGUs as a continuing body to support projects despite political changes			X		
7. Regularize CBFM division of DENR to avoid turnover		X			

4. Summary

Participants in the consultative workshops in Regions III, VII and XI came from the Government (DENR and OGA), LGU, NGO, PO, and private sectors. They identified many technical, policy, financial, management, governance and socio-economic constraints to rehabilitating forests in their regions. The main rehabilitation issues raised and the actors raising the issues were different across regions. Region XI raised many policy-related issues. Region VII raised many socio-economic issues, reflecting the high density of people living on its forest land and depending on forest products. Region XI has a very low population

⁷ ENRO – Environment and Natural Resources Officer

density on forest land and raised very few socio-economic issues. In the technical, governance and financial aspects, there was not much difference between regions in terms of number of issues raised. The PO and DENR raised the most issues in Region XI, where the private and other non-government sectors have been the dominant forest rehabilitation actors from 1993-2001. Likewise in Region VII, a DENR-dominated rehabilitation area, non-DENR actors appeared to be raising the issues of concern.

The most commonly cited problems across sectors and regions were:

- Poor long-term maintenance due to limited funds and staff after project ends.
- Lack of species-site matching.
- Lack of technical capability to rehabilitate.
- Inconsistent or contradictory policies.
- Limited funding or poor access to funding.
- Delayed release of funds.
- Lack of livelihood opportunities for upland farmers.
- Lack of marketing support and farm-to-market roads.
- Political interference.
- Apathy of villagers to rehabilitation projects.
- Peace and order problems.

The last two concerns were raised mainly by the non-PO sectors. Perceptions that upland communities do not support rehabilitation efforts could be due to the fact that their interests are not taken into account when planning projects. The workshop participants finally provided specific recommendations to address the key rehabilitation bottlenecks that they identified.

5. References

- FMB. 2001. Philippine forestry statistics. Forest Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Quezon City, Philippines.
- FMB. 1993-2002. Philippine forestry statistics. Forest Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Quezon City, Philippines.
- National Statistical Coordination Board. 2002. Philippine statistical yearbook. National Statistical Coordination Board, Manila, Philippines.