

FOREST PROTECTION IN A CBFM SITE: THE CASE OF TIBKOI

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Natural Resources Management Program

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ACRONYMS

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| AP | - | Assisting Professional |
| AWP | - | Annual Work Plan |
| BDF | - | Bureau of Forest Development |
| BENRO | - | Barangay Environment and Natural Resources Officer |
| BOD | - | Board of Directors |
| CBFM | - | Community-Based Forest Management |
| CBFMA | - | Community-Based Forest Management Agreement |
| CBFMO | - | Community-Based Forest Management Office |
| CENRO | - | Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer |
| CRMF | - | Community Resource Management Framework |
| CTF | - | Communal Tree Farm |
| DA | - | Department of Agriculture |
| DAI | - | Development Alternatives, Inc. |
| DAR | - | Department of Agrarian Reform |
| DECS | - | Department of Education, Culture and Sports |
| DENR | - | Department of Environment and Natural Resources |
| EO | - | Executive Order |
| IEC | - | Information, Education and Communication |
| KMO | - | Kaingin Management Office |
| LGU | - | Local Government Unit |
| MFPC | - | Multi-Sectoral Forest Protection Council |
| NGO | - | Non-Government Organization |
| PA | - | Philippine Army |
| PB | - | Punong Barangay |
| PD | - | Presidential Decree |
| PENRO | - | Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer |
| PNP | - | Philippine National Police |
| PO | - | People's Organization |
| RUP | - | Resource Use Plan |
| SAAC | - | Sustainable Annual Allowable Cut |
| SBr | - | Sangguniang Barangay |
| SWIP | - | Small Water Impounding Project |
| TIBKOI | - | Tible Bantay Kalikasan Organization, Inc. |
| USAID | - | United States Agency for International Development |

**FOREST PROTECTION IN A CBFM SITE:
THE CASE OF THE
TIBLE BANTAY KALIKASAN ORGANIZATION, INC.
IN BARANGAY TIBLE, SIPOCOT, CAMARINES SUR¹**

INTRODUCTION

Under the CBFMA, the PO has committed itself to protect its forestlands from illegal extraction and cutting, forest and grass fires, and slash and burn farming. As part of the recognition of de-facto management of forest lands by communities, DENR has authorized the PO to be deputized as the Environment and Natural Resources Officer. Forest protection, therefore, has become a major performance indicator in assessing the impacts and effectiveness of CBFM strategy in the management of forestlands. With CBFMA as an instrument of closing “open access” forestlands, the effectiveness of communities in protecting the forest lands has been often doubted among environmental advocates. There has always been the question on the PO’s capability to muster enough resources to fulfill its commitment under the CBFMA.



In CBFM, the communities are assumed to have the greatest stake in protecting and managing the forest lands because most of their members depend on the forests for livelihood. Thus forest protection require organization, mobilization and participation of community members. It requires dissemination of information, conduct of educational campaign among residents (members and non-members of the PO) and stakeholders, conduct of regular patrols, knowledge and skills on legal procedures, and vigilance in forest patrols and manning towers and check points. All of these require time, equipment, linkage, and coordination with the police, local government units, and other concerned public and private organizations. Definitely, forest protection needs operational funds or sweat labor on the part of the newly organized PO in order to fulfill their responsibility as the Environment and Natural Resources Officer.

This case presents the experiences, struggles, issues, lessons learned, and potential of community-based forest protection activities. The issues and opportunities of forest protection are discussed in the context of why forest protection vis-a-vis the local elite, the commitment of DENR to provide assistance to POs, the divisive effects of forest protection on the community members, and the inherent dangers of the strategy.

¹ This case was prepared by Mr. Ernesto Cadaweng with guidance and assistance from Dr. E. Chong-Javier, Dr. E.S. Guiang, Dr. B.R. Harker, and N. Sarmiento under the USAID- and DENR-assisted Natural Resources Management Program. Field assistance was provided by Mr. E. Boncajes, and DENR CBFMO field staff in Region 5.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY SITE

The community-based forest management agreement (CBFMA) of the Tible Bantay Kalikasan Organization, Inc. (TIBKOI) is located in Brgy. Tible, Sipocot, Camarines Sur. It has a total area of 1,954 hectares of forestlands and covers eight sitios, to wit: Batrag, Belnas, Bulalahin, Cacao, Palanog, Marilag, Iriga and Centro. DENR issued the CBFMA to TIBKOI on November 21, 1997.

Tible is approximately 15 kilometers away from the town proper of Sipocot passing through Maharlika highway to the crossing in Brgy. North Villazar. The highway from the town proper is accessible to all types of vehicles. From the highway to the barangay proper are 4.6 kilometers of dirt road. Because it is most often in bad condition, this road is usually inaccessible to light vehicles. To get to the barangay during the rainy season, a 4-wheel drive or a 6 x 6 and other heavy vehicles are better suited for traversing the road. The barangay is approximately 6 kilometers away from the residual production forest.

The physical features of the CBFM area are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected information of the physical features of the TIBKOI-CBFM project area.

| FEATURE | INFORMATION |
|--|--|
| Total area | 1,964.00 ha |
| Existing land uses: | |
| Protection forest | 100.00 ha |
| Residual forest | 977.00 ha |
| Cultivated/Agroforestry | 681.60 ha |
| Residential | 20.00 ha |
| Plantation | 50.00 ha |
| Others (creeks, trails, transmission line) | 25.40 ha |
| Topography | Moderate (95%) to steep (5%) |
| Elevation | 200-900 m. above sea level |
| Slope | Average of 10% to |
| Climate | Type II, with distinct wet and dry seasons |

The table indicates that more than 50% of the CBFMA area has residual forest and a major portion is comprised with cultivated and occupied upland farms. The site is adjacent with the Bicol National Park Protected Area and serves as a buffer of the protected area system.

Brgy Tible has a total population size of 1,290 people consisting of 672 women and 618 men. It has a total of 215 households, each with an average size of 6 persons. Ninety percent (90%) of the population are native Bicolanos while the remaining 10% are migrants from other provinces. On the average, 98% of the population have attained the elementary level of education. The residents used to be the displaced workers of a former logging company that operated in the area.

At present, most of the residents are farmers deriving income from agricultural production. In between farming activities, they draw other sources of income from sale of forest products such as lumber and working as hired laborers for better-off community members. Of the total population in Tible, only 55 have permanent employment. Based on CENRO data the average annual income of a household in the barangay is 40,000.00 which is way below the national poverty line.

KEY ISSUES ON FOREST PROTECTION

DENR PARTICIPATION

The CBFMA defines the role of both parties in forest protection. In the agreement, the provisions cited hereunder are geared towards forest protection:

- 1.2 *Magkaloob ng tulong sa **CBFMA Holder** bilang bahagi ng normal na operasyon ng DENR, tiyakin ang pagsasapanahon (updating), pagpapatibay (affirmation), at pagpapatupad (implementation) ng CRMF at Annual Work Plans (AWPs) kasama ang Resource Use Plans (RUPs);*
- 1.4 *Magtalaga ng kwalipikadong kasapi ng komunidad bilang Barangay Environment and Natural Resources Officers (BENROs) batay sa kahilingan ng **CBFMA Holder** alinsunod sa DAO Blg. 41 Serye ng 1991 at iba pang kautusan hinggil dito;*

The PO with the assistance of the APs requested from CENRO Sipocot to conduct paralegal training for the BENROs. The CENRO replied and advised the PO to prepare and complete all the necessary requirements for the training and for deputation of BENROs.

In April 14, 1998, CENRO officer Juan B. Belardo and staff of the CENRO forest protection unit, conducted a one day Seminar on Forest protection and Law enforcement in Tible, Sipocot, Camarines Sur. This was attended by 25 BENROs, PO leaders, SB council, PMO and APs.

The lecture focused on the obligation, duties and responsibilities of BENROs. Strategies in conducting forest protection and detection of illegal activities, procedures on confiscation and the steps on how to go about were thoroughly discussed to the participants.

The resource persons also specifically discussed two particular sections under PD 705 (Forestry Code of the Philippines) as amended by EO 277 and RA 7161. These are 1) violation of section 77 that any person who illegally transport, cut/gather or in possession of any kind of forest products and; 2) violation of section 78 on illegal kaingin.

After the training/seminar on forest protection was conducted in Tible, the PO members who were trained applied and submitted all requirements for deputation. The processing and issuance of deputation paper took almost three months. Out of 25 applicants, two were disqualified because one was overage and the other died because of protection works.

The Special Order of 25 BENROs was released on July 28, 1998 effective until October 28, 1998. A letter from the PO requesting for the renewal of the deputation was sent to the CENRO after the expiration, however, no response yet was received from the CENRO under DENR's existing policy based on DAO 98-09, the PENRO upon the recommendation of the concerned CENRO may issue or renew the deputation order of PO key leaders and IP elders.

DENR SUPPORT

DENR is supporting the community through the implementation of projects within the area. Projects that were implemented is the Small Water Impounding Project (SWIP) which provides water for irrigation purposes of upland farmers in the barangay.

Another project is the awarding of a 30-hectare Contract Reforestation to TIBKOI. The contract amount is more than ₱500,000 over a period of three years. This was awarded last July 1998. This contract shall be implemented within their CBFMA area. As of December 1998, the billing of the PO was already released. The implementation of projects within the area is to steer the community away from illegal cutting from the residual forest and from the Bicol National Park.

The Office of the PENRO also issued a certificate of accreditation to the PO as an NGO so that they can participate in any existing program/projects of DENR.

To date, these DENR supports have provided interim employment for some members of the community. These supports (e.g., subsidies) are generating local economic activities and employment.

KAINGIN MAKING

In 1978, the Kaingin Management Office (KMO) under the then Bureau of Forest Development (BFD) conducted a survey of upland farmers (kaingineros) of the area as well as the survey of their farm lots. This was done to curb the influx of people to the forestland. After the survey, no follow-up activities were done to continue whatever the purpose of the survey was. In 1979, a survey of the area was again conducted for the preparation of another project for implementation, the Communal Tree Farm (CTF), the project was to organize the upland farmers into a cooperative or organization and then let the organization develop the area into a communal tree farm. This project also did not materialize

ILLEGAL CUTTING/POACHING

Illegal cutting of timber has always been a major source of income for many of the residents in and near the CBFMA area. The whole Bicol region does not have a legal source of timber products. It imports from nearby regions from Mindanao. This situation brings a lot of pressure to the remaining natural timber stands in the region, especially those that are economically accessible. The CBFMA area of TIBKOI is not exempted as a rich source of illegally-cut timber for housing and local construction activities.

On April 19, 1998, five days after the training, one member of the BENROs, Mr. Gabriel Gallarte, Jr., was hacked to death by suspected illegal logger. Based on the testimony of two witnesses, the victim and his brother went to their farmlot in Sitio Palanog, Tible when the victim saw the suspects cutting a narra tree inside the victim's farmlot. Being the owner of the land, and as a BENRO, the victim tried to apprehend the suspect but the later resisted, thus resulting to a heated confrontation. Upon observation by the victim's brother, that the problem will not be solved, he immediately went back to PB Nelson Barsaga to ask for assistance. SBr Kagawads Ernesto Antonio and Nomeriano de Jesus immediately responded to the area to settle the problem. With the presence and advice of the Barangay officials both parties agreed to settle their problem. When the Barangay officials believed that the problem was already settled, they went back to the barangay with the victim and his brother but without knowing, the suspect hacked the victim on the right leg that caused his death.

The family of the victim, with the assistance of the PB, PO and DENR filed the necessary criminal complaints both for murder and violation of forestry laws. It was almost seven months before the suspect was convicted for the crime he committed. He is now detained at the Sipocot Municipal Jail. Due to this incident, members of the forest protection team doubted the implementation of forest protection. The BENROs then asked what protection will they get from the PO management and DENR if another similar incident will happen while performing their duties as BENROs. In reply to this, the PO leaders encouraged the BENROs to continue what they started, stressing that when the PO had accumulated enough resources, all BENROs shall be insured and other benefits will be provided.

FOREST FIRES

Forest fires within the CBFMA area are not as prevalent as in areas within Regions 1 or 3. Although the climate is Type II wherein there is a distinct wet and dry season, the wet season is longer that starts in the months of May or June and ends in late February to early March. Fires that occur within the area are usually caused by slash and burn farming.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION FOR FOREST PROTECTION

Prior to the harvesting and utilization operation of TIBKOI that started in August 1998, the 23 BENROs continuously conducted forest protection work without pay. Only their commitment and dedication to help protect the CBFM area was in their minds.



INDIVIDUAL AND PO COMMITMENTS

Under the terms and conditions of the CBFMA the community shall be immediately responsible in the protection of the CBFMA area.

- 2.1 *Agarang akuin ang responsibilidad upang mapangalagaan ang kabuuang sakop ng lupang kagubatan ng "CBFMA Area" laban sa ilegal na pagtotroso at ibang di-pinahihintulutang pagkuha ng mga produktong gubat, pagpigil sa pagkakaingin at pagsusunog ng kagubatan at damuhan at iba pang uri ng pagsira ng kagubatan;*

Under the CBFMA of the PO it is stipulated that one of their duties and responsibilities is the protection of their area. The PO is bound in their CBFMA that they have to protect their area from illegal encroachment or any form of illegal acts.

The Community Resource Management Framework (CRMF) and the Annual Work Plan/ Resource Use Plan (AWP/RUP) are the two CBFM plans developed in the area. Embodied in the CRMF is the long-term plan that states the PO's vision, mission and objectives and key strategies in implementing the four major areas of concern, the resources, organization, enterprise development and support services. The resources have to be protected so that the community can use these resources as source of capital for their livelihood for the present community and for the future generation.

The AWP/RUP is more specific than the CRMF. It is stipulated in the AWP/RUP the detailed activities of the PO for the year, this may or may not include resource utilization. Whether the PO would go into resource utilization or not, they are still obligated to protect their CBFMA area.

CRMF preparation started in September 1997 until the affirmation on November 21, 1997 while the AWP/RUP started in January 1998 and affirmed on April 24, 1998.

PLANNING FOR FOREST PROTECTION

The CBFMA holder organized the Community Forest protection Team known as the Barangay environment and Natural Resources Officers or BENRO. This forest protection team was organized into two teams, each team is composed of 12 members with one team leader each. The BENROs are responsible in conducting forest protection activities within the CBFMA area and portions of the Bicol National Park. The PO categorized forest protection into three main aspects: 1) no illegal cutting and extraction 2) no forest fires, and 3) no illegal kaingin or expansion of existing farm holdings. The BENROs were directed by the PO to conduct regular forest protection activities over the area. Each group would work once a week. If there were any intelligence reports on forest violations, the two groups will combine to apprehend and to take necessary action against the forest violators.

BENROs undertook Information Education Campaign (IEC) with the assistance of PO leaders and Aps. This was conducted through the installation of billboards announcing that illegal forest products gathering within the 1,954 hectares CBFMA area are strictly prohibited by TIBKOI management. These billboards were installed along strategic points, main trails, entry and exit points and CBFM boundaries where people can see and read the message.

IEC was also undertaken through house to house visitations, small assemblies, small group meetings in sitios within the barangay and adjacent barangays believed as origin or residence of "iligalista" such as North Villazar and Sooc. For human consideration, violators were initially warned by BENRO not to continue with what they are doing, and then they discussed the CBFM program and encouraged them to cooperate and participate in the program. This strategy of the PO in collaboration with the Sangguniang Barangay of Tible became effective when about 20 people from Barangay North Villazar joined TIBKOI as workers in the timber harvesting and lumber processing operations of the PO.

Prior to the harvesting and utilization operation of TIBKOI that started in August 1998, the 25 BENROs continuously conducted forest protection work without pay. Only their commitment and dedication to help protect the CBFM area was in their minds.

INCENTIVES FOR FOREST PROTECTION

As an incentive, the PO leadership decided to allocate one peso per board foot from the net sales of lumber to the BENROs. As a result, the team became more active in their activities since they now have income from what they are doing.

ROLE OF LGU AND OTHER AGENCIES ON FOREST PROTECTION

During the last quarter of 1997, the NRMP through DENR CENRO Sipocot facilitated the formation of Multi-Sectoral Forest Protection Council (MFPC) in the Municipality of Sipocot. This MFPC was participated by DA, DAR, DECS, PNP, PA, LGU, NGOs, POs and DENR as the lead agency. TIBKOI President Catalino de Jesus was elected as PO representative and PB Nelson Barsaga was elected as Vice Chairman of the IEC Committee. The objectives of the council are to develop awareness through IEC on environmental protection, to monitor, apprehend and to arrest illegal loggers. The council also realizes that our environment and our forest now are endangered. They also said that Sipocot and other lowland municipalities are always the victims of flashfloods during typhoons. However, after the formation of the council, no follow-up meetings were called.

Prior to the start of CBFM in Tible, the then ISF association has already been conducting forest protection campaign within the Barangay. However, this is only limited to their respective CSC areas. During that time, the barangay council also initiated to hold a meeting with identified "iligalista" operating within Barangay Tible. The council advised these "iligalista" to cooperate to minimize if not totally control illegal cutting inside the CBFM area of Tible including the protected zones in the Bicol National Park.

The Punong Barangay (PB) also encouraged them to start developing their individual farmlots and convert this to be more productive that in the future become their major source of income. These "iligalista" agreed to the agreement presented by the Barangay council. However, this idea never materialized.

On June 17, 1998, a joint session of TIBKOI and the Sangguniang Barangay (SBr) of Tible was called through the facilitation of Site Assistance Team. The purpose of this assembly was to encourage support and partnership of the SBr for the smooth implementation of AWP. SBr council led by Punong Barangay Nelson Barsaga, BODs and officers of TIBKOI, CBFMO Grace Cariño, PMO Angelito Rutaquio, PASU Vivencio Cabanayan, Elmer Boncajes and Orly Osi, APs assigned in the area, attended this meeting.

The proceedings of the last assembly meeting were read. Then, the meeting ensued with consensus setting particularly on the roles, responsibilities, benefits, and privileges and control measures. The SBr and the PO had agreed on the following:

That, all members of the SBr shall be considered as honorary members of the PO;

That, anybody from the SBr as appointed by the PB will act as an ex-officio during the POs regular meeting;

That, Barangay Tanods will be prioritized and be recommended as BENROs to support the POs SDENRO;

That, the PO will entertain only registered and accredited chainsaw equipment and operators.

Both parties acknowledged these agreements. However, all the conditions mentioned above shall be subject with PO's existing policies and by laws. PB encouraged all SBr to provide full support to TIBKOI in the implementation of their AWP and CBFM program as a whole. He also warned that anybody who will engage in the illegal cutting would be sued under PD 705.

The PO obtained lumber dealer permit from the DENR last August 1998. Then, CENRO Sipocot issued the Notice to Proceed Order. The PO was now authorized to harvest and sell finished lumber from the Sustainable Annual Allowable Cut (SAAC) with a total volume of 450 cubic meter. At year 1 of AWP implementation, the PO was allowed to cut mature and over-mature, and damaged trees from the annual operable area of the CBFMA area including the abandoned felled logs and typhoon damaged trees.

In cutting, peeling of timber, squaring, and slicing, the PO used chainsaw, while two man saw was employed in finishing lumber products. Carabao logging is employed in hauling of lumber and flitches to the logpond located about five kilometers away from the designated cutting area of the PO. TIBKOI completed its first shipment to Bicol Sanitarium in Barangay San Pedro, Cabusao, Camarines Sur. A total volume of 600 board feet of processed lumber was sold at ₱20.00 per board feet.

While utilization is on going, members of forest protection teams are deployed in the strategic points of the Barangay. Regular monitoring and patrol works within the CBFMA area and adjacent vicinities particularly on exit points of illegal loggers was conducted by the forest protection team. IEC on anti-illegal logging was also undertaken by the team, this was proven to be effective in minimizing, if not totally control illegal logging activities within and around the CBFM area.



SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED

1. Forest protection as a PO commitment requires major sweat capital, subsidy, support from DENR, or a major inflow in order for it to prosper. It is a cost center and a fixed cost on the part of the PO. Without a definite source of cash inflow, in the short term, forest protection suffers. During the initial stage of CBFM implementation, only forest harvesting provides a potential source of PO revenues.
2. PO membership and participation are the key in community-based forest protection. The more of the community residents participate as member of the PO, the stronger it becomes as a force in protecting its CBFM area from illegal cutters, farmers and migrants.
3. The lives of community members are threatened in forest protection.
4. Incentives for the forest protection teams are necessary for them to effectively carry out their tasks. Volunteerism can only go so far.
5. IEC, support from local leaders, training and DENR's willingness to support the PO in their efforts to protect and manage the CBFMA forest lands are some effective forest protection activities.
6. CBFMA as a resource allocation instrument threatens the livelihood of community members who depend on illegal cutting. This situation ignites division within the community – the CBFMA members and the illegal cutters.