



## Integrated Approach in the Management of Major Biodiversity Corridors in the Philippines

Document	National Project Board			
BD Corridor Project 3rd National Project Board Meeting				
Venue	Prime Hotel, Quezon City	Name	Position	Agency
Date	December 6, 2022	Usec. Jonas R. Leones, represented by BMB Director Natividad Bernardino	Chair	DENR
Time Started	2:00 PM	Usec. Annaliza Teh	Co-chair	DENR FISCC
		Ms. Floradema Eleazar	Member	UNDP
Time Finished	6:30PM	Dir. Nieva Natural, represented by Ms. Jessa Danica Agcopra	Representative	NEDA
		Usec. Cheryl Marie Caballeros, represented by Ms. Eva Dacumos	Representative	DA
Agenda	1. Presentation and Adoption of 2nd NPB Minutes of Meeting 2. TWG Chair's Report to the NPB 3. Physical and Financial Progress as of November 2022 4. Corridor Updates 5. Partner Updates 6. Presentation of Work and Financial Plan for 2023 7. Presentation of Consultants' Findings and Recommendations 8. Summary and Next Steps 9. Other matters	Dir. Mylene Rivera, represented by Mr. Mic Ivan Sumilang	Representative (TWG Member)	DHSUD
		Atty. Geroncio Aguio, represented by Ms. Carmelita de Silva	Member	NCIP
		Dir. Anna Liza Bonagua	Member	DILG
		Dir. Emma Asusano	Member	DTI
		Dir. Warner Andrada	Member	DOT
		Asec. Marcial Amaro, Jr.	Member	DENR ASPPFASPO
		Dir. Natividad Bernardino, represented by BMB Asst. Director Amelita Ortiz	Representative (TWG Co-chair)	DENR BMB
		Ms. Nida Collado		CBFM Federation
		Mr. Jerome Montemayor		CSO (FPE)
		Gov. Dakila Cua		LPP
To Be Determined		IP, Private Sector		

Other attendees included representatives from the Inter-Agency Technical Working Group (TWG), National and Corridor Project Management Units, Project Partners and Consultants. Please refer to **Annex I** for the complete list of participants.

### I. Call to Order and Provisional Agenda

On instruction by the Chair of the National Project Board (NPB), Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Director Natividad Bernardino of the Biodiversity Management Bureau called to order the meeting at 2:00 PM as Acting Chairperson. The Chair acknowledged the presence of the NPB members, including representatives from the DENR,

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Department of Agriculture (DA), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Department of Agriculture (DA), National Peoples' Organization Federation, and the Foundation for the Philippines Environment (FPE), and then declared a quorum. She also recognized the presence of the representatives from other DENR offices and Bureaus, the Project Management Units and Project Consultants.

The Chair highlighted that this is the 3rd and final NPB Meeting for 2022, and convened specifically to review and approve the Work and Financial Plan for 2023, and help fast-track the implementation of the Project.

Dr. Selva Ramachandran of UNDP delivered a message, acknowledging the hard work and diligence of implementing partners in achieving the 2022 targets. He also recognized the challenges encountered in the delivery of these targets, and encouraged all to reflect on lessons learned and address these challenges to accelerate implementation and better achieve our targets, especially for 2023. He thanked everyone for a productive 2022 and looked forward to a more fruitful 2023.

He also flagged the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) which will replace the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 to 2020, and expressed UNDP's support to the ambitious target of restoring 30% of degraded lands (about a billion hectares), and protecting and conserving 30% of lands and waters, to enable the achievement of nature-dependent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Given these ambitions, he emphasized the importance and contribution of the BD Corridor Project, and advised that the Project be mindful of the following as we consider the 2023 Work Plan targets:

- Accelerate implementation activities to enable demonstration of a few working models especially at the site level by mid-term in 2024, noting that the Project has been flagged with substantial risk due to low delivery since the Project started in 2021;
- Harness the facilitative capacity of the DENR and project partners to ensure that government processes and procedures- including recruitment, procurement and financial management, identify bottlenecks in Project implementation and collaboratively work on finding solutions;
- Ensure complementation with other Projects and relevant development partners, consistent with the government's and UNDP's approach to ensure efficiency of use of resources, scalable impacts and sustainability.

The Chair then thanked the UNDP Resident Representative for his message, and presented the Provisional Agenda (*see Annex 2*).

***The NPB approved the Provisional Agenda, without amendments.***

## **II. Presentation and Adoption of the 2nd NPB Minutes of Meeting**

The Chair then asked the NPB members to review the minutes of the 2nd NPB Meeting (*see Annex 3*).

***The NPB then approved the 2nd NPB Minutes of Meeting without further comments.***

## **III. Presentation of the TWG Chair's Report to the NPB**

Ms. Melinda Capistrano (TWG Chair and DENR OIC, Director for Policy and Planning Service) presented the TWG Chair's Report to the NPB (*see Annex 4*). Said Report highlighted the key decisions and matters arising from the 2nd NPB Meeting and 4th TWG Meeting.

Director Capistrano provided the updates on the concerns raised during the 2nd NPB Meeting, including the: a) follow up meeting with DHSUD to revisit the draft JAO and Manual on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the CLUP; b) endorsement of DAO on Forest Certification; c) fast tracking of opening of account of DA-BSWM; d) Biodiversity-friendly Enterprises (BDFEs); e) UNDP Execution support for specific services to facilitate project implementation; f) engagement of Private Sector Due Diligence Specialist; g) planning and mapping activities; h) strengthening of existing IT/GIS/data management of DENR; i) financial performance; j) training needs assessment and capacity development plan; and k) Operations Manual.

Moreover, among the presented highlights of the 4th TWG Meeting were the: a) proposed Work and Financial Plan for 2023; b) progress report on findings and recommendations on institutional framework, capacity building, and gender action plan; and c) Project Branding Guidelines and Communications Plan.

Among the comments are as follows:

- *On the recruitment of new project managers for the Corridor Project Management Units (CPMUs)*, Dir. Capistrano recommended to fast track the engagement process since project managers are crucial in project implementation. The EMBC and MBC representatives responded that recruitment is ongoing;
- *On the engagement of DENR-ERDB for the studies on the biological minimum of key species, including the bleeding heart pigeon in EMBC and MBC*, Dir. Capistrano suggested to invite ERDB in the succeeding TWG and NPB meetings;
- *On private sector due diligence assessment*, Dr. Caleda mentioned that the procurement of PSDS Specialist is almost complete with the contract, Notice of Award, and Notice to Proceed to be signed. She added that a meeting with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) will be conducted to further discuss this concern. Ms. Floradema Eleazar reiterated that the private sector due diligence assessment is not just a UNDP policy but GEF as well;
- *On the draft DAO on Philippine Forest Certification*, Ms. Emma Castillo of FMB mentioned that they are already consolidating the comments from their technical divisions to finalize the draft guideline. After finalization, they will endorse it to FMB Policy Review Committee (PRC) in the second week of December 2022 for review and subsequent endorsement to DENR Policy Technical Working Group (PTWG);
- *On the piloting of eSEAMS and eBAMS*, Ms. Thess Espino-Yap of UNDP queried whether these systems were already adopted and cleared by BMB since BD Corridor included in the 2023 work plan the pilot testing in the project sites. Ms. Nancy Corpuz of BMB clarified that USAID SIBOL Project will develop the monitoring tools and it will be piloted first with the BD Corridor project sites. Dr. Caleda added that based on initial discussions, SIBOL will also pilot test the systems in their project sites. She added that there will be a discussion with SIBOL in the second week of December to further discuss how to proceed and utilize the systems in the protected areas within the corridors. Dir. Bernadino suggested to pilot test the monitoring systems first before the adoption and include the FMB and other concerned offices (i.e. Planning, KISS) in the meeting.

#### **IV. Physical and Financial Progress as of November 2022**

Dr. Mary Jean Caleda (NPMU National Project Manager), presented the BD Corridor Project

Progress as of November 2022 (see *Annex 5*). The presentation highlighted the following: a) weighted physical accomplishment of 14.58% over 17.92% 2022 weighted physical target; b) Consultation/Workshop on the Harmonization of Policies and Development Planning across National Government Agencies; c) Harmonization and Consolidation of Thematic Maps; d) BMB-FAPS Complementation Workshop; e) Consultation-Workshop on Capacity Development and Gender Mainstreaming Assessment; and f) finalization of the initial Communication Plan.

Mr. Fulgencio Estrella (NPMU Operations Officer) presented the financial progress as of October 2022. It was highlighted that the budget allocation for the year 2022 is Php50.08 million and as of October, the project had utilized 51% or Php25.32 million. It is expected that the utilization rate will increase to 87.13% by December 2022.

## V. Corridor Updates

Ms. Maria Melissa L. Endangan (Region IVB OIC Chief, Conservation and Development Division) presented the updates of Mindoro Biodiversity Corridor. Among the highlights of the discussion are as follows:

- *On the conservation of tamaraws*, Dir. Bernardino queried on the strategies on how to expand the habitat range of the tamaraws and suggested identifying interventions to implement these strategies. Ms. Eleazar also suggested identifying where the pressures and threats are coming from to effectively design conservation plans. Dir. Bernardino further suggested exploring how the Project can support the patrolling of the tamaraw habitats.

Director Capistrano inquired about the distinction between regular programs and project activities with respect to tamaraw monitoring and conservation. Ms. Endangan explained that the DENR uses regular funding to oversee and protect tamaraw habitats through monitoring and patrolling, including the hiring of patrollers. It was then suggested to ensure no duplication of budget/activities with the regular budget of DENR.

- *On ICCA undertaking*, Ms. Espino-Yap suggested DENR to call for a high-level meeting with NCIP to further clarify and reconcile the definition of ICCA.

Ms. Josephine Araojo (EMBC Regional Focal Person) presented the updates of the Eastern Mindanao Biodiversity Corridor. Among the highlights of the discussion are as follows:

- *On the coordination meetings with Davao Oriental and Davao de Oro*, Dir. Capistrano asked about the 5000 hectares devolved areas. It was clarified that these areas refer to the communal forests as specified in Executive Order 138, which allows local government units to implement support for biodiversity projects and activities.

## VI. Partner Updates

Ms. Emma Castillo (OIC, Forest Conservation Section) presented the updates of the activities conducted by Forest Management Bureau (FMB) particularly on Component 3.1: Voluntary forest certification system to be piloted for local communities and privately managed forests and Component 3.3: Reduction of fragmentation of biodiversity habitats through Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) approaches and collaborative management. Among the highlights of the discussion are as follows:

- *On the identification of priority areas for forest restoration*, Dir. Bernardino suggested including the total forest areas to determine the extent of the forest degradation. Ms. Eleazar also suggested to map out degraded forestlands within the Corridors and ensure complementation with the FAO-funded project.

**Commented [1]:** What was the response to this. Also what were discussed in relation to the BSWM presentation

Ms. Eva Dacumos also presented the updates on the activities conducted by the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM).

## VII. Presentation of the Annual Work Plan for 2023

Ms. Ma. Theresa Corazon Ladrera (NPMU Planning and M&E Officer) presented the 2023 Annual Work Plan (see *Annex 6*).

- *On the mainstreaming of biodiversity in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP)*, Dir. Bernardino inquired whether the Project is looking into integrating all ENR-related to the CLUP. Ms. Ladrera replied that, based on a roundtable discussion with the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), the Program and Policy Section of the DENR will convene a meeting to discuss the alignment of biodiversity guidelines to be included in a Joint Administrative Order (JAO). Dr. Caleda added that DHSUD also suggested including DILG in the proposed JAO.
- *On other biodiversity-related guidelines*, Dir. Bernardino suggested including guidelines on PEIASS and OECMs to be reviewed and enhanced by the project.
- *On the development of a harmonized information system*, Ms. Jessa Danica Villa L. Agcopra of NEDA asked if the information system will be accessible to anyone. Mr. Mitchel Confesor (NPMU) responded that the system is open to general public viewing, but with different layers of access by concerned national government agency.
- Ms. Eleazar asked about the risks and challenges in the project implementation in 2023. Dr. Caleda mentioned that among the risks are: a) procurement, b) issuance of Certification Precondition by NCIP, and c) staffing in the CPMUs. To address the procurement issues, the project is considering hiring a Procurement Specialist to oversee and facilitate the process.

**The NPB approved the Work and Financial Plan from 2023 subject to the comments and suggestions raised by the Board.**

## VIII. Presentation of Consultants' Findings and Recommendations

1. Atty. Paz Benavidez (Institutional Development Specialist) presented her Findings and Recommendations (see *Annex 7*). She mentioned that there were no policies in recognizing the biodiversity corridors in the country, that we needed to adopt high conservation value-based integrated ecosystem management (IEM) framework, and that IEM strategies must be integrated in the national, regional, and local plans. Based on the policy analysis that she conducted, draft guidelines were prepared.

For the institutional governance mechanism, Atty. Benavidez presented two options: 1) DA-DENR-DILG-NCIP-NEDA Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) or 2) Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) Resolution.

Dir. Bernardino stated that the PCSD track is not advisable. At the site level, it was already agreed that RDC will create CAACs through resolutions. The national level mechanism will be determined later on based on the experiences and lessons learned at the site level.

2. Atty. Ronely Sheen (Capacity Development Specialist), presented the findings and recommendations for capacity building based on the training needs assessment (see *Annex 8*). It was suggested to include the training modules in the ENR Academy to address sustainability.

**Commented [2]:** Please revisit the discussion on this

3. Ms. Jacqueline Bacal (Gender and Development Specialist) presented the findings and recommendations based on the gender mainstreaming assessment (see *Annex 9*).

There were no further comments regarding the presentation.

The NPB noted the developments of the consultancy engagements and provided recommendations.

Commented [3]: ???

#### **IX. Summary and Next Steps**

Ms. Corpuz presented Summary and Next Steps (see *Annex 10*).

##### **On Project Progress:**

1. EMBC and MBC to fast track hiring of Project Corridor Managers and other staff as they are crucial in the project implementation;
2. NPMU to invite ERDB in TWG and NPB Meetings;
3. NPMU and BMB to fast track engagement of PSDD Specialist;
4. FMB to facilitate completion of Manual on CAVCS DAO;
5. NPMU to conduct a virtual meeting with SIBOL, BMB and BD Corridor on December 12, 2022 and a face-to-face meeting on January 2023 together with DENR-KISS, FMB, D' Aboville to discuss updates on standardization of data, e.g. BMB, LAWIN and SMART system;
6. MBC to: a) identify strategies to expand habitat range of tamaraws- e.g. Critical Habitats, other OECMS; b) identify pressures/ threats to effectively design conservation plan; c) explore possible support to the patrolling of the tamaraw habitats; and d) ensure no duplication of budget/activities with the regular budget of DENR

##### **On Forest Certification and SFM:**

7. FMB to map out degraded forest lands within the Corridors and to take note also of the complementation with the FAO/sister project.

##### **On 2023 Work and Financial Plan:**

8. Project to include policies on PEISS and OECMs to be reviewed and enhanced in 2023.

#### **X. Other Matters**

Ms. Josephine Arajo suggested the meetings transition to paperless mode, using QR codes or online links for meeting materials and use of tablets during meetings to reduce use of paper.

There being no other matters discussed, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

PREPARED BY:

NOTED BY:

MARY JEAN A. CALEDA

NATIVIDAD Y. BERNARDINO

National Project Manager  
BD Corridor Project

OIC - Director, Biodiversity Management Bureau  
and concurrent National Project Director

