

INTEGRATED APPROACH IN MANAGEMENT OF MAJOR BIODIVERSITY CORRIDORS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Implementing Partner/Executing Agency	Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
Implementing Agency	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Project Implementation Period	July 2021 to June 2027
Management Arrangement	National Implementation Modality (NIM)
Financing Plan/Project Budget	GEF Trust Fund: USD12,260,241 / Co-Financing: USD62,701,007 <i>Total Project Budget: USD74,961,248</i>

THE CHALLENGE

With more than 7,600 islands (NAMRIA, 2017), the Philippines is the world's second largest archipelagic country. Its total land area of around 300,000kms is home to more than 1,130 terrestrial wildlife species, with almost half of it endemic to the country (44% of birds, 64% of land mammals, 65% of reptiles and 77% of amphibians). In terms of flora, the Philippines also serves as one of the world's primary ecological hubs as it currently maintains 5% of the world's plant species. More than half of the 10,000-15,000 species of vascular and non-vascular plants can only be found in the country. However, the Philippines rank among the Top 10 countries globally with the most number of species threatened with extinction due to various threats. Among the key threats to natural resources management and biodiversity of the country are: loss and degradation of natural habitat; unsustainable resource use practices; pollution; invasive alien species; and climate change. These are compounded by the following barriers:

i
Despite being one of the world's most biodiverse countries, the Philippines is also one of the Top 10 countries in the world with the most number of species threatened with extinction.

- Policies, regulations and approaches that breed disjointed governance, planning, management, and financing of activities within the biodiversity corridors;
- Fragmented implementation of key programs that fails to effectively address threats to Biodiversity corridor connectivity and natural resources decline; and
- Weak community level mechanisms to incentivize conservation of biodiversity, promote sustainable natural resource utilization, and monitor compliance.

THE BD CORRIDOR PROJECT

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), received funding approval from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the project entitled **"Integrated Approach in Management of Major Biodiversity Corridors in the Philippines,"** otherwise known as the **BD Corridor Project**.

The project is consistent with the priorities defined in the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016. The project will demonstrate how the network approach to PA system management can be demonstrated at the corridor level. The project is also aligned with the strategic priorities of the Philippine Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (PBSAP) 2015-2028. Moreover, the Project will contribute to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 15: Life on Land (Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss). More importantly, it will directly address the threats to sustainable forest management and help in delivering ecosystem benefits to affected population.

The Project will also contribute to attaining SDG Targets 1 (eradicate extreme poverty), 2 (end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture), 5 (achieve gender equality, empower women and girls, end all forms of discrimination) and 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change impacts, integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning). In contributing to the attainment of SDG Target 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere, the Project will work with selected communities to influence their practices to reverse the current conditions. The impact of the Project would be felt by communities and resource managers living within and around the biodiversity corridors.

The primary objective of the BD Corridor Project is to operationalize integrated management of biodiversity corridors to generate multiple benefits including effective conservation of globally threatened species and high conservation value forests, reduce deforestation and degradation and enhance local biodiversity-friendly livelihoods. It is aimed at addressing the increased degradation of habitats from deforestation and conversion to agriculture and expanding infrastructure development, pollution, invasive alien species (IAS) and climate change which are threatening critical habitats and ecosystems and their attendant biodiversity. All of these will be achieved through the implementation of

- 1 **COMPONENT 1.** Effective coordination and governance framework for integrated ecosystem management in the Philippines biodiversity corridors system
- 2 **COMPONENT 2.** Application of integrated network design and management of biodiversity corridors to ensure continued stability and sustainability of their biological, ecosystem services and socio-economic conservation values
- 3 **COMPONENT 3.** Community-based sustainable use and management systems in the two pilot biodiversity corridor systems in the Philippines
- 4 **COMPONENT 4.** Knowledge management, gender mainstreaming, learning, monitoring, and evaluation

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Below are the Project components and target outputs.

1 **Effective coordination and governance framework for integrated ecosystem management in the Philippines biodiversity corridors system**

- Output 1.1: Functional governance and coordination mechanism established at national level to facilitate integrated ecosystem planning and management of Biodiversity Corridors
- Output 1.2: Policy instruments (biodiversity and community safeguard standards and guidelines) for improving biodiversity outcomes within the biodiversity corridors developed and adopted
- Output 1.3: Compliance monitoring and enforcement strategy developed and adopted to measure progress towards measuring agreed biodiversity outcomes, threat reduction, sustainable natural resources management, apprehension of violators and prosecutions

2 **Application of integrated network design and management of biodiversity corridors to ensure continued stability and sustainability of their biological, ecosystem services and socio-economic conservation values**

- Output 2.1: Integrated ecosystem management framework developed and adopted for two biodiversity corridors
- Output 2.2: Site-specific integrated cluster conservation plans (CCPs) designed through stakeholder and community consensus and decision-making for areas of critical high biodiversity within the biodiversity corridors
- Output 2.3: Improved management effectiveness of existing protected areas within the two biological corridors
- Output 2.4: Recognition of a network of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM) such as ICCAs, LCAs to accord improved protection and conservation within key biodiversity areas
- Output 2.5: Capacitating national and sub-national governments, sector stakeholders, local communities and indigenous peoples to mainstream biodiversity conservation measures tested in the pilot corridors into their policies, planning and monitoring systems

3 **Community-based sustainable use and management systems in the two pilot biodiversity corridor systems in the Philippines**

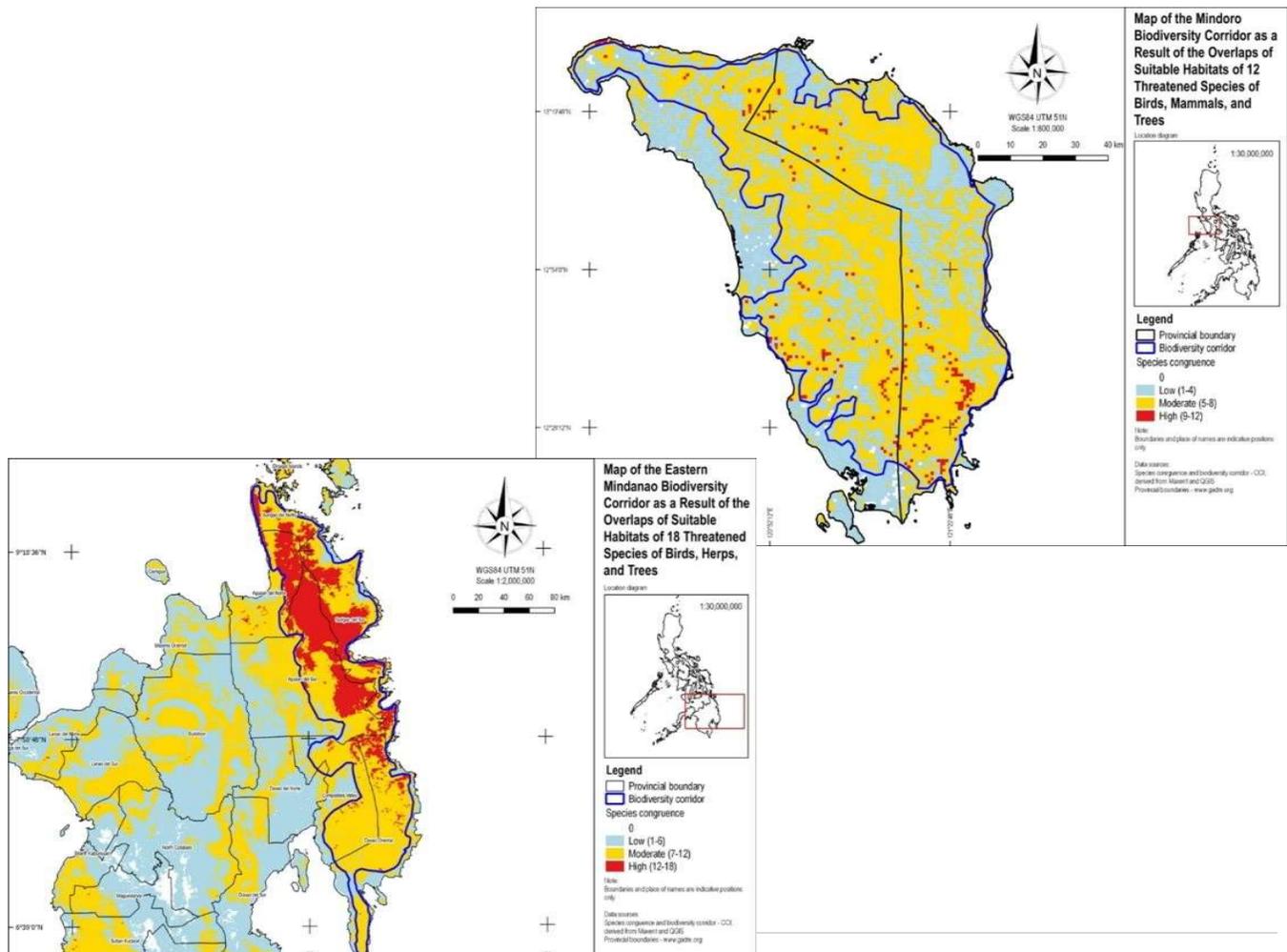
- Output 3.1: Voluntary forest certification system piloted for local communities and privately managed forests
- Output 3.2: Sustainable land management applied to degraded agricultural lands through a suite of SLM technologies/practices and incentives
- Output 3.3: Fragmentation of biodiversity habitats reduced through SFM approaches and collaborative management
- Output 3.4: Biodiversity-friendly livelihood and business enterprises promoted to avoid biodiversity loss and lead to natural resources use sustainability

- Output 4.1: Knowledge Management and Communications, Gender Mainstreaming and Monitoring and Evaluation strategies developed and implemented
- Output 4.2: Harmonized information management system to integrate lessons from the biological corridors and user friendly operational
- Output 4.3: Knowledge Management and project experiences contribute to learning and facilitate replication and scaling up of integrated biodiversity management approaches elsewhere in the country.

PROJECT SITES

The project target sites are the Mindoro Biodiversity Corridor in Region 4B and the Eastern Mindanao Biodiversity Corridor in Regions 11 and 13 which have been chosen mainly because of their critical importance as centers of endemism and biodiversity hotspot and economic significance. Other criteria include poverty incidence, vulnerability, extent of extractive industries and/or extent of land use conversion and infrastructure development and land degradation. The selection was made following an evaluation of all biological corridors in the country and determination of their biological importance, threat level and potential for demonstration of integrated approaches.

The two biodiversity corridors selected below represent distinct biodiversity characteristics and forest formations, located in different biogeographic zones. Each site offers different sets of challenges for integrated biodiversity management, due to the nature and degree of threats they are exposed to. A total of 16 KBAs are located in the two biodiversity corridors, with a total area of 1.026 Million hectares. The two corridors host 185,046 hectares of old growth forests and 657,214 hectares of open forests.



GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Trough DENR Special Order 2021-87, the Project will be implemented following UNDP's National Implementation Modality (NIM), according to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government of Philippines and the Country Program

A senior official of DENR will serve as **National Project Director (NPD)** to personally oversee the tasks of the Department as National Implementing Partner as described above. The NPD will convene the first meetings of the Corridor Advisory Committee in collaboration with the respective RDCs and NEDA Regional Offices. The National Project Director will work closely with UNDP and NPMU staff in all aspects of planning, implementation and management of the Project. Tasks are defined indicated in Annex 21.

An inter-office forum will be convened regularly within the DENR to provide regular technical advice to the NPD on harmonizing sectoral concerns to support project objectives while at the same time ensuring that project outcomes can support the strategic concerns of sectors offices. The regular forum will be composed of representatives from the planning offices of FMB, MGB, BMB, LMB, EMB and ERDB plus other subject matter specialists on an on-call basis. The National Project Management Unit (NPMU) will be put under the umbrella of the office of the NPD.

At the corridor level, the DENR and NPD will be represented by respective **Regional Executive Directors (RED)** who will concurrently serve as **Corridor Project Director (CPD)**. As CPD, the RED will convene (jointly with the senior RDC representative) the regular meetings of the Corridor Advisory Committees; ensure harmonized delivery of support by DENR subsectoral offices; engage the local political leadership for their support; and provide operational leadership of the project at the corridor level to ensure the outcome orientation of activities. Tasks of the CPD are further described in Annex 21. The CPD will regularly convene a task force composed of regional focal person of key sectors that mirror that of the national level task force assisting the NPD, These sectors include forestry, mining, land management, biodiversity, environmental management and ecosystems research.

At the corridor level, **responsible partners** will be identified to implement work packages/TORs for the delivery of specific project activities and outputs. Work packages will be executed through Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will be signed between DENR and each Responsible Partner. The table below illustrates the list of work packages that may be identified during project level planning and corridor level planning, as well as the list of candidate responsible partners who can implement the same with financial support from the Project. Work packages are designed to be TORs for mainstream or emerging institutions that have long-term stake in corridor management. They involve planning and field level implementation activities that the Project aims to institutionalize. This list does not include the work of individual staff and individual consultants who will have separate TORs. Their TORs may also include providing expert assistance to responsible partners in their tasks.

Based on the annual workplan, corridor strategies and targets, the PMUs (NPMU, CPMU) would define the TORs of work packages facilitate the execution of MOA between the DENR and the identified agencies who will serve as Responsible Partners to implement these work packages. A responsible partner may undertake several work packages. The PMU would jointly prepare project-level annual workplans with responsible partners. The CPD would review and endorse work packages and workplans for approval by the PB or by the NPD as delegated by the PB. Responsible partners would prepare reports, for review, endorsement, and approval either by the NPD or CPD depending on the scope of the work package.

Institutional arrangements for planning and implementation of cluster conservation plans (Output 2.2) will entail the competitive selection of a local NGO for each cluster. Contracted NGOs and local government (LGUs) will be responsible for engaging local community, private sector entities, farmer organizations and IP members in the planning exercise leading to the development of CCPs, for overseeing implementation of the CCPs, and for building and maintaining cluster-level linkages at the biodiversity corridor level to ensure wider ecosystem management. NGO activities supporting communities will be done collaboratively with LGUs. The selected NGO would have expertise in conservation, SLM, SFM, livelihood and enterprise development, social mobilization and tenure applications. Planning and implementation teams at the cluster level will include the above-mentioned expertise from the NGO and incorporate key technical staff from the LGU in its area of operation, the latter inclusion in the planning and implementation activities will facilitate later integration of biodiversity consideration into the LGU CLUPs. Criteria for engagement of NGOs will be further reviewed and finalized during the launch workshop.

Criteria for engagement of NGOs could include the following:

- Local strategic presence in the target area so that there will be a long term commitment to these communities and the objectives of the project;
- Good understanding of local government functioning and linkages to enable opportunities for integration of mainstreaming actions in CLUP planning processes;

- Demonstrated experiences in ability to nurture communities and establish business partnership for improving community productive resources and livelihood development;
- Experiences in working on conservation, SLM, SFM, livelihood and small scale enterprise development
- Experience in establishing community financial support mechanisms for sustainability
- Practices knowledge management and experience facilitation of consensus building processes; and
- Ability to mobilize additional financial resources and financial track record.

The governance role of project target groups is discussed in detail in Annex 3 on Framework for Integrated Ecosystem Management, Consensus Building and Planning and Implementation within Biodiversity Corridors.

UNDP. UNDP is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of this project. This includes oversight of project execution to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and provisions. UNDP is responsible for delivering GEF project cycle management services comprising project approval and start-up, project supervision and oversight, and project completion and evaluation. UNDP is responsible for the Project Assurance role of the Project Board/Steering Committee.

