



Australian Government

Australian Centre for  
International Agricultural Research

Social Sciences

# Enhancing livelihoods through forest and landscape restoration

## Overview

**Improving the livelihoods of the rural poor remains a critical issue for the Philippines, especially in the country's rural uplands where deforestation and land degradation are major challenges.**

In 2011, the National Greening Program (NGP) was implemented to rehabilitate 1.5 million ha of degraded lands. This initiative was designed to reduce poverty, and promote food security, environmental stability and biodiversity conservation, as well as enhancing climate change mitigation and adaptation. By November 2015, the objective was expanded to rehabilitate a further 2.3 million ha.

Many of the planned initiatives are included as commitments under the Bonn Challenge, a global initiative to restore 350 million ha of degraded forestland by 2030. Underlying the Bonn Challenge is the forest landscape restoration (FLR) approach, which aims to restore ecological integrity while improving human wellbeing through multi-functional landscapes.

Within FLR, 'landscape' is regarded as an integrated whole, which implies looking at different land-uses, their connections, interactions and a mosaic of interventions, which together are expected to lead to restoration being more effective than a single land-use approach.

However, despite optimism associated with the targets set by various groups and initiatives, successful planning and implementation of reforestation programmes face many challenges, especially in the country's upland communities.



## KEY FACTS

**ACIAR Project No.** ASEM/2016/103

**Duration:** December 2017 to June 2022 (5 years)

**Target areas:** Philippines

**Budget:** A\$2,400,472

### Project Leader

Prof John Herbohn and Dr Nestor Gregorio,  
University of the Sunshine Coast

### Key partners

- Visca Foundation for Agricultural and Rural Development, Incorporated Visayas State University
- Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD)
- Southern Cross University
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
- The University of Queensland
- Queensland University of Technology

### ACIAR Research Program Manager

Dr Jayne Curnow

## Objective

### The project aims to improve rural livelihoods through FLR in the Philippines.

#### The project's three specific objectives are to:

- Improve the livelihoods of smallholders involved in FLR.
- Develop and test options for scaling out landscape-scale community-based reforestation.
- Achieve better economic outcomes for smallholders through improved monitoring, best practices and policy.

## Expected scientific results

- Best practice guidelines developed and subsequently used to guide national FLR initiatives through the NGP, resulting in substantially higher tree survival rates, greater productivity from woodlots and cost savings.
- Advocacy by project collaborators involved in local initiatives expected to result in improved national level policy that will have impacts in improving the national implementation of the NGP.
- The training programmes and extension materials on FLR provided for Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) officers and staff of other organisations to influence FLR practice throughout the Philippines.
- Monitoring protocols and revisions to improve policy and implementation of the NGP and other FLR initiatives within the Philippines.
- Field trials to provide critical information about species selection and silviculture resulting in improved productivity of woodlots established by communities.

## Expected outcomes

- Higher household incomes through increased agroforestry, agricultural and fuelwood production.
- Between 500 and 1000 ha of unproductive land reforested within ten communities.
- Improved survival of seedlings planted within participating communities leading to cost savings for DENR and greater longer-term financial benefits for communities.
- Improved household incomes from the production of biofertilisers.
- Improved ability to access additional funding from DENR and other government programmes to support FLR initiatives.

