

Initial Project Information Document (PID)**Report No: AB188**

Project Name	PHILIPPINES-River Basin and Watershed Management Project (RBWMP)
Region	East Asia and Pacific Region
Sector	General agriculture, fishing and forestry sector (100%)
Theme	Water resource management (P); Other environment and natural resources management (S)
Project	P064974
Supplemental Project	P071273
Borrower(s)	GOP
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1. Country and Sector Background

Approximately 37 percent of the country's total population live below the poverty threshold with approximately 60 percent of them located in the rural areas. Despite noteworthy efforts by the government in recent years to focus development outside the major industrial and economic centers, rural development remains an elusive and challenging effort. Faced with increasing population and limited access to economic activities, rural communities are struggling to make ends meet which more often than not strains the fragile natural resource base. Nowhere is this relationship more prevalent than in the uplands where the majority of the rural population live. Practicing subsistence agriculture, lacking essential social services, and marginalized from major economic and political activity, these communities continue to engage in activities that threaten the resource base. Forest areas are converted to denuded slopes through short-term cultivation, slash and burn practices, fuel wood collection and illegal logging. These practices

are depleting the resource base and future sources of livelihood. They also contribute to high water runoff, soil erosion, lowland flooding and water scarcity in key commercial and economic centers. To address these issues natural resources management activities should essentially provide clear economic benefits and improve incomes for rural communities. It is thus becoming clear that rural poverty issues and natural resource management are fundamentally linked and should be addressed together.

Inadequate management of water resources has significantly affected peoples' economic well being and quality of life. The country is facing an increasing water resources management challenge. For instance, in the two most critically affected regions, such as metropolitan Manila and its watershed hinterland of Angat and Laguna and that of Cebu city and its relatively small island catchment, specific and highly focused attention to the water issues are required. Despite abundant rainfall and the expansion of water infrastructure over several decades, the Philippines has reached a stage where the scarcity of water resources of adequate quality has emerged as a pressing issue. In the dry season, water supply can no longer meet demand from all sectors. The problem is not the lack of water per se. It results from among others, degradation of vegetative cover and fragmented development and management of water by different sectors. The problem is compounded by critical weaknesses in the management of water distribution systems and inefficiencies in the use of water. In addition to the upland watershed management issues mentioned above, the main concerns include: recurrent water supply shortages and increasing conflicts in water allocation among users; water pollution near urban centers; and lower than feasible productivity of water used for agriculture, the main user of water. At the core of the problems are the absence of a basin and watershed based integrated water resources management approach to guide water resources development, protection and efficient use. This results in weak capacity for regulating and coordinating activities across sectors; inadequate investments in water infrastructure and watershed management, and inadequate operations and maintenance (O&M) of water infrastructure. Water management is typically fragmented and responsibilities are divided among agencies and sectors with little coordination or communication. Agencies have largely independent programs for water resource development and operations. Negative externalities from excessive water withdrawals and discharges have extended impact in upstream and downstream areas of river basins and across sub-sectors.

The awareness of the critical water situation amongst the public and civil society has increased significantly in recent years. The Government, conscious of the urgent need to address the water issue, outlined a strategy in the 1995 GOP Water Summit to "initiate integrated water resources management based on hydrological boundaries or river basins as the direction for future water resources planning and investment". The Water Summit concluded '*...there is an urgent need for a sector approach to an integration and coordination of all water related efforts towards a more focused approach to water resources management*'. The strategy emphasizes coordination of water resources development among competing users, and promotes efficient use of natural resources and resource conservation, to eventually reduce poverty. The strategy has now been formalized in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (2001-2004), which provides general policy guidance and supports "*... the creation of river basin authorities to effect integrated water resources management and that each basin should develop a master plan for the area*". Consultations with government agencies and local stakeholders revealed

indisputable consensus on the importance of a poverty alleviation and integrated watershed development and management approach. To assist in operationalizing the water summit strategy, which is in line with the Bank's water policy, the GOP, with assistance from the Bank's World Bank Institute (WBI), organized the first East Asian Regional Workshop on River Basin Water Management in June, 1999. Efforts such as those aimed at strengthening and reforming key national water resources institutions, enacting of water related legislation, privatization of public utilities in urban water supply and sanitation, and transfer of irrigation management to farmer groups (including the Bank's on-going Water Resources Development Project, WRDP), illustrate the concern given to water issues by the Government and the public.

2. Objectives

The overall development objective of the proposed River Basin and Watershed Management Project (RBWMP or "the Project") is to enhance livelihoods and improved natural resources management by promoting coordinated and sustainable demand driven development activities in a river basin context. The project would help the Government of the Philippines (GOP) to undertake a first initiative in implementing its strategy for integrated river basin and watershed approaches. Specific objectives are: (i) in a pilot basin, Bicol; (a) engage communities in development activities supporting increased economic and agricultural production and rural incomes, improved service facilities, and sustainable management of the resource base; and (b) pilot comprehensive water resources planning and management; and (ii) at the national level, start developing capacity for integrated water resources management and future investments for the two most water stressed cities of Manila and Cebu through the preparation of water resources management action plans by two Task Forces.

The project approach in the pilot basin would be strongly integrated with GOP's decentralization policies and institutional structures, while using a community driven development (CDD) approach to improve sustainability. As basin development and management is a long-term process, the project would be a first intervention with envisaged follow-on projects. In the Bicol pilot program the project will develop and test the implementation of demand driven integrated watershed management investment activities while addressing the root causes of degradation. The lessons learnt from the project would be included in the development plans for Manila and Cebu, developed by the Task Forces. The action plans developed for Manila and Cebu, and the Bicol pilot program would also serve to build national capacity in water resources management. The project thus has high priority in the GOP's development agenda.

3. Rationale for Bank's Involvement

In view of GOP's disciplined use of scarce funding resources, and as Bank funding comes at near market interest rates, Bank projects need to make a difference in providing significant value added to help forge new development paths or scale up existing successful programs, thereby justifying the use of scarce GOP resources. In the RD/NRM sector, new programs such as the Land Administration and Management program, the newly restructured CBRMP and the Diversified Farm Income and Market Development project (under preparation) are amongst the projects undertaking the former, and have important scope for broad basing, while programs such as the Agrarian Reform Communities Development project are in scaling up mode. The RBWMP follows the former approach, and would pilot an important new initiative for GOP with major opportunity for future broad basing.

Although the GOP has been concerned with the need for managing natural resources and water on a basin and watershed basis, and integrating resource management with rural development and poverty alleviation, it has to date not been able to pursue this, except at microwatershed levels. GOP also has limited experience with coordinated management of critical water resource issues, and river basin institutions. The commitment is there, but not the experience as concerns integrated resource management, and there has been limited exposure to international best practice. The Bank, through its extensive international experience in water resources management, together with learnings from the Philippines and international rural development and natural resources management experience, is well placed to assist GOP in pursuing these new directions. The risks of doing this are worth taking on. Basin and watershed based rural development is an essential need in the Philippines, as watersheds and water resources are significantly deteriorating, also threatening means of livelihood. Also, for major growth centers such as Manila and Cebu, water constraints will soon reach crisis levels if means to address the issues are not found. These new directions would be unlikely to take place successfully without Bank support, and the global experience that the Bank has in these areas.

4. Description

The Project would comprise two components: a Bicol Basin Development Program to pilot a basin planned, watershed based rural development and water resources management program; and a Water Resources Management component to develop WRM Action Plans in the Philippines' two most critical water areas.

1. Bicol Basin Development Program:

This component will cover the Bicol river basin in Region V of the Philippines, situated in south Luzon, the Philippines' main island. It would be based on the Bicol Basin Water Resources Management Plan, which is currently being prepared under Region V's Project Preparation Steering Committee (PSC) headed by the DENR and NEDA Regional Directors, with participation of line agencies and LGUs and with assistance from PHRD financed consultants. Bicol basin comprises 3,771 km², 90% of which is in the provinces of Albay and Camarines Sur involving a total of 28 municipal LGUs and three cities. The basin contains about 44% of the region's total population. The Bicol Basin Development Program would consist of the following sub-components: (a) institution building; (b) community driven LGU development activities; (c) Irrigation Improvement and Management Transfer; and (d) Basin

Infrastructure and Flood Mitigation.

a) Institution Building. This sub-component would support: (i) the establishment, operation and sustainability of a river basin management coordinating institution, the Bicol River Basin Board (BRBB); (ii) support to project related technical assistance activities provided by the Region V line agencies to the LGUs; and, (iii) through the activities of the BRBB and the line agencies and specific technical assistance provision to the LGUs, capacity building of the participating LGUs and their peoples' organizations (POs, eg., irrigator's associations, watershed based communities) in planning, implementing and monitoring their sub-project activities. LGU support would in particular be in the areas of planning, community organization, technical implementation, accounting and financial management and procurement. The BRBB would be established during project preparation (Section C4).

b) LGU development activities. This sub-component would support the implementation of the Bicol Basin Framework Master Plan presently under preparation to guide investments in the basin. Within the Framework is a stakeholder developed and negotiated menu of investments that would be supported by the project. To ensure an adequate blend of WRM and watershed management activities it would be stipulated that LGUs would have to integrate a minimum proportion of investments in water and/or watershed protection related activities. Each of the participating LGUs would prepare annual demand-driven Strategic Action Plans (SAPs) that are consistent with and support the Bicol Basin Framework Plan. Based on these SAPs, the LGUs would access loans and grant funding for implementation, minus their equity contribution (see section E.2). Based on current experience from other projects, LGU priorities are likely to include village and municipal water supply (among the top priority concerns of the rural poor population in the Basin), small-scale irrigation, agroforestry and reforestation, watershed small infrastructure, lake management and fisheries development for LGUs bordering the lakes, agricultural development activities, farm to market roads and livelihood and enterprise development schemes. Land surveys and land tenure issuances will be ensured through the support of the DENR/National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA).

c) Irrigation Improvement and Management Transfer. This sub-component would support improvement activities for existing irrigation schemes linked with transfer of management to LGUs and IAs. The smaller Community Irrigation Systems (CISs) would be transferred in full to LGUs and their IAs. For the larger National Irrigation Schemes, an IMT program for all works except main structures would be accompanied by systems upgrading undertaken under the IA concerned. A key change to be attempted for both the CISs and NISs would be management transfer before system upgrading and implementation of improvement works by the IAs. The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) would provide technical assistance and overall coordination, in liaison with the BRBB. NIA's role would thus shift from implementation to technical assistance supporting the IAs. Practices under the Mexico and Andhra Pradesh, India IMT and improvement programs would be used as guiding principles.

d) Basin Infrastructure and Flood Mitigation. This sub-component would finance a limited amount of broad impact basin infrastructure such as simple and low cost flood mitigation structures. Flood mitigation works would likely be constrained by the high financial and social

costs of activities going beyond limited mitigation measures, but prospects need to await the forthcoming consultant studies which will present different options. The exact activities to be implemented are largely subject to the recommendations of the on-going basin master plan study. It is also likely that certain hydrological measuring equipment may be needed such as limnological stations in the lake areas and groundwater measuring wells. Implementation of a significant part of these activities would fall under the line agencies concerned, for example DPWH for flood mitigation, but coordinated and funded through BRBB.

2. Water Resources Management Component:

The Water Resources Management (WRM) component would support the creation of two Water Resources Management Task Forces (WRMTFs) and the subsequent development of integrated, Water Resources Management Action Plans by these WRMTFs for the Philippines' two most pressing water problem areas, Manila and Cebu and their surrounding catchments. Metropolitan Manila and Cebu are the two largest cities and economic centers in the Philippines, and suffer acute water problems, including shortages, resource depletion and poor water quality. While studies on these cities exist, they need to be translated into Action Plans that represent the stakeholders concerned as a basis for future investments and water resources management. The WRMTFs would be comprised primarily of the concerned local government officials, water related agencies, private sector and civil society, with small full-time core teams of technical specialists. The component would also provide funding for related operating costs, honoraria, cross visits, workshops, consultants, equipment and facilities.

Indicative Project Costs

The table below provides indicative project costs for the Project. The preliminary costs would be revised during project preparation, particularly those linked to the flood mitigation component in line with the Bicol Basin Master Plan and the financial, technical and human resource capabilities of the LGUs as assessed during project preparation. Given its pilot nature, the expected project costs will be modest and would also take into account: a) the Philippine's experience of slow implementation in the first one to two years; b) the absorptive capacity of implementing agencies; c) the new requirement for LGUs to share a higher proportion of costs and raise a minimum equity amount determined by activity; d) projected demand for activities on the menu in this pilot phase; e) the government's desire to launch a promising development approach rather than invest heavily at this juncture; and (f) the difficult fiscal situation of the national government.

1. Bicol Basin Development Program
 - 1.1 Institution Building: US\$ 3.3 million
 - 1.2 LGU development activities: US\$ 16.7 m
 - 1.3 Irrigation improvement and Management Transfer: US\$ 3.3 million
 - 1.4 Basin Infrastructure and Flood Mitigation: US\$ 4.4 million
2. Water Resources Management Task Forces: US\$ 2.2 million

5. Financing

Source (Total (US\$m))

BORROWER (\$8.30)

IBRD (\$21.60)

FOREIGN SOURCES (UNIDENTIFIED) (\$0.00)

Total Project Cost: \$30.00

6. Implementation

The institutional implementation arrangements presented here are preliminary and will be finalized during project preparation. However, these arrangements have been extensively discussed within Region V and with GOP and include features based on successful experience under the ongoing ARCDP and restructured CBRMP projects and the recently closed Special Zones for Peace and Development Social Fund (SZOPAD). The institutional arrangements also take into account the Government's desire to reduce the creation of non-institutionalized Project Management Offices for each project by fully integrating the management units in the existing structures. The preliminary arrangements as discussed to date are described below and an organization chart is included in Annex 4.

The DENR confirmed by letter dated January 3, 2003 that it undertakes to be the Executing Agency. A RBWMP Project Board, composed of the DENR Secretary as Chairperson and the NEDA Secretary as Vice Chair and members from partner agencies (e.g., NWRB, NIA, DA-BFAR, DPWH, DBM, DOF, DILG), will be established primarily to address policy and key operational issues of the project, and to provide oversight of both the Bicol component and the WRM Task Forces. The Board will also be tasked to review and approve Bicol subprojects exceeding a specified threshold. A small project technical secretariat will be formed to coordinate the WRM Task forces' activities and ensure linkage between them and the BRBB.

WRM Component: Each WRM Task Force would be substantially comprised of stakeholders from the area concerned. These would be supplemented by some involvement of the national agencies. Composition and structure of each task force would be worked out during project preparation, but would likely comprise a decision making committee of the heads of the key entities involved and local stakeholders, and a smaller group of professionals, also from these entities, who would be near full-time dedicated to implementing the work. They would have recourse to limited consultancy, but the primary value of the WRMTFs would be that, by doing the work themselves, the Action Plans would be self-generated and locally owned.

Bicol Component: In line with international experience with basin management and GOP's own experience with decentralization, at the basin level, the BRBB would be substantially independent to manage the Bicol component, under the oversight of the RBWMP Project Board. The BRBB would comprise its executive Board, a Technical Working Group (TWG) and a small Management Unit. The BRBB's Executive Board would be chaired by the Regional Executive Director, Region V, DENR, and co-chaired by the NEDA Region V Director, with membership formed from other Region V agency directors involved (NIA, DPWH, DA-BFAR, BLGF, DILG). An informal link would be maintained with Region V's Regional Development Council to ensure harmonized activities between those implemented by BRBB and regional initiatives. This harmonization would be facilitated as most of the BRBB Executive Board are also in the RDC. The BRBB TWG would be comprised of senior staff from the various agencies above, the Provincial Planning and Development Coordinators (PPDCs), complemented by members from the private sector, civil society, academe, socio-professional groups, indigenous peoples, and other interested stakeholders. The BRBB Management Unit (BRBBMU) would be comprised

mainly of a small group of full-time staff detailed or seconded from the concerned line agencies. It would comprise a Project Director, a Technical Section, a Finance, Procurement and Administration Section and cells for M&E, Planning and Community Development (refer to organization chart, Annex 4).

Roles and responsibilities. BRBB's executive Board would be responsible for developing policies and regulations for the basin, providing overall direction and resolving cross-sectoral issues. The TWG would have a more hands-on role in cross-sectoral coordination of project activities through more frequent interaction than the executive Board. The BRBBMU would be responsible for managing implementation and coordinating activities at the LGU level. Each LGU would form a small management team from its existing staff (ARCDP and CBRMP model), including accounting, procurement, community outreach and technical skills, to carry out its project activities. Training would be provided by the BRBBMU in project accounting and procurement procedures, community organization and key technical areas. Other important roles of the BRBBMU would be to assure coherence between the LGU SAPs and the basin framework plan, to consolidate financial statements, allocate budget to the LGUs to implement their SAPs, and to facilitate coordinated activities of the Line Agencies involved. The Line Agencies would each provide technical assistance and training within their existing mandates to the LGUs and local communities concerned. In some instances – for example, for larger infrastructure – the Line Agencies would specifically implement. At grass-roots levels, most of the implementation would be done at sub-LGU levels: by Barangays and Peoples Organizations (IAs, Cooperatives and Registered Societies) specific to the area concerned.

A “menu” of investment options that will improve land and water management and livelihoods, identified and negotiated by the stakeholders and in conformity with the Basin Master Plan, will be provided to LGUs. In addition to the Basin Master Plan, BRBB will produce annually a Strategic Action Plan for the basin evaluating progress in implementing basin priorities and the key actions to be undertaken in the forthcoming year. Each LGU would be required to prepare annually its own simple LGU Strategic Action Plan (SAP), which will outline its WRM and rural development priorities, and contain its prioritized development interventions based on the menu provided and the basin level SAP. The LGU SAPs would also take into consideration the valuable physical and social data in their Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) already developed in the case of most LGUs. The annual process described above, where the key will need to be simplicity and adaptability based on learning, is a deliberate thrust of this project to enable a community driven and constantly evolving development process, departing from the overly pre-planned and inflexible approaches often found in river basin projects. An approval process and financing mechanism for the LGU and national agencies would be developed during preparation. Project implementation would be governed by an Operations Policy Manual to be developed during preparation and to be part of the project legal documents.

The above arrangements are designed to substantially operate within the existing institutional structures and processes in the Philippines. The only new entity is the BRBB, which is a small entity, not usurping the roles of the regional line agencies. Its role will, however, be key in facilitating the basin based approach, requiring harmonized actions by multiple players

and ensuring consistency with the broader regional development strategy. A start towards establishing the BRBB is the already existing institutional arrangement being used in the preparation of the Bicol Basin Master Plan. Overall Project preparation in Bicol has been led by NEDA through its Regional Office V, with DENR as co-leader. A Project Preparation Steering Committee (PSC) has also been set up at the central level. The PSC has been chaired by NEDA, and co-chaired by DENR and NWRB, with members from 8 agencies-NIA, DPWH, NAMRIA, PAGASA, DA, BFAR, BSWM and DILG. A Bicol Region RBMP Preparation Board (BRPB) has also been established at the regional level by the Regional Development Council (RDC), comprising the key technical and oversight agencies and NGO and private sector representatives. A Regional Technical Working Group (TWG) has also been set up, consisting of personnel from the concerned line agencies and municipal planning officers. These structures can be adapted to form the BRBB and its Management Unit (PMU). The recent decision by GOP to transfer responsibility for the project from NEDA to DENR is being accommodated fairly easily as DENR was co-chair of the above structures.

Early establishment of the BRBB and the WRMTFs is highly desirable, and at least the nucleus staffing would be aimed for during the project preparation period. The BRBB and its Management Unit and the Task Forces would be required to be established by Executive Order prior to project appraisal.

7. Sustainability

The Project will adopt a decentralized and community/LGU driven approach to foster local ownership. All sub-projects will include a Sustainability and O&M plan, including an allocated budget by the LGU and/or community for O&M. The BRBB's operations would be funded under the project, but this should phase into a self-sustaining entity over time. The project will thus include an institutional study and access to cross visits and exchanges, with the objective of starting a transition towards a self-sustaining basin entity by the end of the project (refer Section E.4.1).

8. Lessons learned from past operations in the country/sector

Various lessons from the Philippines CAS, the Bank's Water Sector Policy Paper, global practices in river basin and irrigation management, local lessons in rural development, watershed management and environmental management as well as local lessons in decentralized service provision, involvement of local government units and community driven development approaches have been considered in project conceptualization.

Lessons from the CAS and to be taken into account in project preparation are:

- Increase selectivity and focus on a few key long term issues (i.e. introducing river basin and watershed management but integrating with local decentralized government structures as one of GOP's priorities).
- Reduce project complexity and concentrate on delivery mechanisms that are practical and effective on the ground.
- Support community driven poverty reduction programs that give voice to the needs of the poor, understanding how decisions are made in local communities and put opportunities and resources into the hands of the poor.

- Build up management and institutional capacity to carry out programs by focusing more on project management, including financial management, procurement and monitoring and evaluation.
- Emphasize local government capacity building and sensitivity to the local election cycle for projects involving LGUs.
- Emphasize high quality at entry for all operations, including institutional readiness.
- Strengthen outcome focused monitoring and evaluation in Bank supported operations, and support government efforts to move towards performance based systems for M&E, including benchmarking.

The Bank's *Rural Development Strategy* for East Asia and the Pacific Region indicates that capacity building efforts need to be institutionalized and would need more time than the usual lending period, if sustainable outcomes and impacts are to be achieved. The Bank's *Water Resources Management Policy Paper* suggests the following lessons: (1) using river basins as planning and management units; (2) linking land use management as an integral part of sustainable water management; (3) recognizing water as a scarce resource, with an economic good as well as social good nature, and promoting cost effective interventions that are self financing at least for O&M; (4) supporting participatory approaches, including managing water and related basin resources at the lowest appropriate levels; and (5) focusing on actions that improve the lives of people and the quality of their environment.

Experience learned in the Philippines in rural development and natural resource management suggests the following: (1) upland farmers can greatly increase productivity through the use of soil conserving techniques as well as if given easier access to markets; (2) security of tenure is critical to persuade upland farmers in investing time, money and effort on alternative farmland uses; (3) sustainable NRM needs to be associated with activities that enhance incomes and quality of life; i.e., NRM needs to be linked with rural development; (4) active community participation is essential; and (5) strong capacity and processes need to be in place for financial management, procurement and flow of funds.

Experience also indicates that watersheds should serve as the natural functional units for planning natural resources management as well as socioeconomic rural development. However, basin and watershed management approaches would need to integrate with decentralized government structures already in place (regional and local development councils, provincial and municipal LGUs, barangays and peoples organizations).

9. Environment Aspects (including any public consultation)

Issues : The most significant environmental issues would likely be from the flood alleviation component. If such works are minimized, or deferred in the first phase, environmental impacts would typically be small, as irrigation subprojects would primarily be modernization of existing systems, and other works, such as most water supply schemes and farm to market roads, are expected to have minor impacts, with prospects for mitigation through appropriate design features. The nature and magnitude of these impacts would be ascertained as part of the environmental-social impact assessment process.

10. List of factual technical documents:

1. Final Report on the Bicol River Basin Water Resources Development and Management Plan - Volume I: Executive Summary
2. Final Report on the Bicol River Basin Water Resources Development and Management Plan - Volume II: Main Report
3. Final Report on the Bicol River Basin Water Resources Development and Management Plan - Volume III: Supporting Reports

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Note: This is information on an evolving project. Certain components may not be necessarily included in the final project.