

“The five years of experience with the **community-driven participatory approach** in the delivery of development assistance to Indigenous Peoples was remarkable in terms of results. This same approach and framework has evolved and improved through the years. **Thus, it may therefore be appropriate to consider replicating this approach in bigger development cooperation endeavors.**”

Partnership of the  
Embassy of Finland  
and the  
International Labour Organization in Manila  
in support of  
Community Development Projects of  
Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines



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The Embassy of Finland

Indigenous Peoples in the  
Philippines

Community Development Projects



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## The Overall Benefits of the Program

### The Direct Assistance Approach

**E**fficient supervision and clearer accountability

The direct assistance approach eliminated bureaucratic complications and delays in decision making.

The community projects were observed to have been implemented in a shorter time frame and with minimal administrative costs as compared to projects executed through contractors or other indirect delivery schemes.

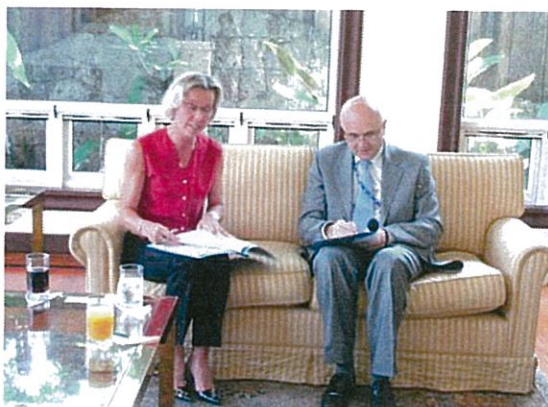
The **delivery of support to indigenous people's (IPs) development** need not be complicated and difficult, as the same could be **simple** and **straightforward** and yet effective. This approach can be used in other projects, with other groups and with other fund sources or development agencies.





# EFFECTIVELY ASSISTING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

**T**he Embassy of Finland forged a partnership and combined resources with the International Labour Organization Sub-Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (ILO SRO Manila) in providing support to Indigenous peoples' development by way of the **community-driven participatory approach**.



**Embassy of Finland Ambassador Riitta Resch and ILO SRO Manila Director Werner Blenk signs the Partnership Agreement.**

## The Community-driven Participatory Approach

This approach differs significantly from other development programs whereby all levels of project identification, implementation and supervision mechanisms are drawn up by the project sponsors or development agencies.

This approach is 'simple and direct' yet very effective in getting the desired results of projects. This is a unique method wherein, the Indigenous Peoples, through their own organizations, were given a principal role in the partnership. The IPs were not mere beneficiaries—they served as the owners, managers and implementers of the community projects. The projects were allowed to progress under the IPs' own initiative, with minimal support provided by the Embassy of Finland and the ILO together with local assisting agencies, NGOs, and professionals.

## The Results

The partnership of the Embassy of Finland and the ILO provided assistance to a number of culturally diversified IP communities, in different stages of development in at least thirteen (13) provinces in the Philippines.

**With the participation of the whole community, all the projects were successfully implemented and sustained with only minimal facilitative support from the partnership. The end-results are cost-effective, timely, efficient and successfully completed projects.**



**"More time for play". The children beneficiaries of a water project in Mindanao.**

The more eloquent leaders described the assistance as **"A dream come true"** ...something that they can only dream of having...but something *that actually happened*," a description made in light of their general lack of access to basic services and the typical complicated processes of the implementation of development projects. But under this approach, they were able to implement their own community projects with the least amount of bureaucracy and with ample opportunity for everyone to participate in the process.

Community leaders claimed that as a result of the assistance and the process involved in implementing the projects, **trust** and **confidence** were built among the community members, between and among the partners, between their community and other communities, and also between their community and other organizations. It created sound partnerships as it also **"brought pride and self-esteem"** to the IPs concerned. Community members were proud of their capability to implement the projects not only to their own satisfaction but also to the satisfaction of the service providers. Thus, every assistance from the partnership was efficiently and effectively utilized.



# The Projects



## Some Projects:

- #1 Milled rice produce of the Tuwali community Rice Mill Project in Hugnduan, Ifugao
- #2 An Aeta using an equipment of the Farm Improvement Project in Botolan, Zambales
- #3 Mother and child beneficiaries of the Farm Improvement Project in Botolan, Zambales
- #4 A Kankanaey child drinks clean water – product of the project in Antadao, Sagada
- #5 Tank installed for the Water System for Maranaos in Lumbatan, Lanao del Sur
- #6 Children benefit from the Farm Improvement project in Buluan, Maguindanao
- #7 Children and youth go to the Water System Project in Lumbatan, Lanao del Sur
- #8 Indigenous peoples in Boston, Davao del Norte test their newly-acquired Abaca Stripping Machine.
- #9 Housing built for the equipments of the Farm Improvement project in Buluan, Maguindanao.
- #10 Tank installed for the Water Project in General Santos City
- #11 Maguindanaon men get clean water – product of their Water System Project
- #12 and 13 Strategic location of Water Projects for the Higaonon community in Bukidnon



# Lessons Learned & the Good Practices

## COMMUNITIES FREELY & INTELLIGENTLY SELECT PROJECTS and project activities

- Projects planned & delivered FOR THE PEOPLE & BY THE PEOPLE
- Building the communities' trust and confidence—on themselves, on the development processes and on the partnerships
- The FULL RESPONSIBILITY of all results should be shouldered by the people
- Behind the scenes, full and genuine RESPONSIBILITY should be carried on BY DEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS
- AMPLE SUPPORT at all levels at any stage should be available
- Allow parties to deliver their responsibilities and complete respective projects



Maranaos launch their Water System project.

## OPEN COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS and INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

### ACCESS TO INTERNAL & EXTERNAL TECHNICAL SUPPORT

### LOCAL ANCHORS & LINKS TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS & RESOURCES



The Parish church in Sagada, Mountain Province plays a big role in community mobilization.

# on Community Building

## ENCOURAGING TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO DEVELOP LINKAGES FOR OTHER PROJECTS

### ADVOCACY EXCHANGES AMONG partners, the IP communities & government agencies

### EXPANDING THE DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY BY ...

- Sharing of experiences
- Applying community dynamics & lessons from previous experiences to inspire people—inspiration is the element that energizes and recharges support groups and development workers.
- Using synergy of markets and productive links to increase contacts and development opportunities.



An Ifugao in Bakun, Benguet: "There's money in honey."

### BETTER FOCUSED AND SUSTAINED SERVICES when...

- Communities work as a TEAM
- There is a dynamic community LEARNING PROCESS for groups of elders, leaders, adults, youth, women and children
- Sensitizing IP community organizations on ISSUES and RIGHTS affecting them enables communities to negotiate for their own interest



Indigenous peoples in Magpet, North Cotabato initiates the partnership with the Embassy of Finland and ILO.



# Lessons Learned & the Good Practices

Pre-selecting communities who are able to successfully and effectively complete projects provide focus.

**SELECTION CRITERIA** for communities that align the development objectives and the IP principles to maximize the project results, include:

- Population of largely homogenous indigenous peoples.
- Existence of prospect of implementing community organization with popular community leadership and self-governance capacity.
- Stability of stature of community and territory.



Community members discuss their responsibilities in implementing the project in Arakan Valley, North Cotabato.



A woman beneficiary enjoys the convenience of washing clothes near her home.

**GIVING COMMUNITY ORGANIZING responsibility to the community members.**

**COMMON GROUNDS** are readily reached in close-knit communities with members coming from same clans or from the same family branches.

# on Community Building



An Ifugao leads a ritual for the success of the project.

**USE OF TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS to communicate & resolve conflict**

- Guidance & Support of Council of Elders
- Allowing community to use internal schemes such as appointment of treasurers, setting of bookkeeping audits and operating rules.
- Trust & confidence in handling of funds.

**ADVICE FROM ELDERS, and esteemed and trusted persons in the community.**

- They are respected and revered, oftentimes their views are taken as law.
- In many cases, elder's wishes and decisions prevail over political leaderships in the barangays and municipalities.



The community members in Hungduan, Ifugao plan for the implementation of their Rice Mill project.



Relative impact is greater in communities with "fresh starts" or those with less experiences in development partnerships



# Lessons Learned & the Good Practices



Community members of Botolan, Zambales share their talent during project inauguration.

**ADHERENCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, project development principles, and facilitating IP community-driven projects.**

- Having the TECHNICAL COMPETENCE and SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE on dealing with IP communities.
- COMPETENT, DEDICATED, COMPASSIONATE and SINCERE OFFICERS.
- Contributions and full support of various parties to sustain the relationship for the development work, in professional and personal contexts.



Project beneficiaries discuss the Community-Driven Integrated Environmental Rehabilitation strategy.

**SHORT BUT ADEQUATE PROJECT CLOSING & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS for community to deliver requirements and demonstrate compliance.**

**PROGRESSIVE REVIEW OF THE PROCESSES and the effectiveness of the undertaking.**

**ADOPTION OF PERIODIC PROJECT CYCLES to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency.**

**APPLYING STRAIGHTFORWARD PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA and project implementation policies.**



A Mosque in Mindanao. Access to water supply makes it easier for the community to perform their religious rites.

# on Partnerships & Project Management

**PERSONAL TOUCH on encouragement and delivery of community projects**

- Developing PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS with the community.
- Partnership and personal principles are expressed.
- Motivating IPs to work for their goals and principles inspires them to seek the best way..



Embassy of Finland's First Secretary Mervi Kultamaa personally hands over the fund to the project.

**SIMPLE & STRAIGHTFORWARD AGREEMENTS for project requirements, prudence and sincerity of good management**

- A "no-frills" agreement, whereby the expectations and the support provided are clear.
- The role of organizations and what they share should be recognized.

**INDICATORS that the community is vibrant:**

- There are regular community meetings to seek new opportunities (even after the project)
- Clear organization and delegation of responsibilities
- Strong leadership
- Highly motivated members
- Strong individual and collective initiatives
- Leverage in negotiations
- Updating of skills and own capabilities by members
- Effective relations with LGUs and other groups.



Community members actively participate in regular meetings for the project.



# Lessons Learned & the Good Practices

## ACCESS TO LOCAL SUPPORT (including local institutions or agencies or professionals)...

- For technical suggestions, advices and practical information in specific projects
- Local governments are adequately informed of activities for the project since they may provide some of the needs of the project and the community
- By helping out, organizations and development institutes are strengthened and are able to help others better



**Signing the Agreement in Ampatuan, Maguindanao. Local government support is important for projects to succeed.**

## SUSTAINABILITY & PERMANENCE of Projects

- Project site is in a permanent location and community has long-term or permanent control of the project site
- Project is useful and kept for many years, even for generations.
- Regular monitoring and supervision (in various modes) to ensure projects are on track
- Sound partnerships echoes in the communities, the local authorities and neighboring villages
- Use of internal and external resources, with or without support

## SPECIFIC MEASURES TO KEEP PARTNERSHIPS STRONG:

- Regular interaction that allows discussion of issues
- Team building and monitoring
- Initiatives on community level as well as supervisory levels.
- Exploring new opportunities to improve cooperation and operation aspects of community and partners
- CULTURE as a tool to guide project and procedural preferences (i.e. seek the continuing guidance of council of Elders or leaders)

# on Partnerships & Project Management

## POLITICS & POLITICAL PARTIES ARE DIVISIVE.

- Projects should be politics-free and politically neutral
- This prevents the notion that the project is intended for the benefit of a select group.
- Political alliances complicates the implementation of projects.

## LGUs that have direct participation may inadvertently suppress certain aspects of the project.

## NEGATIVE CULTURAL INFLUENCES may be counter-productive.

- Reinforcing "culture of dependence" on members who are constantly receiving aid.
- Divisive cultural influences such as clan or family feuds that disrupt peace and good relations.
- Projects for communities in middle of crisis, moving or in temporary locations.
- Communities that exhibit hostilities.

## ASSISTANCE expanded into so many types of services and number of communities in the regions assisted without the corresponding transformation of supportive structure.

## FORMAL & STRUCTURED RELATIONSHIP with assisting organizations or professionals who could restrain the voluntary and the flexibility aspects of the service.



# Lessons Learned & the Good Practices

## On preferred NATURE OF PROJECTS

- Emphasis on poverty reduction projects that are intended for the poorest rural communities.
- Basic community needs and conditions are important in identifying appropriate projects.
- Projects addressing several thematic development objectives or those that cover complete development assistance in one simple project.
- Stand-alone and independent implementation of projects with other initiatives.
- Adherence to project criteria and implementation requirements.
- Allowing the communities to define their needs, priorities and the dynamics of the interventions.
- Technical standards may be used to guide generic projects (e.g. water systems, agricultural improvement).
- Longer project cycles or multiple year plans may also be used to accommodate larger and longer project plans and projects for multiple communities.



Rice thresher is one of the equipments of the Farm Improvement Project in Buluan, Maguindanao.



Community members in Buluan Maguindanao inspect the equipments for their Farm Improvement project.

## IDENTIFYING LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES FOR IPs

- Development partners together with community have continuing process to identify appropriate income generating activities for start-up livelihood or for expanded opportunities.
- Supplemental programs like credit and assistance services for starting micro businesses and other training support to the income generating project (IGP) initiatives.
- Complementation of IGP projects and products developed for neighboring communities to avoid destructive competition.

# on Project Design

## ON CHOICE OF PROJECTS & ACCESS TO RESOURCES

- New Technology improves farming techniques and productive use of community resources.
- Assessment of distance and the scope of service coverage and other competing infrastructure may be needed to present long-term viability and sustainability.
- In many situation, conventional one-crop farming are not able to sustain incomes in IP communities and families. Supplemental income are provided by multiple cropping, farm productivity improvement, post harvest facilities, food-for-work and other home-based projects.
- The ability to recycle farm inputs and income for productive use should be monitored to increase prospects of sustainability. In case of animal dispersal, "ownership and accountability" of individuals to community and long term partnership may be supplemented by built-in repayment/recycle schemes-to eliminate risk of consumption.



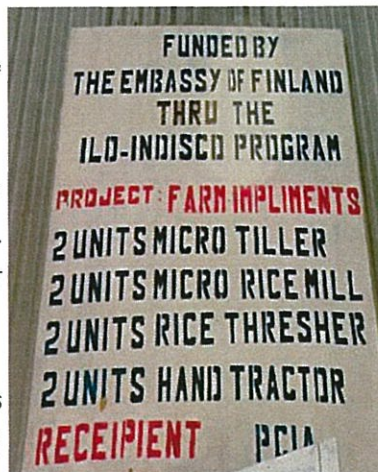
Indigenous peoples communities in General Santos City and Maguindanao access water from potable water system projects.



# Lessons Learned & the Good Practices

## FARM PROJECTS

- Projects in poor IP communities constitute improving livelihood and basic services.
- Most rural IP populations are economically dependent on farm work and agriculture. Effective projects are those that bolster post-harvest farm productivity.
- Farm support packages supports community (and immediate locale) production and post harvest improvement
- Potable water system and rural electrification gives access to basic community utility infrastructure. Rural electrification is not a priority in this partnership since it needs greater support structures and there are national programs that could support this objective.
- Project packages for small community water systems may include ground water extraction or spring sources - pumped by generated or electrical sources, or it can be powered by gravitational force. The links to water supply sources, housing for power facility, water storage and distribution facility are usually included in the systems.
- Each project serves a distinct and independent IP community. Community should be homogenous in terms of IP/tribal group identity and distinct in site and family beneficiaries.
- The project package may substitute for traditional (but less productive) practices. It may also improve access and mobility of farm inputs and products to community and markets.



A project signage in Ifugao shows the typical equipments for the Farm Improvement assistance.

# on Choice of Projects & Access to Resources

## WATER SYSTEMS

- Water system projects may serve dispersed or dense communities. These are basic services important to community. The systems used and the benefits depend on the situation of the available water sources, the distance of the homes to the sources, the transport or collection modes, and the quality and condition of the distribution to users.



Mother and children enjoy more time together after the water system was installed in their community in Antadao, Sagada.

## OTHER COMMUNITY LIVELIHOOD PROJECTS

- Community livelihood projects should have a business plan and good market links.
- Preparatory training programs are useful (i.e. paralegal workshops, empowerment training, skills development and project/business management workshops).
- These are complemented by local supervision visits and support provided by local empowerment groups.



A weaver leaves the center for Abaca Product Development after a day's work.



# Lessons Learned & the Good Practices on Choice of Projects & Access to Resources

## ALTERNATIVE SKILLS & PRODUCTS

- Skills and practical knowledge on setting-up the projects are gained from current projects and pursuit of new endeavors if people's minds and hearts are open to new opportunities.
- Volunteer laborers improve skills and become better workers under a community-shared project.
- Community-wide skills for projects and new technologies may be acquired through the approach.
- Local trainers from the communities may provide the future empowerment and technical assistance to project activities.
- The choice of projects raised the economic status of thousands of families and their communities.
- The projects should be dispersed enough to be able to create a good distribution and leveling of assistance to the many parties seeking support.
- The projects improve productivity and provide new jobs.
- Basic services such as water systems help in household needs and create new trade of businesses. These may be explored in other pursuits such as community energy systems for areas without electricity.



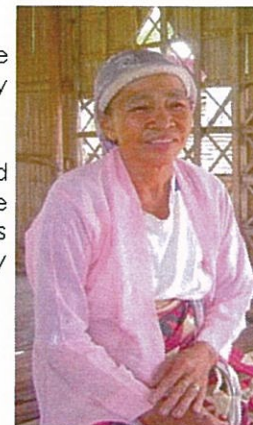
- Respect and honor to parents and elderly are reinforced by the community dynamics brought about by participatory projects

Farmlands are used for fishpond projects in Bakun, Mountain Province.

# Gender Development & Environment

## GENDER

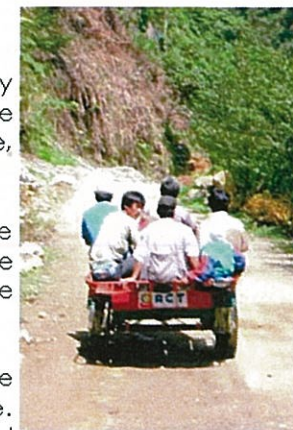
- Gender equality is influenced by culture, and the roles the women & men play are significantly changed by effective development interventions.
- As conditions of work were eased, equity, time and relational perspectives also changed. There are new prospects for education and for acquiring skills individually or collectively in the community especially for women.
- In the various IP cultures, when new possibilities for women became available, the men have been supportive of new values that improve the situation of the entire family.
- Women active in community undertakings become the lead organizers for various community projects, thus, uplifting their role and status in the community.



A Maguindanao woman — happy with the result of the project they implemented.

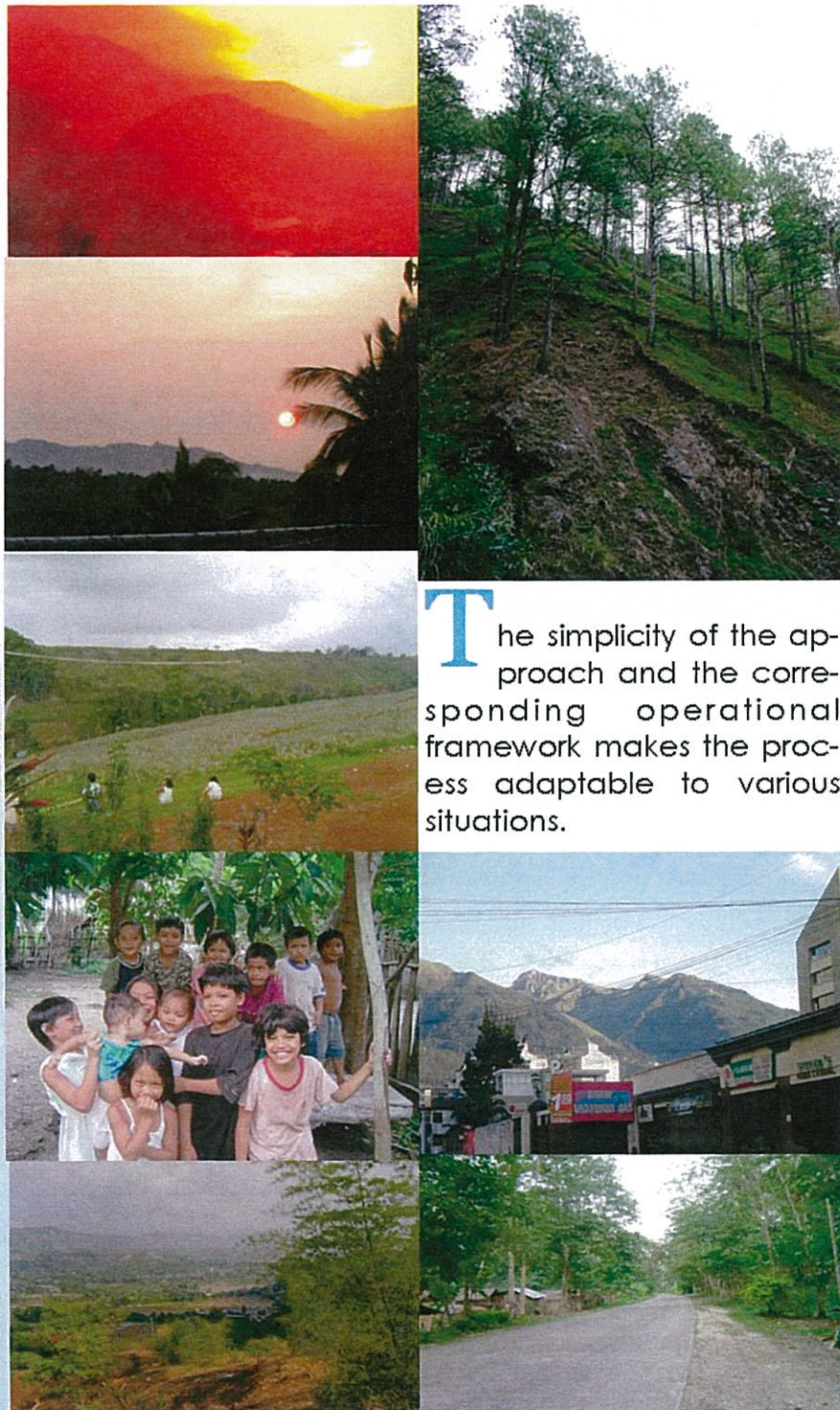
## PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

- IP communities are environmentally vigilant by nature. They protect and guard the environment because it is their life, their home, their source of income and food.
- It is not only the situation of their immediate environment that affects the community. The national environment, and consequently the global environment also affects their well-being.
- Communities are motivated and urged to create the suitable environment for the project (i.e. water systems will only work and will be sustained as long as trees are properly managed) .
- Communities' consciousness for the environment can be instilled in community discussions.



Community members go around the hills of Cordilleras in their tractor that doubles as transport equipment.





**T**he simplicity of the approach and the corresponding operational framework makes the process adaptable to various situations.

## Outlook for the Future

**A**s a next step, it may be appropriate to consider replicating this approach in bigger development cooperation endeavors. The straightforward approach, the practicality and universality of the operational framework in the partnership produced a model that may be applied in various settings and in other non-IP target groups. Identified related interests are community development projects for homogenous rural townships with emphasis on poverty reduction undertakings.

**A**long with the successes comes the opportunity to respond to other needs of larger IP populations and a number of communities. This may necessitate expansion of the partnership framework and perhaps the support and funding modality. Expanding the scope may mean additional partner communities and funding support. In such a situation, other cooperating agencies may be invited to provide complementary facilitative services. Should this be contemplated, it may be worthwhile:

- To retain the simplicity and directness of the approach.
- To keep the established scheme and criteria to identify partner communities, assisting organizations, agencies or professionals.
- To maintain the standards applied in motivating communities, facilitating support services and regular monitoring.
- To disseminate the best practices and lessons from the partnership and from the IP community project experiences.
- To sustain the constructive dynamics and interaction within and among the cooperating agencies and the partner communities.
- To have the concerned government agencies, NGOs and other donors continue to participate and perform supportive roles in the process.
- To collaborate with other donors in using the same approach. As a way of building-up potentials, utilize combined fund sources and support from different donors and development agencies.

**A**s a transition strategy, all stakeholders and potential supporters, including the government and development agencies could come together in a round table discussion or workshop to discuss the options, the future actions and ideas on how the process can be improved.