



SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT [SFM]

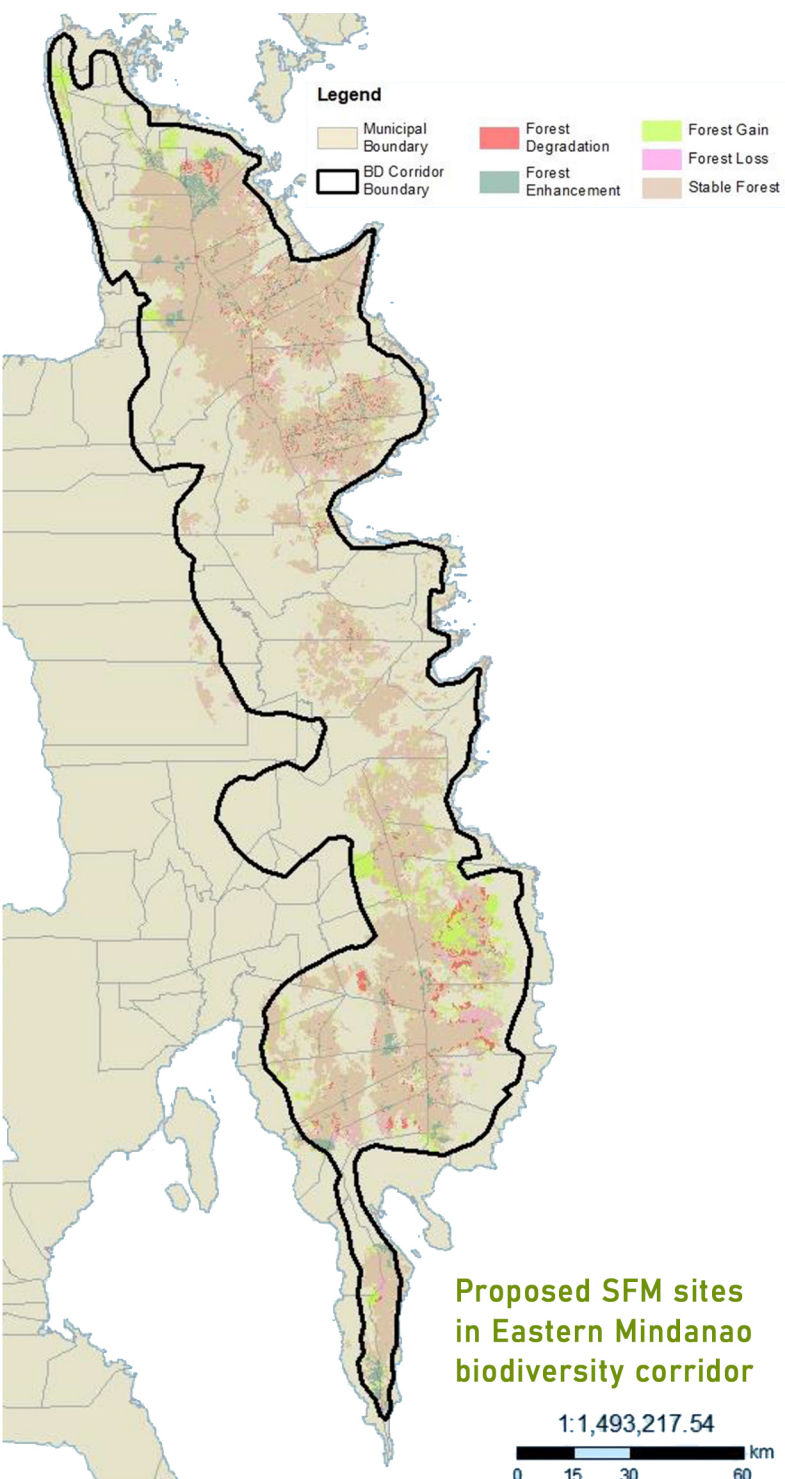
Sustainable Forest Management refers to the management of forests to achieve one or more clearly specified objectives of management, with regard to production of continuous flow of desired forest products and environmental services without undue reduction of its inherent values and future productivity, and without undesirable effects on the physical and social environment.

In fact, forests are one of the most important ecosystems in the world. The benefits we derive from them may be divided into these categories:

Ecologic

Forests provide us with several ecologic benefits. Foremost are its role in climate change mitigation as forests act as natural carbon sinks. Forests are also the most diverse terrestrial ecosystem and biodiversity habitat. In particular, the Mindoro Biodiversity Corridor (MBC) has evolved into a unique center for biodiversity, with very high endemism. A number of important mammals can be found in MBC that include the *tamaraw* (*Bubalus mindorensis*) and *Philippine warty pig* (*Sus philippinensis*). These mammals are now considered rare and declining. MBC is also home to the critically endangered *Mindoro bleeding heart pigeon* (*Gallucolumba platenae*).

Meanwhile, the Eastern Mindanao Biodiversity Corridor (EMBC) hosts a large proportion of the country's unique plants and animals. The largest remaining blocks of dipterocarp forest in the country can be found in EMBC. Among the forest obligate species in EMBC are the critically endangered *Philippine Eagle* (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) and the vulnerable *Mindanao bleeding heart pigeon* (*Gallucolumba crinigera*).



Economic

Forests are important economic drivers, particularly for rural and upland communities. They provide people with production inputs, environmental goods, food, fuel, medicines, household equipment, building implements and raw materials for industrial processing. Because of a wide range of economic benefits from forests, they can provide employment from sustainable production forests, value-added processing and marketing of raw timber and non-timber forest products. For instance, EMBC is within the timber corridor of the country, wherein growing of forest tree plantations is highly favorable. Meanwhile, farmers managing community-based forests harvest logs to jumpstart community-based enterprises. Bamboo production also provides income as well as rattan, nipa palms, and nito fern, which are used as raw materials for handicraft.

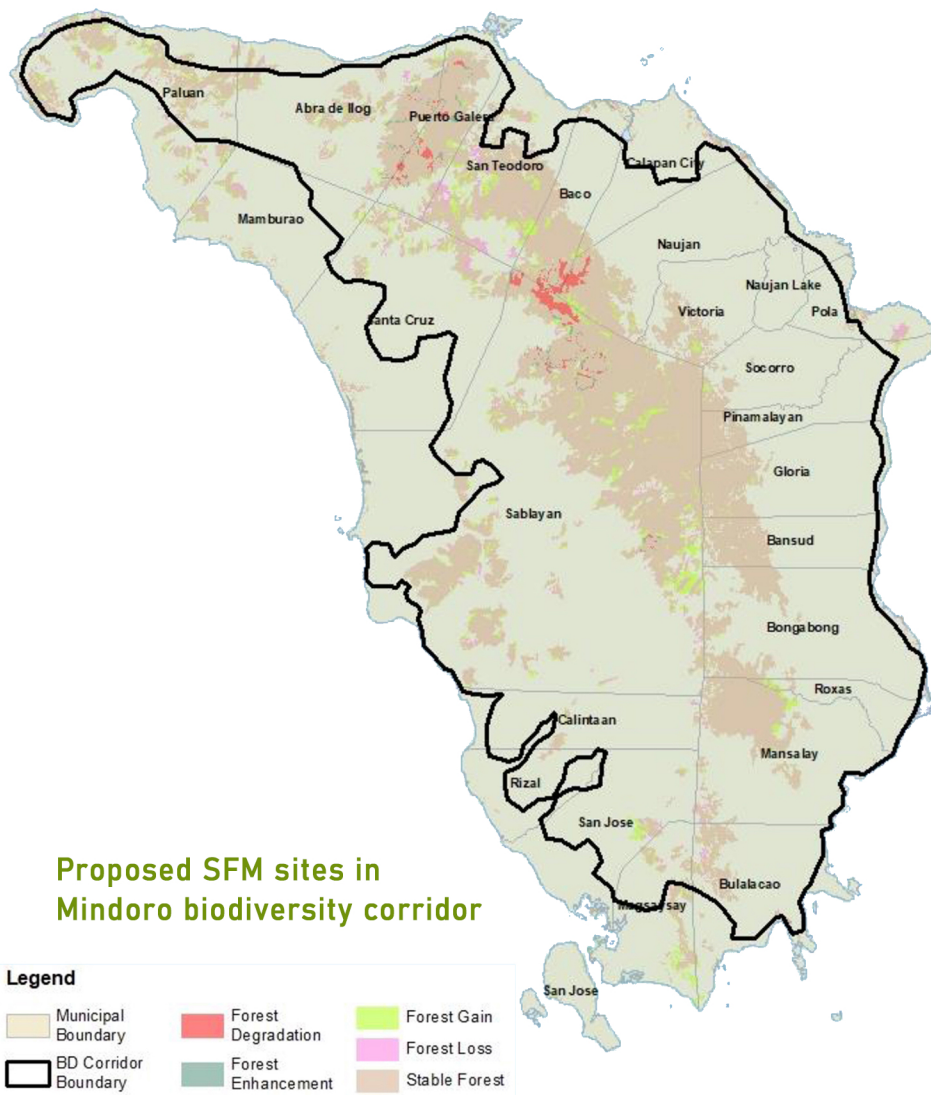
Social

Forests are interconnected with people's physical and mental well-being, by providing forest foods, nutritional and medicinal products, as well as limiting diseases and other health problems, particularly those emanating from animals such as coronaviruses. The recreational and aesthetic beauty of forests and even urban trees and vegetation also promote mental and physical health, by reducing stress and in recovering from attentional fatigue, and strongly enhance both psychological and physical rehabilitation.

Present and Future

MBC and EMBC have been undergoing instances of rapid land degradation as results of forest cover change arising from conversion of forests to agriculture and built-up areas, and proliferation of extractive industries such as logging, mining and other economic activities. Due to these factors, the ecologic, economic, and social benefits that can be derived from forests continue to decline.

In response to these alarming conditions, the Philippines has recognized the concept of SFM, which aims to ensure that the ecologic, economic, and social benefits from forests are managed to meet the present needs without compromising the needs of future generations.



Reducing Threats

To address the continued degradation of areas within the two pilot corridors in Eastern Mindanao and Mindoro, SFM is necessary to reduce the threats to forests, particularly areas that are critical for maintenance of biological linkages. The BD Corridor Project employs SFM as a strategy to achieve multiple combined objectives, namely, maintenance of biodiversity, ecological integrity and connectivity, and enhancement of human benefits through sustainable forest product use, while enhancement of forest productivity, among others, will be promoted.

Specifically, the project will include activities such as:

- (1) identification of project areas for rehabilitation and protection;
- (2) consultation with forest communities in defining suitable approaches for forest restoration;
- (3) preparation of SFM plans that may include adoption of Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) and agroforestry activities;
- (4) monitoring of progress for the implementation of SFM plans; and
- (5) provision of technical support for the subsequent restoration efforts.

