

## **An Assessment of Potential Benefits to Smallholders of REDD+ Components in the Philippines**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Many sectors in the Philippines are looking at the potential of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation-plus (REDD+) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to help finance forest protection and rehabilitation in the country. However, one major problem is that there is little information on the potential benefits the country can expect under REDD+. Specifically, it is not known how each component activities of REDD+ can benefit smallholder farmers. Thus, this paper assesses the potential benefits of activities under REDD+ to smallholder farmers in the country. The key question is what is the potential of REDD+ in the Philippines for improving the sequestration potential of the forest sector and to serve as a form of supplemental livelihood for rural forest dwellers? The main approach of the paper is to summarize what is known about: the historical pattern of deforestation and degradation, the driving forces behind them, community-based forest management (CBFM), tenure and rights, and to analyze the implications of Copenhagen and Cancun meetings for the Philippines. The main finding of the study is that depending on which REDD+ activity is implemented, smallholder farmers under CBFM areas would have varying roles and potential benefits. Smallholder farmers will have the most benefits from avoiding forest degradation and enhancing of forest stocks activities. That is, these activities pose the highest potential carbon credits. Because of the rising total forest cover of the country, little carbon credits are expected from avoiding deforestation. This implies that government policies and programs could focus on preparing local communities and institutions on activities that decrease forest degradation and enhance carbon stocks. In addition, there are many uncertainties and information gaps remaining. For example, the rate of biomass degradation in Philippines forests and the drivers of forest degradation are still unknown. The ability of government agencies to implement REDD+ is still inadequate. A strong capacity building program is therefore necessary.