

**[ DENR DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER  
NO. 3, February 11, 1991 ]**

**POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR THE AWARD AND  
ADMINISTRATION OF THE MANGROVE STEWARDSHIP  
AGREEMENT**

Pursuant to Executive Order 192, LOI 1260 which establishes the Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) Program; the Comprehensive Agrarian Law (RA 6657); Department Administrative Order 97, Series of 1988, which provides implementing guidelines for the ISF Program; and the mangrove utilization policies established in Department Administrative Order 15, Series of 1990; the following policy and guidelines governing the award and administration of the Mangrove Stewardship Agreement are hereby promulgated.

*SECTION 1. Basic Policy* - To achieve the national objectives of economic and social development, it is the policy of government to democratize the use of public forest land and to promote more equitable distribution of the forest bounty. In line with this policy, the government shall provide secure tenure over mangrove forest lands to qualified and deserving individuals for them to develop and maintain their area as permanent mangrove forest and to enjoy such harvests as may be sustainably derived therefrom. The award and administration of Mangrove Stewardship Agreements shall therefore be pursued according to the following policy guidelines.

- a. **The Value of Mangrove Forests** as a vital natural resource which provides many direct and indirect benefits to society is recognized and acknowledged. Direct benefits include shoreline protection from erosion, wind and wave damage as well as the harvest of forest and marine products. Indirect benefits include providing vital spawning and nursery grounds as well as nutrient export to support other coastal fisheries. It is the policy of the Government to rehabilitate and protect our remaining mangrove forests.
- b. **Stewards and Stewardship.** A steward is someone entrusted with the resources of another for the purpose of exercising stewardship by providing care, protection; and wise management to improve the quality and productivity of those resources for the mutual benefit of the Steward and the owner. It is the policy of the government to allow and encourage the stewardship of State-owned natural resources and give preference to the existing small-scale users of those resources.
- c. **The Purpose of the Mangrove Stewardship Agreement** is forest management; it requires the development and maintenance of permanent mangrove forests on the Stewardship Area in return for the exclusive right to harvest from the Area on a sustainable basis. It is not a certificate of occupancy and is never be used for that purpose.
- d. **Approach.** The stewardship approach to mangrove forest development and management stresses self-help and self-reliance by organized groups of coastal residents. Forest development and management, including the

collection of planting materials, will be accomplished through the voluntary efforts of participants to the greatest extent possible.

- e. **Coverage.** Mangrove Stewardship Agreements may be awarded over new plantations, existing mangrove forest or a combination of the two. All mangrove areas are eligible for coverage except those specifically exempted in Section 5 of this Order.
- f. **Security of Tenure.** Participants shall be given long-term tenure over a parcel of mangrove forest land for the purpose of establishing or managing the mangrove forest thereon.
- g. **Utilization.** The selective harvest by participants of forest and marine products at sub-sustainable levels shall be allowed on the area covered by the Stewardship Agreement.
- h. **Management of Mangrove Forest Lands by Individuals and Organizations.** Qualified individuals and groups of qualified individuals shall be allowed and assisted to develop and manage permanent mangrove forests on Individually allocated parcels of mangrove forest land.
- i. **Size of Individual and Group Allocations.** Individual participants may be allocated a total maximum area of seven (7) hectares. The initial area allocated to a group shall not exceed five hundred (500) ha. This area may be increased in the future if the group demonstrates adequate managerial capability and additional area is available.
- j. **Location of Area Allocated.** Areas allocated to groups under the Mangrove Stewardship Agreement should be located within the community/municipality they are presently occupying. In the case of individuals, the participants must be living within the area or adjacent barangay/sitio and must continue to live therein.
- k. **Community Organization and NGOs/POs.** Before mangrove forest resources within a barangay are allocated to individuals and groups under Mangrove Stewardship Agreements, a process of community organization and education shall be required. This activity is to be undertaken by qualified NGOs/POs or by ISF technicians trained in mangrove management who reside in the area during this process and subsequent forest development and management activities.
- l. **Participatory Management.** Participants shall be enjoined to actively participate in the allocation of mangrove forest lands in the preparation and implementation of their respective Stewardship Agreements which shall detail the forest development and management activities to be undertaken. NGOs/POs and all government agencies indicated in LOI 1260 shall provide assistance as may be required.
- m. **Area Management** recognizes the interrelated nature of mangrove forest and coastal marine resources, the limited sustainable livelihood opportunities provided by each specific coastal resource and the corresponding need to manage these resources in an integrated way on an area basis rather than singly and in an unrelated fashion.

*SECTION 2. Objectives* - The organization of coastal communities and the award and implementation of Mangrove Stewardship agreements aims to mobilize forest resources for the economic and social progress of the nation through the involvement of traditional small-scale mangrove users who shall be made effective agents of the State in the protection and management of permanent mangrove forest and in the production of forest and marine products. The program shall endeavor to achieve the following specific social, economic and ecological objectives.

- a. To establish a long lasting partnership between the government and participating small-scale mangrove area users in promoting the sustainable use public lands through a resource management system that is environmentally sound, productive and culturally appropriate.
- b. To rehabilitate and effectively manage our existing mangrove forest as the primary purpose; the planting of new mangrove forests is secondary.
- c. Maintain a permanent mangrove forest which shall provide improved shore line protection, wildlife habitat, spawning and nursery grounds for marine life and nutrient supplies to support marine life within and outside mangrove areas.
- d. Ensure regular supply of mangrove forest and marine products in the market place.
- e. Provide long-term security of tenure to participants who will develop and/or maintain permanent mangrove forest.
- f. Improve the capability of coastal communities in mangrove areas to address their own development needs through cooperative effort.
- g. Increase and sustain income of participants.
- h. Improve quality of life for participants.

*SECTION 3. Definition of Terms* - The following terms and definitions are provided for the purpose of this Order.

- a. **Mangrove Forest** refers to a distinctive community of trees and associated plant and marine species which is found on tidal flats along the sea coast, extending along streams which are brackish.
- b. **Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP)** refers to the national program launched under LOI 1260 which is designed to protect existing forests, improve the productivity of forest lands and to improve the socio-economic status of participants and participating communities.
- c. **Mangrove Stewardship Agreement** refers to a contract entered into by and between an individual mangrove user or mangrove user association or cooperative and the government which grants the former the right to the exclusive use of a specified mangrove area in return for managing that area according to a Stewardship Plan. It is hereinafter called the **Agreement**, a copy of which is attached as a part of this Order.
- d. **Mangrove Stewardship Area** refers to the parcel of mangrove forest land covered by a Mangrove Stewardship Agreement. It is herein after called the **Area**.
- e. **Mangrove Stewardship Plan** refers to a written plan which details the initial status of the Area and the forest development and management activities to be undertaken on the Area. It is developed jointly between the participant and the DENR or DENG0 and is hereinafter called the **Plan**.
- f. **Mangrove Steward** refers to the individual or group entering into an Agreement to develop and implement a Plan over a specific mangrove Area and is hereinafter called the **Steward**.
- g. **Certificate of Mangrove Stewardship** refers to the document issued by the government pursuant to the Mangrove Stewardship Agreement. The Agreement, the Plan and the site map comprise integral parts of the Certificate. A copy is attached as a part of this Order.
- h. **Next of Kin** refers to the spouse and children, or if not applicable, the parents, brothers and sisters of a participant who has entered into an Agreement.
- i. **Project Area** refers to a portion of coastline containing mangrove forest land which is to be managed as a project area by an NGO/PO and ISF technician(s)

and the mangrove allocated to the community under a number of individual or group Agreements.

*SECTION 4. Participants* - Citizens of the Philippines of legal age who meet the following requirements may enter into Mangrove Stewardship Agreements.

- a. Individuals, heads of families, communities or associations of individuals who have traditionally utilized mangrove resources for all or a substantial part of their livelihood, residing near the mangrove area to be managed.
- b. Preference shall be given to participants who are poor and landless and who have previously relied upon mangrove areas as their primary source of livelihood.
- c. Individuals with primary residence along the coastline, wishing to develop or maintain mangrove forest to protect their property from strong winds and large waves.
- d. In the case of owners of coastal infrastructure, not qualified to enter into an Agreement, but wanting to protect their property, are encouraged to allow a qualified person to undertake the establishment and management of mangrove forest on the said area.

Agreements shall not be entered into with absentee claimants, landlords, speculators or other persons who do not meet the stated qualifications and who will not personally manage the allocated area pursuant to the goals of these agreements.

*SECTION 5. Coverage* - All mangrove forest lands and newly afforested areas are eligible for coverage under Agreements except those listed below. The following areas are prohibited from coverage under an Agreement.

- a. Mangrove wilderness areas which have been properly delineated and found to be free from valid prior private rights.
- b. Areas covered by a mangrove reforestation contract funded by the National Forestation Program, the Fisheries Sector Program or other funding source. Long term tenure over such areas may be provided by the Forest Lease Management Agreement (FLMA).
- c. Areas covered by valid Fishpond Lease Agreements (FLA) or Ordinary Fishpond Permits (OFP) which are fully developed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the lease or permit.
- d. Other areas, such as parks or preserves, where sustainable use of forest resources is not permitted.

Vegetated mangrove areas which have been released for fishpond development but which are not yet covered by an FLA or OFP; and vegetated areas within an existing FLA or OFP which have not been developed for more than five years, may be reverted to mangrove forest land and become eligible for coverage under a Mangrove Stewardship Agreement.

*SECTION 6. Participation of Development Oriented Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Private Organizations (POs)* - It is the policy of the DENR to encourage NGOs/POs to actively participate in the implementation of its programs. This is in recognition of ( i) their willingness to live and work in the barangay while assisting rural communities to undertake their own development, and (ii) the limited capacity the DENR has for undertaking such activities. The NGO/PO serves in this capacity

as an extension of the DENR. The Government shall assist the development of NGOs/POs by providing training and technical assistance.

*SECTION 7. Project Area Selection Criteria* -The primary concern shall be the rehabilitation and management of existing mangrove forest. The reforestation of barren areas is secondary. The following criteria shall be used in site selection.

- a. Existing mangrove, with preference given to areas which are degraded and important to local residents for their livelihood. Where barren areas suitable for reforestation exist, it should be integrated with the management of adjacent existing mangrove rather than treated separately.
- b. Presence of interested prospective Stewards.
- c. Availability of suitable NGO/PO and ISF technician(s).

*SECTION 8. Project Area Activities* - The role of the NGO/PO and/or ISF technician at the community level would include the following activities.

- a. Inform the community of the purpose of and opportunities available under an Agreement and assist them to better understand the value of mangrove forest and the ways in which it can be made more productive.
- b. Undertake with the involved communities an inventory of mangrove users and uses relating to the project areas.
- c. Determine with the DENR the specific area(s) available for mangrove stewardship.
- d. Organize the community with particular reference to mangrove area users. Assist the community to explore its opportunities and constraints to development, with special reference to coastal marine resources, and to explore opportunities for the more effective management and utilization of their productive resources.
- e. Establish by community consensus, within applicable guidelines, the criteria for participation in mangrove stewardship and the mechanisms for allocation of available areas. Assist the community to make the formal allocation which is subject to DENR approval.
- f. Assist the community to actively participate with the DENR in the parcellary survey of individual Stewardship Areas and the establishment of boundary markers.
- g. In close cooperation with the DENR, assist prospective Mangrove Stewards to develop Stewardship Plans for their respective Areas.
- h. In close cooperation with the DENR, provide trainings in various aspects of coastal resource management, especially in mangroves.
- i. Use the process of community involvement to identify other community needs especially in coastal resource management, and to begin to address those needs using community manpower and financial resources available from government and other agencies.

*SECTION 9. The Stewardship Plan* - The Plan shall be developed jointly by the Steward with a DENR and/or NGO/PO representative. The Plan shall be comprised of three parts: ( i) the current status of the Area, (ii) specific forest development activities to be accomplished within the first three years (Phase One) and (iii) the long term management plan including harvesting (Phase Two). The completed Plan shall be approved by DENR prior to issuance of the Certificate of Mangrove Stewardship and become an integral part thereof.