

**[DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 04,
February 02, 1991]**

**REVISED REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE INTEGRATED SOCIAL
FORESTRY PROGRAM**

Pursuant to the provisions of Executive Order No. 192, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, and Letter of Instruction No. 1260, the following regulations and guidelines are hereby promulgated:

SECTION 1. Basic Policy and Objectives – The Integrated Social Forestry Program is based on the principle of land stewardship, which joins the complementary objectives of environment protection, poverty alleviation, and social justice.

The program applies to the lands classified as public forest lands. These lands, which have slopes greater than 18% have the special characteristic that the impact of the way in which they are used redounds not only to the user, but also to the larger society. Misuse of these fragile lands results in loss of soil fertility, siltation of downstream ecosystem such as irrigation systems and coastal fishing grounds, and the exacerbation of droughts and floods. Proper use of such lands reverses such effects to the benefit of everyone within the ecosystem. Therefore, anyone using such lands must be committed to protecting and enhancing the ecological stability of the land and of the larger ecosystem of which it is a part.

Therefore, the Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) Program seeks to protect the environment, alleviate poverty, and promise social justice by enlisting the people directly using forest lands in the task of stewarding the uplands. In line with this policy, the government shall provide security of land tenure and other assistance to individuals, families, groups or communities that commit themselves to the stewardship role. Such a commitment would include not only proper use of the land under the stewardship agreement, by also cooperation with other stewards in the area to exert joint efforts to protect and enhance the natural resources base within their area of responsibility.

The fundamental requisite for exercising a stewardship role is physical presence in the area to be stewarded. Stewards must actively invest themselves in the care of the lands, be intimately aware of the land's response to different treatments, and be able to respond in ways that enhance the productivity of the land. Thus, any individual, family, or group wishing to take on stewardship rights and responsibilities must demonstrate capacity for stewardship by: personally tilling whatever land is cultivated in the area to be stewarded; and residing within the area or adjacent barangay so as to actively participate in individual and group activities aimed at environmental protection and enhancement, such as fire control, watershed maintenance, and prevention of land encroachment by parties not committed to the stewardship concept. Absentee landlordism is inconsistent with the concept of stewardship.

The ISF Program shall therefore be pursued in accordance with the following policy guidelines:

1.1 Security of Tenure – Consistent with the provisions of the Constitution, the Program shall award Stewardship Agreements to individuals, families, groups or communities that qualify as stewards and commit themselves to stewardship responsibilities. Recognizing that the benefits of stewardship activities often take a long period of time to manifest, such Agreements shall provide use rights over the subject and for a period of twenty-five (25) years, renewable for an additional twenty-five (25) years.

1.2 Continued Occupancy of Present Clearings. Qualified participants shall be encouraged to cultivate and develop their clearings and homelots or settlement areas in ways consistent with ecological stability and sustainability. Such development should not impair the forest ecosystem nor shall it encroach on lands specifically exempted from the Social Forestry Program.

1.3 Size of Stewardship Areas. Individual and family stewardship Agreements shall, with due consideration to the need for equitable distribution of lands to all qualified stewards cover land areas of economically viable size, which, depending on topography, soil and general conditions of the area, shall cover not more than five hectares. The size of communal Stewardship Agreements shall depend on the nature of the site, the history of the group to promote productive and protective activities within the stewarded area.

1.4 Establishment of Stewardship Associations. Program participants awarded with individual or family Stewardship Agreements are encouraged and assisted to organize into Stewardship associations and mobilize themselves to undertake activities to improve participants' welfare and to protect and enhance the ecosystem upon which the participants as a group depend. Such association, and groups holding communal Stewardship Agreements, shall be encouraged to develop Stewardship plans that can serve as a basis for the awarding of rights and responsibilities for the development of additional nearby land areas in ecologically appropriate ways, such as through reforestation, forest protection, and other related activities.

1.5 People's Participation. Program participants, through their stewardship associations or other community organizations, shall be encouraged to participate in the preparation of plans for their individual and community areas and to draw assistance from government agencies as indicated in LOI 1260.

1.6 Government Commitment. The government agencies and instrumentalities, as mandated by LOI 1260 and other existing laws, rules and regulations, shall assist in the development of upland communities, through stewardship associations or other organized groups, in ways consistent with the objectives of environmental protection, poverty alleviation and social justice.

SECTION 2. Definition of Terms –

2.1 Area Developed. The portion of the land on which activities have been undertaken based on the individual and project area development plans jointly

prepared by the holder/s of Stewardship Agreement and the Community Development Assistant (CDA).

2.2 Certificate of Stewardship (CS). The document issued by the government to qualified individual forest occupants pursuant to the stewardship Agreement.

2.3 Certificate of Community Forest Stewardship (CCFS). The document issued by the government to qualified forest communities, associations, including indigenous cultural communities pursuant to the Stewardship Agreement.

2.4 Integrated Social Forestry (ISF). The national program provided for by Letter of Instructions No. 1260 designed to maximize land productivity and enhance ecological stability, and to improve the socio-economic conditions of forest occupants and communities.

2.5 Next-of-Kin. The spouse and children, or if not applicable, the parents, the brothers or sisters of a forest occupant who has entered into Stewardship Agreement.

2.6 Program Participant. A forest occupant or community associations or cooperative which has entered into a Stewardship Agreement and actively involved in the ISF Program.

2.7 Project Area – A public forest land which is utilized by specific proximate groupings of holders or prospective holders of CS or CCFS.

2.8 Program. Refers to Integrated Social Forestry.

2.9 Stewardship Agreement. A contract entered into by and between an individual forest occupant or forest community association or cooperative and the governmental allowing the former the right to peaceful occupation, possession and sustainable management over the designated area.

SECTION 3. Program Management – The program shall be managed and implemented through an Executive Committee to be assisted by a National Coordinating Office, the Social Forestry Division of the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) and appropriate Program Assistance Teams and Community Development Officers.

3.1 Executive Committee. The ISF Program shall be managed by an inter-agency Executive Committee to be chaired by the DENR Secretary. The Committee shall include the Secretaries of Environment and Natural Resources, Agrarian Reform, Agriculture, Education, Culture and Sports, Health, Justice, Public Works and Highways, Social Welfare and Development, and Interior and Local Governments, and the Director-General, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). The Committee shall have a two-fold function of ISF Program planning and policy making.

3.2 National Coordinating Office. The following shall be the functions of the National Coordinating Office:

3.2.1 To develop, formulate, and recommend ISF policies, rules and

regulations, guidelines, and procedures, related to program development and implementation;

- 3.2.2 To coordinate the implementation and execution of ISF policies, plans and projects at all levels;
- 3.2.3 To monitor and evaluate social forestry field activities and performance in coordination with the Regional Executive Directors;
- 3.2.4 To provide the Executive Committee of the ISF Program with periodic reports on activities and accomplishments and perform such other roles in its capacity as the National Secretariat of the ISF Program;
- 3.2.5 To act as clearing house for all project proposals, feasibility and policy studies pertaining to social forestry matters and make recommendations prior to the approval of the proper authority;
- 3.2.6 To liaise with other Government Agencies and coordinate with interdepartmental implementing bodies for smooth program implementation;
- 3.2.7 To develop and recommend strategic plans that will unify the visions, approaches, and all existing upland development efforts of the various management units implementing social forestry related policies, programs, and projects;
- 3.2.8. Call on any DENR personnel, whether Central Office based or in the Regions, for assistance in the performance of its functions;
- 3.2.9 Exercise such discretion in the selection and hiring of personnel and other support staff for the administration of the ISF Program; and,
- 3.2.10 Initiate institutional linkages with other government agencies (OGA) and non-government organizations (NGO).

3.3 Social Forestry Division. The Social Forestry Division (FMB) shall be strengthened and shall provide staff support to the National Coordinating Office in the development of guidelines and coordination of the implementation and execution of ISF policies plans, and projects, formulation, and guidelines in the identification, establishment, and development of ISF projects, the monitoring and evaluation of field activities, preparation of periodic reports, process applications for CFSA through its regional counterparts and shall carry out other functions which shall be assigned to it.

3.4 Program Assistance Teams (PAT). The National Coordinating Office shall organize Program Assistance Teams which shall have the following functions:

- 3.4.1 Conduct briefings/orientation of CDOs and CDAs on the programs;

3.4.2 Provide technical assistance in the implementation of the Program;

3.4.3 Monitor and evaluate program implementation;

3.4.4 Validate and update profile of social forestry areas;

3.4.5 Assist in the documentation of appropriate social forestry technologies and/or farming systems; and

3.4.6 Coordinate implementation and execution of program policies; regulations and guidelines.

3.5 Regional Executive Director (RED). The RED shall be responsible for the effective implementation of all ISF projects in the region. He shall be assisted by the *interim* Social Forestry Division of the Region.

3.6 Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO). The PENRO shall closely coordinate, supervise, and monitor the implementation of the ISF Program in the province. He shall ensure that ISF funds are exclusively utilized to support the program implementation.

3.7 Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO). The CENRO shall be directly responsible for the supervision and management of the ISF Program within his area of jurisdiction. He shall also conduct periodic monitoring of all ISF projects and submit through the PENRO and RED periodic reports of project activities and program accomplishments.

3.8 Community Development Assistants (CDA). The RED, upon recommendation of the CENRO, shall designate at least one CDA for each Project Area who shall be responsible for actual management and implementation of the ISF Program in the Project Area under the direct supervision of the Community Development Officer (CDO) and CENRO concerned.

3.9 Staff Development. The DENR through the Human Resources Development Services in consultation/coordination with the National Coordinating Office and the Social Forestry Division shall organize appropriate training courses periodically for the CDOs and the CDAs based on the training needs determined through a training needs analysis which shall be properly conducted before such trainings.

SECTION 4. General Consideration – The following consideration among others, shall be applied in the design and implementation of projects aimed at achieving the objectives of the Program:

4.1 Economic self-sufficiency and ecological stability shall be the key considerations.

4.2 Each project will focus initially on strategic activity responding to an immediate concern of the participants as identified during the assessment and appraisal of the project area needs.

4.3 Program participants shall be actively involved in project area planning, design, and implementation.