

## **Profiling Tree Nurseries in Northern Mindanao, the Philippines**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Forestry nurseries play an important role in supporting small-scale plantations, tree farming as well as government initiated afforestation and reforestation programs. However, some major constraints have been identified in the forestry nursery sector in the Philippines, particularly in the supply of high quality planting materials. This hindrance is being investigated to formulate intervention points as part of a continuing research project on enhancing tree seedling supply via economic and policy changes, funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). This paper presents baseline information regarding the profile of forestry nurseries in the Northern Mindanao region of the Philippines through personal interviews of operators of private, communal and government nurseries. Most nurseries in all three nursery types are operating on a small scale and are strategically situated based on the purpose of their existence. Private nurseries, being business oriented, are located near main roads, as are government nurseries which distribute seedlings mostly without charge but in some cases for sale. Communal nurseries are mostly situated on farms because they cater to the seedling needs of their members and are therefore established far away from main roads. In terms of stability, private and government nurseries are stable compared to communal nurseries which rely on support organizations. When the support ceases communal nurseries also cease to operate. There is no current policy that supports the production and use of high quality seedlings. Intervention points to address these problems are seen as necessary extension efforts in promoting the use of high quality seedlings, thereby creating a strong seedling market, training operators to increase their capability to produce high quality seedlings, and promoting and supporting the forestry nursery industry, including introduction of tree nursery certification.

Keywords: nursery capacity, communal nurseries, certification, snowball sampling

### **INTRODUCTION**

Rapid deforestation, a shortfall of timber for the domestic market, conversion of forestland to agriculture and major land degradation resulted from extensive logging in the Philippines (Dart et al. 2001) and have been closely linked with land degradation, lowland flooding, and degradation of rivers (Harrison and Herbohn 2001). Mercado and Piñon (2008) found that regular sawmills, mini-sawmills and