RE Hub

A pre-competitive learning and innovation platform to advance regenerative multi-land use models and marine spatial planning

Responsible Energy Initiative Philippines

What is RE Hub?

Current land use models and marine spatial planning in the Philippines are intensifying competition for limited and fragile natural resources as renewable energy (RE) scales, leading to increased conflict, potential food insecurity, reduced resilience, forced displacement of communities, and damage to ecologically sensitive areas. Scaling of offshore-wind (OSW) is also at risk of being on a collision course with global biodiversity goals if both are pursued in isolation.

RE Hub is a pre-competitive learning and innovation platform for actors across the RE value chain to support the pioneering of regenerative multi-land use and marine spatial planning models. As a collaborative space, its purpose is also to foster new rules of engagement for fair value-sharing in the Philippines.

RE Hub's functions and process

RE Hub is composed of four core functions designed to build our understanding of how regenerative RE models can be designed and scaled in the Philippines. These include:

Adapt and refine regenerative indicators: Through each site visit, RE Hub will evolve its understanding of regenerative indicators by adapting international standards related to the protection of biodiversity, food systems and livelihoods to the Philippines context. A key focus of their implementation will be given to foregrounding social and cultural functions of natural resources into the design of multi-land use models, as well as to participatory pathways for mapping them.

Action learning visits: RE Hub seeks to learn from at least three real life testing grounds, across a minimum of two RE technologies. The first site will be SunAsia's floating solar test bed operation in Laguna Bay (Barangay San Antonio). A second testing site, which will be community-led, is anticipated in Negros Occidental. The aim is for a third to engage an OSW project in a priority zone such as Batangas, Verde Island Passage or San Miguel Bay. RE Hub will ideally engage with LGUs across all learning sites.

Learning and dissemination: Following each site visit, RE Hub members will sense-make key learnings, including around factors that have enabled or hindered the implementation of regenerative practices. Philippines-based regenerative indicators may be adapted, based on these insights. As more visits are completed, RE Hub will share emerging patterns and root causes to policymakers, finance actors, procurers and others who may be in a position to bridge existing gaps.

Design and innovation sprints: Where possible, RE Hub will seek to address emerging challenges by engaging REI participants from across the value chain in design and innovation sprints. This may also require the involvement of technical support from beyond the REI cohort.

RE VISION

A future where multi-land use models and marine spatial innovation accelerate a fast and fair energy transition that enables every living being to thrive in harmony with nature, protects previous value of natural resources, and creates equitable benefits.

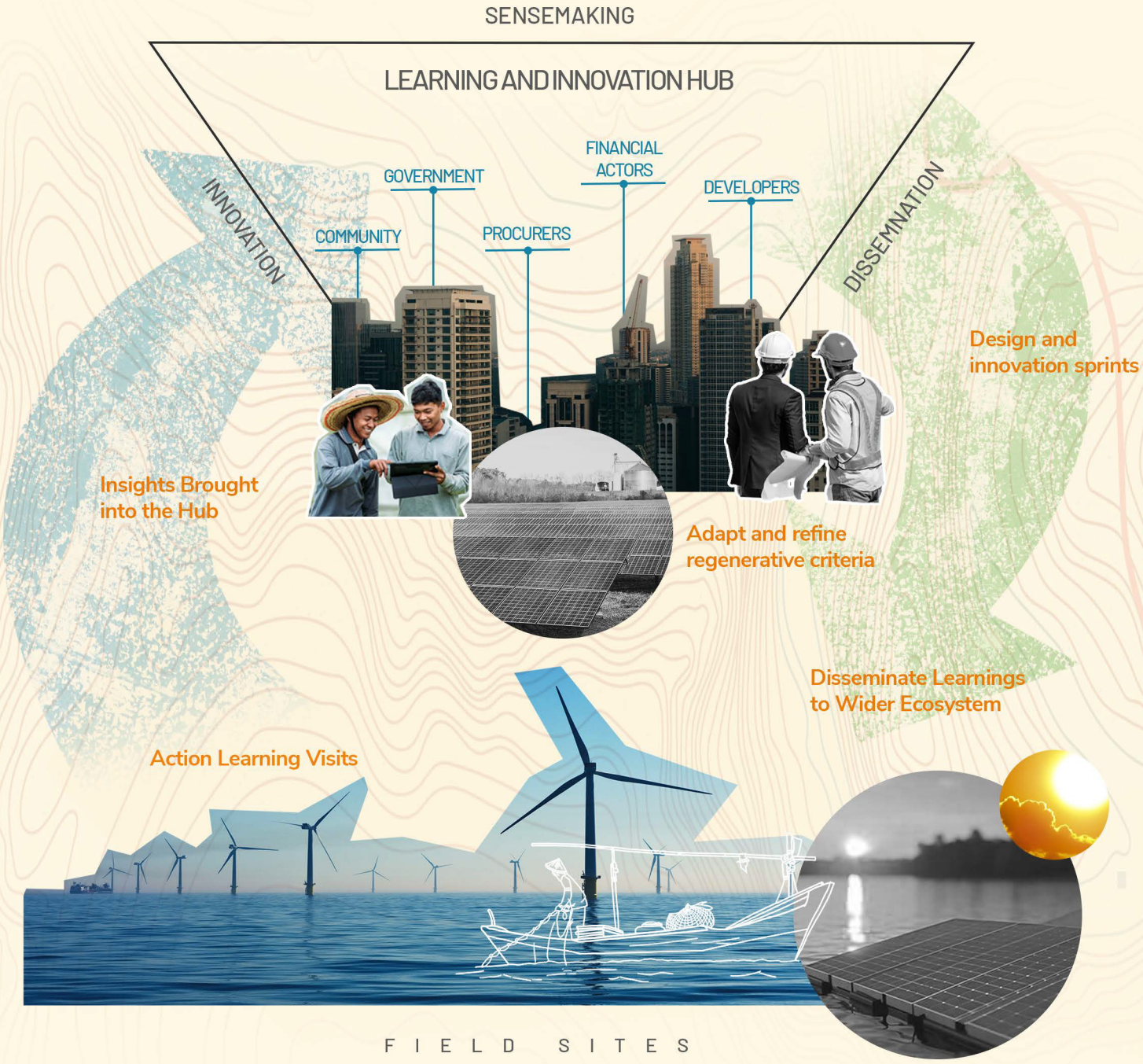
KEY OUTCOMES

Established community of practice to support the design, testing, and uptake of inclusive multi-use models in the Philippine RE sector.

Strengthened capacity of developers, test communities and LGUs to shape RE project planning and development in ways that reflect local natural resource use, customary practices, and community priorities.

Contributes to reducing investment risks associated with multi-use models.

THE RE HUB PROCESS



How to become involved

All value chain actors are welcome to join RE Hub to contribute to its learning by engaging in post-visit sense-making, or by forming part of the Working Group tasked with evolving the Philippines-based indicators for regenerative RE projects. If you are interested in joining or nominating your RE project as a future learning site, please contact Cynthia Morel at c.morel@forumforthefuture.org.

Co-Own Energy Futures

Responsible Energy Initiative Philippines

What is RE Co Own?

In the pursuit of a socially just and resilient renewable energy system in the Philippines, the Responsible Energy Initiative (REI), a cohort of over 50 multi-sectoral participants - developers, civil society organisations, financiers and procurers has identified meaningful community engagement as key to transforming the Filipino renewable energy (RE) system. Renewable energy projects in the Philippines often face issues in implementation and/or fail to deliver promised benefits when host communities and other impacted stakeholders are not meaningfully involved in the planning, design, operation or management of the project. Not only are communities harmfully impacted by gaps in involvement, but the long-term viability of RE projects is also likely to be compromised due to the increased risk of significant delays due to community opposition. This, in turn, fuels perceptions of RE's ineffectiveness for electricity production, distribution and thus threatens to slow the Philippine's trajectory towards a clean energy transition.

In response to this challenge, the REI cohort formed a workstream that led to the design of Co-Ownership of Energy Futures (Co-Own). Co-Own is a model of collaboration between different stakeholders within an RE project (developers, communities, financiers) that ensures equitable benefits-sharing and democratic involvement within the preliminary, implementation and maintenance stages of an RE system. Its emphasis is on fostering shared risk, shared reward and shared responsibility among the stakeholders. While there are examples of co-ownership models being trialled in other geographies, there have been no cohesive attempts at creating a tried and tested set of co-ownership principles and processes that can be applied in a utility-scale context within the Philippines, to scale.

The REI cohort believes that Co-Own is an intervention that has the potential to shift relationship dynamics within the RE development process to an equitable, accountable, rights-based, inclusive and democratic RE system. The project consists of 2 stages to develop a prototype of co-ownership trialled within the Filipino context:

(1) Creating a guidebook of co-ownership principles that fit the local context, based on research within local and international case studies
(2) Piloting the model as a prototype that can demonstrate the "art of the possible" for scaling across the system. These two stages are in dialogue with one another, where learnings from the research will influence the pilot and lessons from the pilot will shape the guidebook.

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

What does Co-ownership look like?

From a year of landscape analysis through expert, multi-stakeholder input from the REI cohort and further research into existing case studies of community ownership (to derive inspiration from in forming principles for co-ownership), the Co-Own team has sought to define what co-ownership might look like within the Filipino context - specific to the needs and opportunities present within the local system.

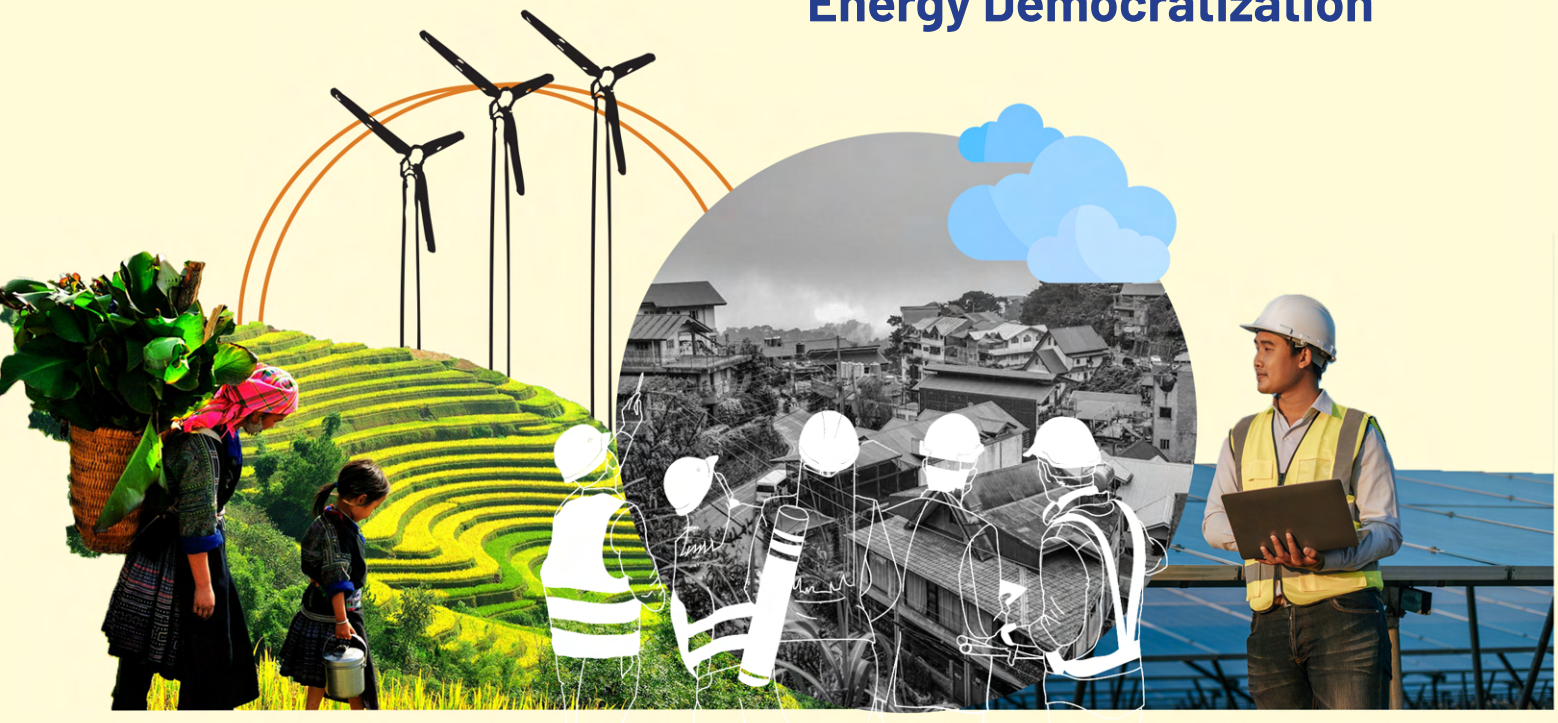
Co-ownership puts democratization at its heart. The agency of communities and all stakeholders within it should be recognized and shared with RE developers and other duty-bearers and process holders of an RE system.

Co-ownership should be an expansion from community ownership, that challenges any uneven power dynamics between developers and communities - creating a system that empowers everyone. Through the negotiation of commuity ownership models, the aim is to transform relationships with RE developers towards an RE system that is co-created, co-managed, as well as driving shared access and benefits.

Co-ownership is anchored in trust-building that effectively enhances engagement and solutions identification among stakeholders. Co-ownership aims to address polarized dynamics and antagonistic narratives between developers, communities, and other stakeholder groups within the RE system. Transparency is central to building trust and fostering new dynamics between and among these stakeholders.

Co-ownership is regenerative in both process and outcome, going far beyond compliance. It puts sustainability and futures thinking at its core, responding to shocks in the system and identifying new opportunities for unlocking mutual benefits. Its approach is centered on fostering the ability to learn, adapt and become resilient.

Building Blocks to Energy Democratization



Meaningful community engagement is fundamentally characterized by ownership, democratic management, and the realization of tangible shared benefits, which directly incentivizes joint long-term stewardship. The Malaya Farmers Agriculture Cooperative (MFAC) in Camarines Norte is a prime example, where savings from the solar facility and earnings from cash-for-work farmland development were immediately converted into capital for their organizations, directly linking the RE system's presence to socio-economic benefits and strengthening the community's commitment to its sustainability. Similarly, the Vergara Magtu-od Development Cooperative (VEMADECO) and the micro-hydro project run by TTriMPA in Mindanao demonstrate that when communities directly own and manage their systems, they ensure both reliable electricity access and the necessary protection of associated natural resources. This collective, rights-based approach, rooted in democracy and equity, is essential for ensuring the RE system truly serves local needs and maintains its sustainability.

An improved policy environment enables a just, regenerative, and scalable RE transition by removing barriers and fostering local government support for community-led initiatives. The success of the Vergara Magtu-od Development Cooperative (VEMADECO), for instance, has gained the full support of the Local Government Unit (LGU) and the National Electrification Administration (NEA) for a connectivity upgrade to the grid, which signifies a positive shift in public sector investment toward community-initiated projects. In Labo, Camarines Norte, the achievements of the Malaya Farmers Agriculture Cooperative (MFAC) led to a formal commitment from the municipal government to invest in local RE infrastructure, establish a municipal Just Energy Transition Council, and finance vital access road construction. This demonstrates that grassroots achievements can be leveraged to advocate for and secure policy and financial commitments from local authorities, thereby creating a supportive, rights-based, and accountable environment for community-powered RE development.

Capacity building is crucial for community self-reliance and the sustainability of decentralized RE systems, encompassing technical skills, organizational management, and policy advocacy. In the case of the Sabah RE2 Roadmap 2040 project, technical training was prioritized to enable the community to handle day-to-day operations and maintenance, alongside establishing a community energy management committee for governance and financial oversight. For the Malaya Farmers Agriculture Cooperative (MFAC), the RE installation spurred a broader capacity to strengthen their social enterprise, leading to the development of internal policies for maximizing savings and capital formation. Groups like ALPAS Homeowners Association in the SINAG Homes microgrid take on specific administrative roles, such as managing the prepaid card loading system, showing how capacity building translates into practical, decentralized management of the energy system's commercial aspects.