

Indigenous Practices for Conservation of Biodiversity



Since 2011, the Conflict Sensitive Resource and Asset Management (COSERAM) Program supports an integrated approach of poverty reduction and peace building in Caraga, Regions 10 and Region 11. The COSERAM Program is a joint undertaking of the Philippine and German Governments, implemented by GIZ and partner agencies. The IP4Biodiv-Module of the Program brings together conflict sensitive resource management and biodiversity conservation by strengthening indigenous rights and supporting the use of indigenous knowledge systems and practices. In line with COSERAMs overall objective, it focuses on harmonizing different planning regimes and is oriented towards a peaceful and sustainable governance of natural resources.

LEAD EXECUTING PARTNERS: National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)

OTHER DRIVERS OF THE PROCESS: Indigenous Cultural Communities, provincial and municipal LGUs, Protected Area Management Boards (PAMB), NGOs and academe

TARGET GROUPS: Marginalized Population, especially Indigenous Peoples

DURATION: October 2012 to December 2018

Context

In the Philippines numerous protected areas, characterized by high biodiversity, are found in the ancestral domains of the Indigenous Peoples (IP). Despite the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, indigenous rights and knowledge systems and practices (IKSP) are not sufficiently included in the management of these areas.

This is characterized in different ways:

- Protected Areas are not governed according to good governance principles, often increasing conflicts over natural resources.
- Protected Area Management Boards (PAMB) often lack the adequate representation of IP and local government units (LGU). The roles of members are not clear, leading to poor attendance and uninformed decision-making by the board.
- IKSP are not recognized and included in biodiversity monitoring and law enforcement, thus, IPs living in protected areas, have limited livelihood options. If conservation is taken seriously, some introduced livelihood activities might need adaptation.
- IP and LGU still lack the capacities and recognition to take over a coordinating function in the management of buffer zones of protected areas as well as other critical habitats.
- Management plans of protected areas, ancestral domains and LGU are still being developed independently, leading to conflicting land uses, but also inefficiency in data collection.



Approach

Recognizing both, the importance of biodiversity conservation, as well as the right of Indigenous Peoples to decide upon the use of their lands, IP4Biodiv's objective is closely linked to the agreements between the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) formulated in the JMC 01-2007. As mandated agencies for these topics, both agencies are equal political and implementing partners. Taking into account the Local Government Code, IP4Biodiv takes the JMC a step further, by including LGUs in the management of overlapping protected areas and ancestral domains. The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has taken over the role of monitoring and providing feedback to IP4Biodiv's planning and implementation processes.

The module adopts a multilevel approach. Implementation partners are enabled to develop and carry out a protected area governance approach to conserve biodiversity with the

participation of IP and incorporation of IKSP. In the process, methods for inclusive governance are being developed and shall be replicated in other areas and absorbed by national policies and guidelines, wherever possible.

IP4Biodiv continues to work in its initial implementation site, the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, slowly reducing both technical and financial support while handing over processes to partners. As decided by the program's National Steering Committee, two further protected areas which overlap with ancestral domains and are affected by conflict, namely Mount Apo Natural Park in Regions 11 and 12 and Mount Balatukan Range Natural Park in Region 10, are being supported. Additionally, other protected areas in the country will have the possibility to use the elaborated manuals and receive capacity development based on the experiences of the first phase. The Mindanao PAMB Network, which has been established with the support of the program, will provide a platform for such exchange and learning.

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Anticipated Results

- Protected Area Governance Assessments have been conducted and serve as a basis for PAMB to engage adequate and active members in taking decisions which respect IP rights and bring forward conservation.
- IKSP are recognized and included in biodiversity monitoring and law enforcement in protected areas.
- Local conservation areas (LCA) and Indigenous Peoples' and community conserved territories and areas (ICCA) are established in ecologically or culturally critical habitats and well managed by LGU and IP.
- Inter-agency databases are established and regularly maintained and updated.
- Unmanned Aerial vehicle (UAV) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are used to map protected areas and serve as basis for land-use planning.
- Protection is recognized and incorporated as an important pillar in the ancestral domain sustainable development and protection plans (ADSDPP), while IP rights are respected in Protected Area Management Plans (PAMP). Both are incorporated in the comprehensive land use plans (CLUP) of LGUs. Through dialogue, the stakeholders consider each other's interests at an early planning stage.
- Mindanao PAMB Network is institutionalized and serves as a learning and policy making platform.

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