



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 the region of Caraga and other conflict-affected areas in the Philippines. 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.

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 stipulated in different ways:

- 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.
- 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.
- Since IKSP are still not recognized, IP living in protected areas, have limited livelihood options. If conservation is taken seriously, some introduced livelihood activities might need adaptation.

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, esp. the provincial level, 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.

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





The module adopts a multilevel approach. Implementation partners are enabled to develop and carry out a protected area management approach to conserve biodiversity with the participation of IP and incorporation of IKSP. In the process, methods for inclusive management are being developed and shall be replicated in other areas and absorbed by national policies and guidelines, wherever possible.

IP4Biodiv continues working in its initial implementation site, the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary (AMWS), until the end of the program, slowly reducing both technical and financial support. As decided by the program's National Steering Committee, protected areas which overlap with ancestral domains and are affected by conflict in Regions 10 and 11, will have the possibility to request the module's support. Considering the available resources, it is realistic to aim at accompanying two further protected areas more closely. Nevertheless, 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.

Anticipated Results

- PAMB with adequate and active members, taking management decisions which respect IP rights and bring forward conservation.
- IKSP 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.
- An inter-agency database is established and regularly maintained and updated.
- 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 and plans.
- Communities living in protected areas pursue livelihood activities which are ecologically and culturally sensitive.

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