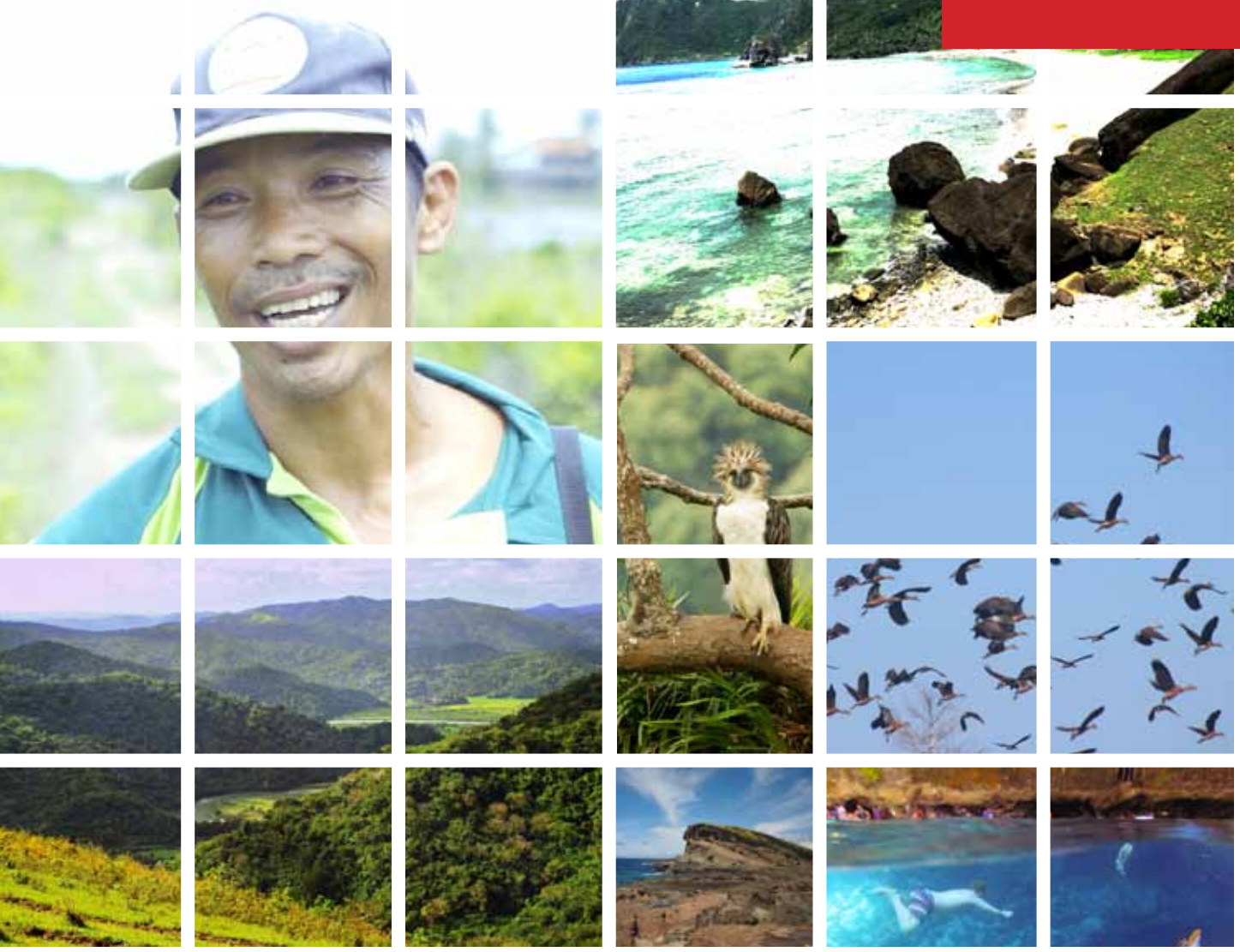
The PAME Project Success Stories



Cooperating to conserve and protect
the Philippines' Key Biodiversity Areas

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

On behalf of

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

of the Federal Republic of Germany

Biodiversity Management Bureau
Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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The PAME Project Success Stories

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Foreword

Unique in purpose and scope, the PAME Project is a proud example of GIZ's commitment to support the conservation of Philippine biodiversity through a holistic approach.

With more than 150 sites of environmental importance, the impact of the PAME Project dots the entire Philippine archipelago. Having started back in October 2012, the Project has steadily gained the repute of delivering trusted capacity development initiatives to its lead government agency, the Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB). Together with the BMB, PAME also helped train individuals from the academe, civil society organisations, and other private partners.

As PAME comes to a close this December 2017, it has left its significant mark across all its supported sites, with some having experiences that rose to become stories worth sharing. These admirable stories of success come most opportune in the wake of a technical legacy that touches on the strengthening of technical capacities, bridging of communication gaps, enhancing management plans, empowering people, and intensifying law enforcement.

Happy reading!

Berthold Schirm
GIZ-PAME Principal Advisor

On behalf of the DENR- Biodiversity Management Bureau, I would like to extend my warmest gratitude and appreciation to the GIZ through the Protected Area Management Enhancement Project (PAME) for partnering with the BMB.

The BMB commends PAME for publishing "PAME Project Success Stories: Cooperating to Conserve the Philippines' Key Biodiversity Areas". We recognize the critical impact of protected areas (PAs) for the conservation of residual tropical biodiversity, and, yet many of these are still being deforested by humans both within and outside of their administrative boundaries.

With the PAME project, we witnessed the increase in management effectiveness scores of 64 existing national protected areas, and the further establishment of 56 new protected areas via local ordinances.

PAME conducted the most extensive capacity development of DENR PA staff since the passage of the NIPAS Act in 1992.

Throughout five years of meaningful partnership, the BMB together with PAME, worked hard to achieve noble targets. Highlighting BMB and PAME's challenges, learnings and innovations through the book provides a tangible piece of our shared work, and hopefully will serve as a useful resource for those involved in conservation efforts.

All the best for GIZ!

Theresa Mundita Lim
DENR-BMB Director

© Photo by DENR Region 3

Acknowledgements

The success stories in this publication show how the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, through the Protected Area Management Enhancement (PAME) Project, has contributed to building capacities of its partners on all levels.

This collection of stories would have not materialized without the full support and enthusiastic response of many individual, partners, agencies, organizations, and institutions.

In particular, the PAME Project wishes to thank the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) for its support and commitment to jointly implementing the project. GIZ would also like to extend its thank all the project regional focal persons who contributed their valuable inputs and comments. In addition, our thanks go out to all the local government units (LGUs) and technical focal persons included in this publication for providing the much needed technical guidance and encouragement in various ways.

On the production side, we are grateful to Ms. Meg Yandoc, who was responsible for the overall editing, having provided her valuable insights on each of the stories.

Last but not least, the production of this publication would not have been possible without the generous financial contributions from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) of the Federal Republic of Germany, under its International Climate Initiative (IKI).

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Introducing the PAME Project

The Protected Area Management Enhancement in the Philippines Project (PAME) is a joint initiative of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH with a 9 million Euro funding support from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) and a 1 million Euro counterpart from the DENR.

The project covers 60 existing protected areas (PAs) within the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) and 100 proposed new protected areas. The PAME Project is implemented from 2013 to 2017.

1 Capacity Development

2 Support 60 existing sites

3 Establish 100 new sites

4 Knowledge Management

The overall goal of the Project is: "Improved protection and management of Key Biodiversity Areas in the Philippines. The proposed action aims to enhance the management of 60 existing PAs, and establish at least 100 new terrestrial or marine PAs under different management regimes (nationally designated or through local legislation) in selected Key Biodiversity Areas."

To achieve the overall goal, the Project proposed to deliver four major outputs in four work packages, namely:

1. Improving management and technical capacity of DENR-BMB;
2. Improving management systems in existing PAs;
3. Establishment of new protected areas; and,
4. Improving knowledge management and awareness raising.

Why protected areas matter

The Philippines is one of the world's 17 mega-biodiverse countries accounting for 70% of the world's species. It has over 52,000 described species, more than half of which cannot be found anywhere else in the world.[1] It is also situated in the most biologically diverse marine region, the Coral Triangle.

However, the Philippines is also a biodiversity hotspot, and is threatened by habitat degradation, overexploitation of natural resources, pollution, climate change, among others. Over 90% of its original forests have been lost. [2] Less than 1% of its coral reefs are in excellent condition. [3] At least 701 species are threatened. [4]

Protected areas (PAs) are the cornerstone of biodiversity conservation. Establishing PAs is a key solution to achieve both environmental protection and sustainable economic growth. When properly managed, a PA's flora and fauna are well-preserved. And, as these flora and fauna thrive, ecosystem goods and services for humans' sustenance and livelihood ideally become more available in the future.

Because of the importance of PAs, Aichi Biodiversity Target #11 particularly aims to have 17% of terrestrial and inland water and 10% of coastal and marine areas be declared and managed as PAs. As of 2014, IUCN reported 15.4% of terrestrial and 8.4% of coastal and marine areas as protected.

Key biodiversity areas (KBAs) in the Philippines are home to globally-threatened species and highly restricted-range/endemic species. Although national government prioritization of PAs include consideration of KBAs, the criteria are not clear. Over 100 KBAs are not protected by the NIPAs and over 100 NIPAS sites are protecting areas of lesser biodiversity value than the un-protected KBAs (Ambal et al., 2012). At the start of the PAME project, 91 of 228 identified KBAs overlapped with the NIPAS sites. [5] Others were less protected legally and, correspondingly lacked the necessary frameworks, mechanisms and resources for protection.

[1] Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2002.

[2] Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2002

[3] Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2015.

[4] IUCN, 2016.

[5] Several PAs may also overlap with one KBA.

The PAME Project Protected Area (PA) Map

Of the Project's supported sites, 64 were existing PAs which observed improved management effectiveness ratings.

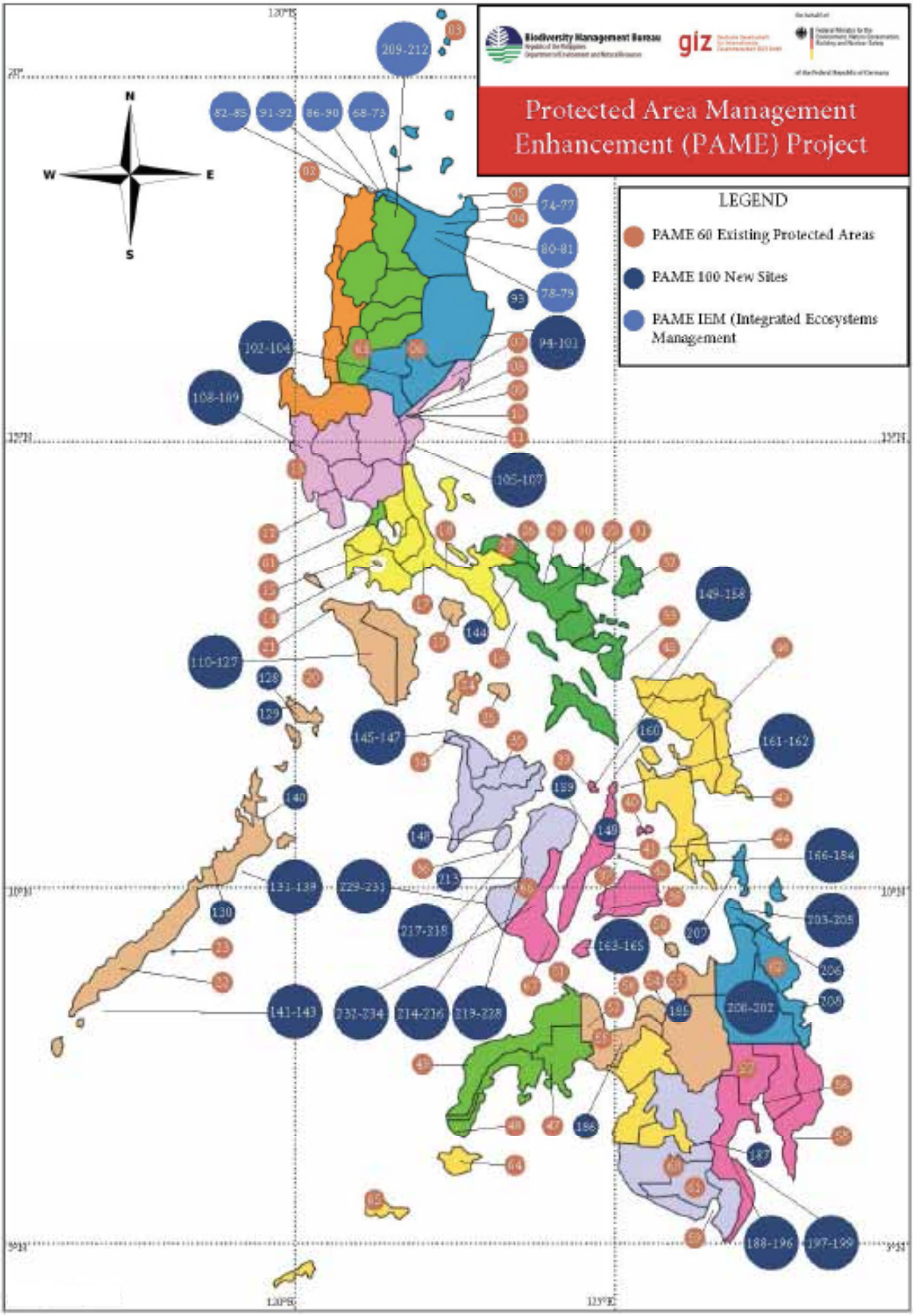
Furthermore, 56 were newly established PAs through the assistance of the Project. Combined, the project was able to make great strides in contributing to the Philippine Development Plan's (PDP) target by increasing the number of PAs under effective management.

This was through the support provided to an equivalent of 1.3 million hectares for the existing national terrestrial PAs (65% of PDP's 2 million hectare target) and 0.3 million hectares for existing national marine PAs (9% of PDP's 3.4 million hectare target).

Meanwhile, the 56 new PAs established span 170,000 hectares, thus covering more than half of the PDP's 300,000 hectare-target.

From Ramsar sites to indigenous lands, and from virgin forests to booming tourist destinations, the PAME hectarage contribution to the PDP, as well to other international environmental commitments, is a testament to how diverse of a background the project worked with.

With over 160 sites of environmental importance, the impact of the PAME Project dots the entire Philippine archipelago.


Biodiversity Management Bureau
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Protected Area Management Enhancement (PAME) Project
LEGEND
PAME 60 Existing Protected Areas
PAME 100 New Sites
PAME IEM (Integrated Ecosystems Management
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74-77
80-81
78-79
94-101
102-104
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219-228
206-202
188-196
197-199
120°E
125°E

Strengthening technical capacities

The PAME Project Success Stories

Biri Larosa Protected Landscape and Seascape · Cuatro Islas Protected Landscape and Seascape · Kalbario-Patapat Natural Park · San Mariano Crocodile Sanctuary

© Photo by Haribon Palawan

© Photo by Mabuwaya Foundation

Improving the Management of Philippine Crocodile Sanctuaries in San Mariano by Establishing Local Conservation Areas

Isabela, Region II

The Philippine crocodile (*Crocodylus mindorensis*) is the world's rarest crocodile. This endemic and critically endangered species is threatened by hunting and habitat loss. Previously widely distributed, one of the last remaining viable wild populations is located in the foothills of the Sierra Madre in the municipality of San Mariano in Isabela Province in Northeast Luzon. Here, about 100 crocodiles survive in several rivers in a human-dominated area outside the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park.

From 2014 to 2016, the Mabuwaya Foundation, funded by the GIZ-PAME project, worked with the barangay governments of municipalities in San Mariano, LGUs and the DENR on crocodile conservation. This project provided local partners with information, tools, and the capacity to establish two new crocodile sanctuaries, improve the management of all eight crocodile sanctuaries, strengthen law enforcement, demarcate the sanctuaries, gather baseline biophysical and socio-economic data and monitor changes.

This project used a holistic approach to a community-based crocodile conservation. Through extensive and continuous communication campaigns, people were informed and engaged in crocodile conservation. Critical habitat areas for the Philippine crocodiles were identified and monitored quarterly during field surveys.

Current land use, land use change, the location of houses, and human population growth were also monitored. Through the engagement of barangay and municipal government officials, the protection of critical crocodile habitat was formalized through barangay and municipal ordinances that declared local crocodile sanctuaries, each with their own rules and regulations.

© Photo by Mabuwaya Foundation

Environmental law enforcement in these sanctuaries is being done by local residents who were trained and deputized as sanctuary guards. A wetland conservation plan identified the responsibilities of various stakeholders to manage the sanctuaries and enforce environmental laws. A crocodile head-start program is in place to assist the still critically small crocodile population to recover.

Through extensive and continuous communication campaigns, people were informed and engaged in crocodile conservation.

Engaging communities in conservation is the key to the success of this program. Awareness and threat surveys formed the basis of a targeted awareness raising campaign. This campaign used passive (posters, calendars, flyers, books), active (theatre shows, puppet shows, school lectures) and interactive means (field visits, community workshops).

Moreover, sustainable development in "crocodile" communities was promoted through agroforestry and reforestation projects, and through projects that aim to minimize crocodile-people conflicts such as livestock predation. Instead of a threat, crocodiles are now generally regarded as something to be proud of in San Mariano.

Improving the Socio-Economic Status of the Community and the Enhancing of Kalbario-Patapat Natural Park (KPNP) Biodiversity

Ilocos Norte, Region I

The Kalbario-Patapat Natural Park (KPNP), which boasts of important and pristine ecosystems, is characterized by old growth forests and is considered part of the last frontier of dipterocarp forests in the Ilocos Region, along with the forests of the adjoining mountain ranges of Cagayan Valley and the Cordillera.

Kalbario-Patapat is well-endowed with several fresh water bodies such as rivers, creeks, waterfalls, and springs that provide ample water supply to adjacent barangays. The Agua Grande supplies water the Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative (INEC) Minihydro at Barangay Pasaleng, Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte. The KPNP covers an area of 5,737 hectares including 1,937 hectares designated as buffer zone.

The level of biodiversity and endemism of KPNP is high, making it one of the top priority sites for conservation in the Philippines.

The KPNP, which is one of the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) in the Philippines with very high priority for conservation, was declared as an additional component of the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) or Republic Act No. 7586, as Natural Park on April 20, 2007 by then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 1275.

The ecosystems within the KPNP have a wide array of wild flora and fauna, largely endemic to this part of the PA and perceived to have caused the evolution of new and sub-species. Further, because of its geological and biophysical characteristics, the level of biodiversity and endemism of KPNP is high, making it one of the top priority sites for conservation in the Philippines.

From 2014 to 2016, the GIZ-PAME, in cooperation with the PAWCZMS – DENR Region I and the Pancian Agro Forestry Association (PAFA), conducted a project on enhancing the biodiversity of the KPNP and improving the socio-economic status of the community. As part of the collaboration, PAME partners conducted the following training workshops for the locals: Mountain Guide Training, Paralegal Training, Disaster Preparedness for KPNP, and Patrolling Activities.

The days of the patrolling activities were doubled when PAME became involved in the assistance of Community patrollers to the Park Rangers, Forest Protection Officers and Protected Area staff.

The project further worked on implementing and enforcing communication plan strategies and recommendations; engaging households and communities in diversified livelihood activities, and generating financial resources for the operation of KPNP.

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Strengthening the Protected Area Management Board in Biri-Larosa Protected Landscape and Seascape (BLPLS)

Northern Samar, Region VIII

The Biri-Larosa Protected Landscape and Seascape, situated in the northernmost of the province of Northern Samar, is famous for its geological wonders known as "Rock Formations", tropical mangroves, and excellent display of benthic life forms. However, these were threatened by infrastructure development.

Beneath its natural beauty were challenges on the protection and management of the BLPLS. Meetings were monopolized, stakeholders' opinions and recommendations were not considered, there was no general management plan, and management zones were not updated following the issuance of the new Implementing Rules and Regulations of the NIPAS.

Moreover, the allocated Integrated Protected Area Fund was insufficient and funds for PASU and PAMB activities were taken out of the regular CENRO and PAWD budget. There was no cooperation, and the voice of the majority was not heard.

This all changed through the partnership formed among the University of Eastern Philippines; the DENR; the Northern Samar Provincial Government/Provincial Tourism Office; local government units of Biri, Lavezares, Rosario, and San Jose; Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and GIZ-PAME.

Together, they aimed to adopt the real good governance concept in managing the protected area by strengthening the capacities of the PAMB.

This partnership strengthened the PAMB, resulting to a strong implementation of the NIPAS in all protected sites and the imposition of penalties for violations – thus reducing the threats to the PAs.

© Photo by DENR Region 8

This new-found strength and unity of the PAMB was also tested against the development of infrastructure within the BLPLS.

The PAMB scored a win for conservation versus development and overturned decisions from regulatory offices, other LGUs, and politicians. Cease and desist orders and penalties were imposed to opposing parties in the construction of a bridge and circumferential road,

The PAMB scored a win for conservation against the development of infrastructure within the BLPLS.

expansion of a resort without clearance, and missing permits.

Working together towards a common goal has improved the collaboration and coordination of efforts among the stakeholders, and better linked the DENR with the LGUs. This also motivated the PAMB in a renewed commitment in protected area management that translates into action.

Because of the change within the PAMB, little by little, attitude change among policy makers and other stakeholders for biodiversity conservation was seen, and the PAMB's efforts sustained.

Managing the Cuatro Islas Protected Landscape and Seascape (CIPLS) Through a Holistic Approach

Leyte, Region VIII

The four islands of Mahaba, Himokilan, Apid, and Digyo make up the 12,500-hectare Cuatro Islas Protected Landscape and Seascape (CIPLS).

It is located in the province of Leyte in Eastern Visayas and is among the PAs under the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) which was declared through Presidential Proclamation No. 123.

After the implementation of the project, a Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) was conducted.

Cuatro Islas' rich and vast aquatic resource is threatened by improper waste disposal, illegal fishing methods and harvesting of aquatic resources and terrestrial plants.

From 2014-2016, the GIZ-PAME Project, together with CIPLS-Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) and its partners, worked to help improve the management of CIPLS with support from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Visayas State University (VSU) Institute of Tropical Ecology and Environmental Management (ITEEM).

PA management, according to the standards of the DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), employs 10 key result areas or major targets, namely: biophysical overview monitored, socio-economic overview monitored, conservation area established, conservation plan updated, partnerships and resources for management secured, boundary/zone markers maintained, behavior of stakeholders improved, compliance improved, benefits captured, and governance changed.

The CIPLS embraced this holistic approach in planning their activities. After the implementation of the project, a Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) was conducted revealing the extent of improvement in management effectiveness for CIPLS. The intervention to the continuing activities of DENR, LGUs and the academe has resulted in more than 300% increase in rating, a gradual improvement from its baseline rating of 18 or below the average of 34 in 2013.

The strong partnership between DENR, the LGUs and the academe paved the way to this significant change in managing the CIPLS. A participatory approach to planning, with active involvement of multi-stakeholders was the major key factor. Multi-level awareness-raising activities resulted to policy formation by PAMB stakeholders, as well as appreciation and behavioral change among the local residents. Violations within the PA have decreased while a huge increase in collective community ownership of Cuatro Islas was observed.

With PAME's support, additional income for the PA's proper management and providing sustainable livelihood resources for the community through ecotourism were achieved. Furthermore, an ecological carrying capacity study to establish limits on tourism activities within the PA was conducted to enable the drafting of the most effective ecotourism plan.

Through the collaboration of all stakeholders, the project proved that PA management should follow a holistic, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach. Moreover, project interventions should likewise be consulted with the community. Understanding the interventions ensure their full cooperation. Ultimately, the benefits of managing the PA should return to the community as an overall improvement in the residents' well-being.

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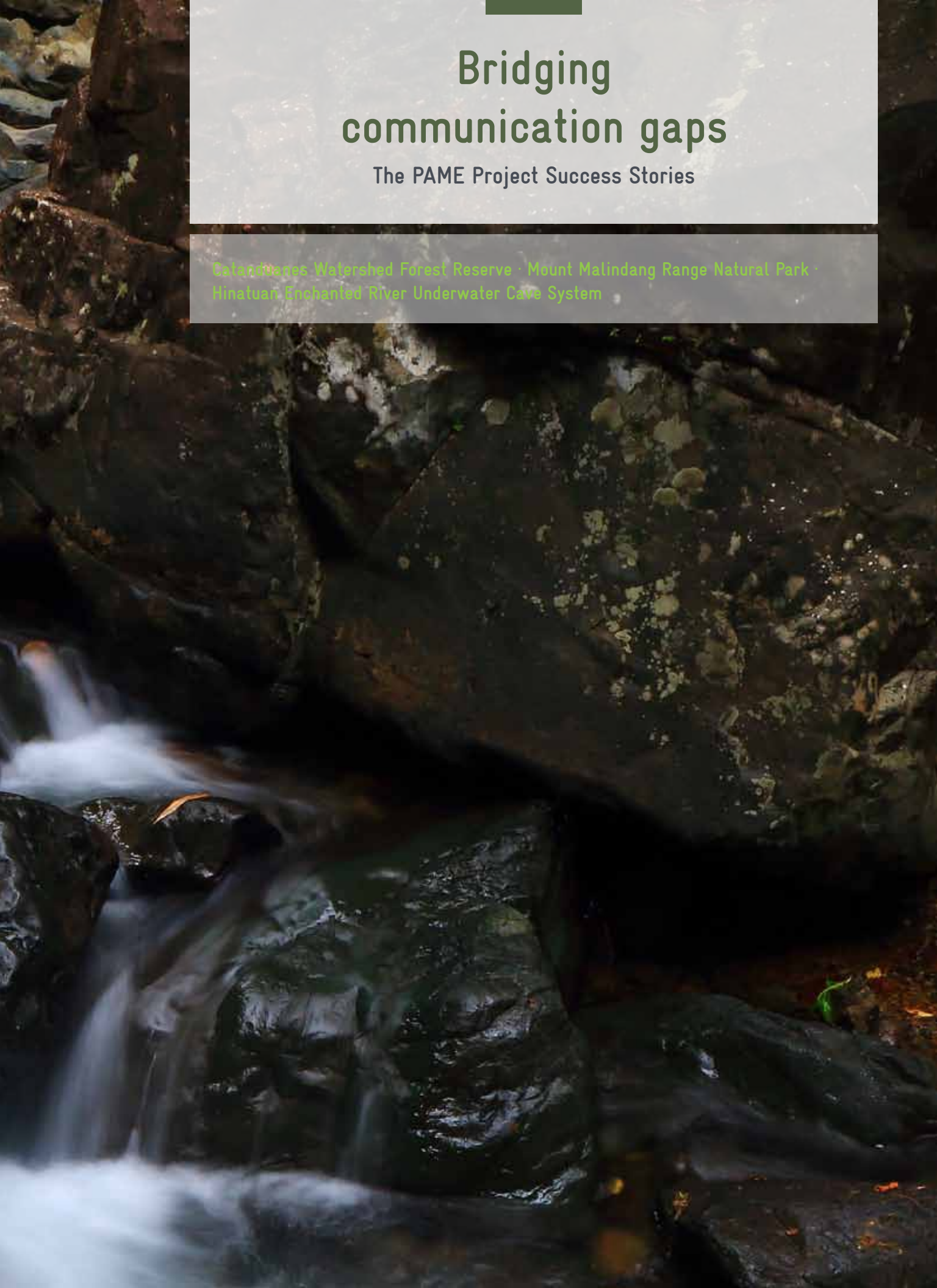
Bridging communication gaps

The PAME Project Success Stories

Catanduanes Watershed Forest Reserve · Mount Malindang Range Natural Park · Hinatuan Enchanted River Underwater Cave System



Establishing Baseline Information Towards Reducing the Threats to the Biodiversity of the Catanduanes Watershed Forest Reserve (CWFR)

Catanduanes, Region V

The CWFR is a 40,000-hectare protected area (PA) in the island province of Catanduanes in the Bicol Region. It is among the PAs under the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS).

From 2015 to 2016, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Catanduanes Sustainable Ecosystems Development, Inc. (ECODEV), with support from GIZ-PAME, embarked on a project that conducted a detailed biodiversity assessment in four chosen municipalities in Catanduanes: Hicming (Virac), Timbaan (San Andres), P. Vera (Viga), and Obi (Caramoran). Results showed that there was moderate to high biodiversity index (qualitative) for birds, dragonflies, butterflies and moths, while the biodiversity index for flora species is high at the upper canopy area.

The project also conducted a parallel study on the level of awareness in biodiversity and conservation, through a baseline knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) survey in the same four sites. Results showed that the communities have low awareness on what important flora and fauna are found within its forests. Half of the respondents believed that the forest resources can never be depleted no matter how much they take from it and that it is not necessary to do anything special to keep the integrity of the forest.

Using results from the studies, the project implementers created a communication campaign which would increase the level of awareness of the community.

The campaign included parades where town officials and mayors volunteered to wear butterfly costumes to show that they were ready to lead the community in conservation efforts.

Science, when communicated strategically to the community, can translate to an increase in community awareness.

They also held exhibits during Wildlife Day, featuring photos of wildlife taken during the biodiversity assessment field work. These activities increased the level of understanding of residents and government officials on the importance of biodiversity protection.

Through the collaboration of a civil society organization and DENR, with support from GIZ-PAME, the project was able to show that science, when communicated strategically to the community, can translate to an increase in community awareness, ownership and accountability of government officials on the importance of biodiversity conservation in their island.

Protecting Mount Malindang Biodiversity Through Capacity Development of Bantay Lasang

Misamis Occidental, Region X

Through the initiative of GIZ-PAME, in collaboration with the DENR-Protected Area Office, the Provincial and Local governments, and Misamis University, more than 560,000 residents benefitted from various measures taken to conserve biodiversity and manage the Mount Malindang Range Natural Park (MMRNP). The cooperation enforced policies and regulations, which culminated in the updating of the MMRNP General Management Plan.

Having trained both the Bantay Lasang and the Peacekeeping volunteers, technology met biodiversity in Misamis Occidental.

The plan takes into account the different aspects of the park's 65 buffer zone barangays in Misamis Occidental, which covers 1,284 floral and 257 faunal species, and the "Subanens" or "river dwellers", the indigenous people of the Zamboanga Peninsula.

In all of its richness of life, MMRNP was included in the list of extremely high conservation priority areas for plants in 2002, and was declared the 30th ASEAN Heritage Park in 2011. Some of the biodiversity names in the MMRNP are the sili-sili and kalingag, valued natively for its known effective medicinal potency. Hence, in order to conserve these, the project also conducted Training on Evidence-Based Biodiversity Protection for both the Bantay Lasang and the Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team volunteers.

In the fruitful attempt to communicate and engage, IEC materials were also utilised to inform stakeholders, raise awareness, and deliver key inputs to the MMRNP General Management Plan.

Having trained both the Bantay Lasang and the Peacekeeping volunteers, technology met biodiversity in Misamis Occidental, ultimately improving the manner of forest protection and resource assessment. The GIS geo-tagging of trees with much economic significance also came to prominence as an important innovation.

Furthermore, the buffer zone barangay environmental management planning was facilitated for capabilities assessment. Thus, with the inter-governmental nature of the project work, it was but inevitable to realise the value of cooperation between different institutions. Task delegation was of much significance, such as having the DENR, in partnership with Misamis University, conduct resource assessment trainings while having the barangays implementing what was learned.

© Photo by DENR Region X

© Photo by L.Hinatuan Tourism Office

Saving Hinatuan's Enchanted River Underwater Cave System

Surigao del Sur, Region XIII

In the sleepy town of Hinatuan in Surigao del Sur lies the Hinatuan Enchanted River, one of the most popular tourist attractions in the Philippines because of its crystal clear waters allowing one to see the river bed at the deepest part. No one knows where the water comes from and flows into the Philippine Sea.

A unique feature of the Enchanted River is its unfathomable depth. The river's unusual colors and unexplored depths have inspired various local legends. One story tells of fairies that added the colors of sapphire and jade to the river giving its unique shade. Local fisher folk also report seeing fish in the river that cannot be caught through any means.
According to locals, it was named the Enchanted River because of the magical beings that dwell there. Legends also say that the river is haunted by supernatural beings, which act as its protectors.

The ER has been scoring high in terms of tourist arrivals since its development in the fourth quarter of 2010. The uncontrolled influx of people puts pressure in the carrying capacity of the area. Its popularity prompted private individuals to construct resorts nearby increasing the number of accommodation facilities, adding pressure to the environment.

Annual figures in May 2016 showed an increasing trend of visitors recording 47,302 visitors averaging to over 1,500 visitors per day with about 3,000 vehicles recorded at the HERUCS parking area averaging to 116 vehicles per day.

In 2014, the DENR with support from the GIZ PAME Project, and in partnership with the Filipino Cave Divers (FCD) and University of San Carlos (USC) Department of Biology in Bacolod conducted a rapid resource assessment (RRA) of the river, a critical step towards sustainable management of the cave system.

The RRA provided a preliminary biophysical profile of the underwater cave system. The research team collected water and sediment samples for analysis, made listings of organisms found inside and outside the caves, and conducted vegetation surveys.

The RRA provided science-based inputs to decision makers of the concerned LGU to better manage these unique ecological resources for longer term. The findings of RRA was enough to convince the LGU to temporarily close it from the public for a few months for major rehabilitations allowing it to heal from significant damages. Moreover, the Management Plan 2017-2022 is implemented under the supervision of HERUCS Management Board.

The river's unusual colors and unexplored depths have inspired various local legends. One story tells of fairies that added the colors of sapphire and jade to the river giving its unique shade.

Activities for conservation, protection and management of the cave and cave resources together with the DENR with support from other concerned agencies such as the Department of Tourism, National Museum, National Historical Institute and concerned barangays, with NGOs and corporate partners and the Province of Surigao del Sur were further intensified.

Some of the major changes include restricted swimming in the lagoon, strictly limiting diving for research purpose, limiting the number of visitors to its carrying capacity. Picnic huts near the lagoon were also removed; passage of heavy vehicles was restricted and all establishment facilities were transferred up to 300 meters away.

The declaration of ER as a local conservation area by the SB further strengthened conservation initiatives.

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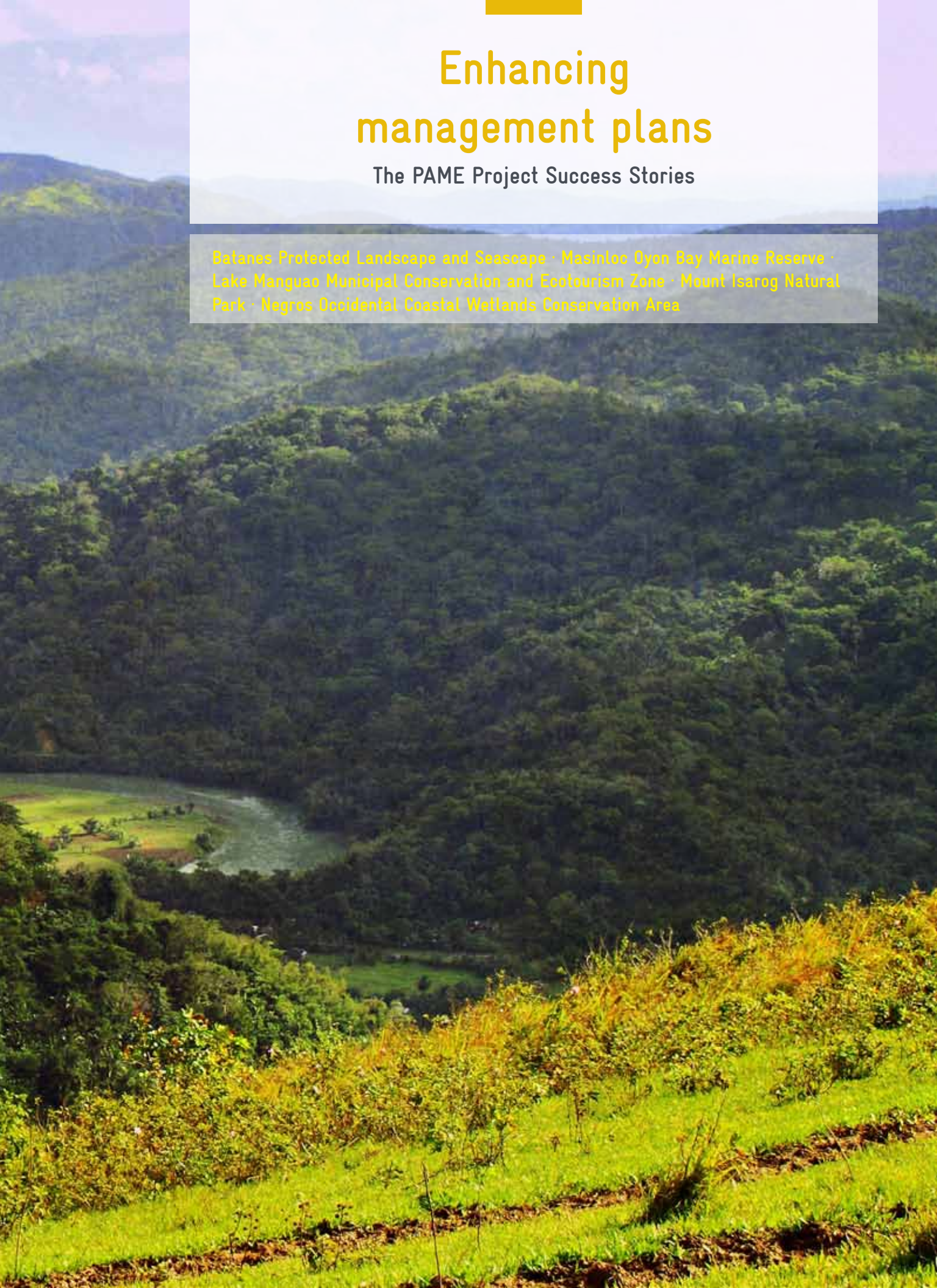
Enhancing management plans

The PAME Project Success Stories

Batanes Protected Landscape and Seascape · Masinloc Oyon Bay Marine Reserve · Lake Manguao Municipal Conservation and Ecotourism Zone · Mount Isarog Natural Park · Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area



Improving the Management of the Batanes Protected Landscape and Seascape (BPLS)

Batanes, Region II

The Batanes Protected Landscape and Seascape(BPLS) is considered a Key Biodiversity Area due to the presence of endemic, rare, threatened and economically important species of flora and fauna. There are 8 species of plants of critical global conservation status found in BPLS. 104 species of birds are also found in the BPLS.

7 threatened and near-threatened faunal species are known to be from Batanes. It is also a wintering area of rare migratory birds. The BPLS was proclaimed as a Protected Area in February 1994 by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 335, and finally established by virtue of Republic Act No. 8991 on January 2, 2000.

But sadly, the island of Batanes is being threatened by encroachment in critical habitats, overgrazing, poaching by Taiwanese fishermen, illegal collection and trade of flora and fauna, and natural calamities, such as super typhoons.

From 2015 to 2016, the GIZ-PAME, in collaboration with the DENR-Batanes, Batanes LGUs, and NGOs, launched a project to update the BPLS Management Plan; capacitate community enforcement groups to be fully functional; increase biodiversity awareness and appreciation; and plan and generate ecotourism activities and employment opportunities.

To address the issue of threatened species, PAME trained 39 individuals and deputized them as Wildlife Enforcement Officers who were involved in the patrolling and monitoring activities of the DENR.

As a result, several rare migratory bird species were recorded in the monitoring sites which were not observed in the previous years.

The heart and soul of the Ivatan is a success story of how they successfully managed in a very harsh environment.

A participative and consultative planning process, and promoting a sense of project ownership were effective ways by which the project was able to support its goals of creating a natural and cultural heritage, an ecotourism management plan, and a monitoring and evaluation plan that links natural and cultural heritage to ecotourism.

With PAME's help, the province was able to receive over EUR 26,000 that were utilised for various conservation and tourism activities, guided by the updating of Batanes' 20-year-old Management Plan which aligned barangay and municipal plans.

The harmonized plan paved the way for adding new areas as strict protection zones including areas rich in Ivatan traditions to ensure that their culture will live on.

Protecting the Masinloc Oyon Bay Marine Reserve (MOBMR) Resources and Conducting Capacity Enhancement

Zambales, Region III

The Masinloc Oyon Bay Marine Reserve (MOBMR) is situated in the province of Zambales. It has mangroves, coral reefs, sea grass, and coastal beaches providing ecological services to the residents in the two municipalities and nearby areas.

The MOBMR was declared as a Marine Reserve in 1993 and is an important source of abundant marine resources such as the "taklobo", sea grass, sea horses, corals, yellow fin tuna, squid, octopus, bangus, lapu-lapu, sea urchin, sea cucumber, Spanish mackerel, seaweeds, and other commercial fishes that provide livelihood to fishermen and the coastal community as a whole.

With the different teams, PAME was able to create a management plan agreement.

The main threats to the MOBMR are destructive resource extraction, unstable fishing practices, siltation and sedimentation, soil erosion, deforestation, mangrove cutting, eutrophication from excessive fish feeding, habitat destruction, inappropriate development directions, and proliferation of occupants.

From 2014-2016, the GIZ-PAME, in collaboration with the DENR, the MOBMR Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), the LGUs of Palauig, and the DA-BFAR, worked on a project that aimed to properly manage all coral reefs, fishes, mangrove and sea grass and human resources within MOBMR, leading to its protection, conservation, sustainable management and to have an agreement on limits of acceptable change.

The project also aimed to prevent the multiplication of the informal settlers inside the MOBMR; to have an updated MOBMR management plan and an updated list of the protected area occupants; to capacitate the law enforcement; to change the behavior of the community inside the PA towards conservation, and increase the awareness of the community.

With the different teams, GIZ-PAME was able to create a management plan agreement facilitated by PAMB, as well as conduct information and communication campaigns for the community to become well-informed and agreeable to measures needed to conserve biodiversity.

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Reducing Threats to Biodiversity and Habitat in Lake Manguao

Palawan, Region IV-B

Lake Manguao is the largest freshwater lake in Palawan. It is located in the municipality of Taytay, in the northernmost tip of the island, surrounded by a hilly catchment of about 4,425 hectares at least 50% of which is original forest.

Key trigger species in the catchment which are listed as Globally Threatened under IUCN include the critically endangered Philippine forest turtle, the Red-headed Flameback, and the IUCN Vulnerable Blue-headed racquet tail, Palawan hornbill. Equally important is the presence of three Lake Manguao-endemic freshwater fishes, including *Puntius bantolanensis, P. manguaonensis*, and *Bosthrycus expatria*, with the latter two also listed as IUCN Vulnerable.

The natural habitat of these species is threatened by timbre poaching, the unregulated collection of non-timber forest products, slash and burn farming methods, and poorly regulated construction of a domestic water supply system.

Thus, the intervention of the technical cooperation of GIZ-PAME came most vital to the work of the local government of Taytay in reducing threats to the KBA biodiversity and habitat.

In order to strengthen the municipal ordinance, a Management Plan was also endorsed by the Municipal Conservtion Area Management Board, later adopted by the Sangguniang Bayan of Taytay in the last quarter of 2015.

The joint effort produced a critical municipal ordinance which promulgated Lake Manguao as a municipal conservation area, with all implementing rules and regulations affixed to it.

The joint effort produced a critical municipal ordinance which promulgated Lake Manguao as a municipal conservation area.

Cognizant of the need to engage the community as well, a communication plan was implemented and enforced, under the mutual guidance and directive of GIZ-PAME and Taytay LGU.

For the experience of the Lake Manguao management, financial management was key. Thus, while employing a socio-econmic analysis, a financial plan was developed and incorporated into the LGU budget.

In turn, it assured further enabling mechanisms and actions that improved the habitat conditions of forest and wildlife populations.

Improving the Management Planning for the Mount Isarog Natural Park (MINP)

Bicol, Region V

The peak of Mount Isarog is never one to disappoint in offering breathtaking views. Wafts of clouds covering its tips, the mountain stands at an elevation of 2,000 metres in the province of Camarines Sur. It is also within an area of more than 10,000 hectares of a natural park that is of protected area status.

However, the environmental wonder of Isarog is also matched by its volcanic threat, which caused the local government to relocate its nearby inhabitants, upon the directive of its disaster risk and reduction plan. The move is coincidentally beneficial to the natural park as it affords the opportunity for biodiversity regrowth in the absence of resource consumption.

Harnessing the power of communication, communities were also engaged in conservation efforts through IEC campaigns and alternative livelihood opportunities.

Apart from the heavy influx of eco-tourism, the preservation of Mount Isarog is also challenged by the expansion of cultivated areas at the foot hills. Other human activities also pose threats to the ecological integrity of the natural park. These include thriving informal settlements, uncoordinated and sprawling land developments, and illegal timbre extraction and poaching.

Threats to biodiversity such as these mentioned are alarming for a protected area that is home to 143 different avian species, 15 of which are Luzon-endemic. Forty eight mammals also occupy the natural park, including one whose species is at the brink of being endangered. Six species, among which are the Isarog Blind Snake and Shrew Mouse, are endemic to MINP as well.

In keeping with its commitment to support environmental conservation efforts, the GIZ-PAME partnered with the Center for Ecosystems and Protected Area Management (CEPAM), the MINP-Protected Area Management Board (MINP-PAMB), the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO-Cam. Sur), the Provincial Government Office (PGO) Camarines Sur, the Office of the Congresswoman of 3rd District, Camarines Sur, and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Provincial Office. This partnership project, which ran from 2014 to 2016, allowed for technical assistance to the management planning of the natural park.

Through the project, the capacity of the MINP-PAMB improved in terms of adaptive management and sound environmental governance. It also focused on reducing the number of households engaged in slash-and-burn and other related ecological threats.

Harnessing the power of communication, communities were also engaged in conservation efforts through IEC campaigns and alternative livelihood opportunities. Noteworthy credit is also owed to the cooperation extended by the barangay and municipal leaders. The joint effort of all those concerned allowed for the sustained conservation of MINP.

© Photo by DENR Region V

giz
PRIORITY SPECIES IN
MOUNT ISAROG NATURAL PARK
Philippine Long-Tailed
UNGGOY
Macaca fascicu
Rufous Hor
KALAW
Buceros hydr
Heart Pigeon
AMPATI
Rattan
HUYO / PALAS
Calamus spp
© Photo by GIZ/Hannah Ebro

Improving th Conservation and Protection Management of Coastal Wetlands in Negros Occidental (NO)

Negros Occidental, Region VI

The realization of the GIZ-PAME project in the Province of Negros Occidental is part of the 25-year work-in-progress of the Provincial Environment Management Office (PEMO) in collaboration with the 10-component cities and municipalities and partners -- which are part of the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area (NOCWCA).

PEMO started to organize and assist 45 Peoples' Organizations (POs) in NOCWCA in collaboration with the 10 LGUs way back in 1996 and in the mid-2000s. With the assistance of the different partners, the level of environmental awareness of the coastal communities especially on the conservation and protection of the coastal resources had increased.

These conservation and protection efforts were further strengthened and everything fell into its proper place when the PAME Project came in 2015 and was fully implemented within 2 years by the Province of Negros Occidental through the Provincial Environment Management Office.

One of the significant results is the involvement of the coastal communities in the conservation and protection, which had definitely increased, especially the 100 Community-Based Environmental Law Enforcers (CBELE) in 10 LGUs who functioned as Bantay Dagat Volunteers, Bantay Katunggan Volunteers, and Wildlife Enforcement Officers.

There is also an added PAME Project in Pulupandan and Bago City, which are the core habitat of the Irrawaddy dolphins. Theses 2 LGUs are part of NOCWCA.

Through the provision of training courses and continuous education, the communities learned how to love and appreciate the birds, the Irrawaddy dolphins, and the coastal wetlands.

With the support provided, PAME therefore helped better the management of NOCWCA as a Ramsar site, the 7th of its designation in the Philippines. It was established as a Ramsar site back in 2016.

When partners are determined to cooperate towards one goal, initiatives such as the PAME Project are sure to last.

Based on the experience of NOCWAMA, sustainability can be achieved if the conservation area is anchored on governance-based policies, attained ecological and human well-being, and implemented using science-based techniques with the participation of people who have a heart for the environment. There is no need to convince the communities to conserve because when people start to realize that they are benefitting from what they have conserved, then they will continue to sustain what they have started.

The NOCWCA Project is a story and a testimony of synergy and collaboration of all stakeholders in conserving coastal wetlands.

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Empowering people

The PAME Project Success Stories

Mount Mingan Philippine Eagle Sanctuary · Green Island Bay · Cleopatra's Needle Protected Area · Taklong Island National Marine Reserve

Establishing a Community-Based Critical Habitat in Mt. Mingan

Nueva Ecija, Region III

Mt. Mingan, located in the center of the Sierra Madre mountain range in the provinces of Nueva Ecija and Aurora, in the Philippines, is home to the critically endangered Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) and about 20 other threatened flora and fauna species.

The Dumagats, the indigenous people of Mt. Mingan, see the Philippine Eagle as sacred. They believe that the presence of Haring Ibon means food is abundant in the area. Thus, they are keen on conserving and protecting the eagle.

Mt. Mingan is known as the center of mammalian endemism in the Philippines but has not been declared as a Protected Area. It is under threat from unregulated hunting causing the local extinction of species such as the giant fruit bat, giant cloud rat, wild pig and deer. Timber poaching and the conversion of forests to agricultural land also contribute to the disintegration of the ecosystem.

From 2014 to 2016, GIZ-PAME and its partners the DENR, the Regional Eagle Watch Team, local CENROs and PENRO; local governments of Gabaldon, Dingalan and San Luis; the Indigenous Peoples Federation of Gabaldon; and the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) of Region 3 and their provincial offices in Aurora and Nueva Ecija, collaborated on a project that aimed to prevent the extinction of many threatened species anchored on the Philippine Eagle by establishing a community-led Critical Habitat in Mt. Mingan KBA; and to enhance the engagement of local stakeholders in biodiversity conservation and CH establishment and management.

© Photo by DENR Region 3

Mt. Mingan is known as the center of mammalian endemism in the Philippines but has not been declared as a Protected Area.

The project also strengthened and expanded the protection of the Sierra Madre Mountain Range, which holds the largest tract of old growth forest in the Philippines, aside from a wealth of diverse endemic flora and faunal species.

Further, GIZ-PAME helped strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders in law enforcement.

Another successful outcome of this project was the discovery of the 2nd Philippine Eagle nest in Mt. Mingan and the creation of the resource and socio-cultural and economic profiles which greatly helped guide the establishment of a Critical Habitat Network for the Philippine Eagle.

Building Protected Area Marine Corridor for the Sustainable Management of Coastal Resources in Green Island Bay

Palawan, Region IV-B

The town of Roxas, located in northwestern Palawan, has a fragile ecosystem and a narrow mountain-to-coast area.

Adjacent to the town is Green Island Bay, which is home to 12 species of seagrass. These 12 species are important nursery and breeding grounds, and a source of food for fish, turtles, dugong, and other aquatic invertebrates.

When marine resources are protected, fishes will always have their homes, and people will have a sustained livelihood.

The ecosystem of Green Island Bay is threatened by illegal fishing using dynamites, the Danish seine fishing, and the use of compressors as an accessory to sodium cyanide fishing; illegal cutting of mangroves, pollution of the freshwater river system such as siltation caused by illegal mining; and the absence of a water-use plan and ordinances to sustain the ecological framework of the coastal area.

Through the GIZ-PAME's efforts, a Comprehensive Water-Use Plan was enforced. Through meetings, patrolling, and threat reduction assessment, the biodiversity baselines were protected and monitored. The biodiversity values of Green Island Bay were updated to 17 coastal barangays. The project also involved protection of coral reefs, mangrove forests and sea grass beds in the coastal areas of Green Island Bay.

The project was able to create an institutional arrangement among NGO, PO, and communities in complementing their local community plans. Thematic maps were developed and used for public hearings and consultations. Community preparedness was done to address sea level rise, seawater intrusions, floods, and droughts in coastal areas through mangrove forest management and other means of adapting to climate change.

With the GIZ-PAME support, the LGU took the initiatives under the local subsidy program to take into consideration a Coastal Zoning that identifies the uses for each zone and redefine the Buffer Zone to Multiple Use Zone which spells out the use of the marine resources.

Roxas LGU is a champion for empowering women. Aside from ensuring that women get positions in the Management Board of the Green Island Bay, the LGU also engage women to lead in patrolling activities and maintain peace and order, especially in apprehending illegal fishers. This unique strategy was found to be effective in guarding their waters. Since their engagement, gears and tools used by illegal fishers were peacefully surrendered. Annual apprehensions of at least three to five cases are being filed in these Barangays. Women also hold 75% of seats in the municipality's Project Management Committee.

The current town mayor believes that empowering women will make big contributions in achieving progress for their municipality.

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Cooperating for Sustainable Livelihood and Eco-Tourism in Cleopatra's Needle Protected Area

Palawan, Region IV-B

The unprotected forests of Cleopatra's Needle, in Palawan, Philippines, and its surrounding valley systems hold several species that make up approximately 85% of Palawan's long list of endemic mammals and birds. Cleopatra's Needle is their last and only safe haven. It is also home to the last remaining 200 members of the Batak Tribe or the mountain people.

The Batak still live in harmony with the forest and their main source of livelihood is the collection of resin, rattan, and honey, which they sell to traders. As the forest is very important for their income, they try to protect it. However, with the decline in forest cover and the influx of outsiders, the Batak have difficulty sustaining their livelihoods. The tribe is trying to find ways to protect their homeland from invaders and to create sustainable livelihood sources while maintaining a balance with nature.

From 2015 to 2016, a multi-stakeholder partnership among Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, LGUs and DENR was created to declare Cleopatra's Needle as a critical habitat. Through the GIZ-PAME, 24 members of the Batak tribe were trained to become eco-tour guides, which enabled them to shift their extractive forest activities into a sustainable one and de-linking them from the consumptive use of flora and fauna in the forest and reducing the rates of habitat conversion and destruction.

The Batak now take much greater care with their rubbish, disposing of it carefully rather than throwing it in the water or anywhere which has a great impact on the development of their ecotourism sites. Most importantly, their attitude, confidence, and skills as tour guides were fully developed from the training courses. As approved by the communities, three tours are offered in the area namely, Pulang Bato Day Adventure, Kaisuka Falls Overnight Tour, and the Summit Hike.

The visitors who come find Cleopatra's Needle beautiful and this has helped heighten the appreciation for its importance.

The GIZ-PAME has also supported the initial community consultations, a baseline biodiversity assessment, and securing Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) from the three Batak Communities. The activities resulted in producing a draft Management Plan for Cleopatra's Needle Critical Habitat (CNCH) and unique and significant research findings.

This project utilized an integrated approach using conservation, livelihood, and education, while incorporating local knowledge and practices in project development to ensure continuing relevance and long-term sustainability.

Recognising the value of the Taklong Island National Marine Reserve (TINMR)

Guimaras, Region VII

The protection which a legal status offers is one of the backbones of protected area management. It is the protection afforded by a congressional enactment which the Taklong Island National Marine Reserve (TINMR) vies for. The team behind its conservation lobbies for an escalated protection due to the rich ecosystems, pristine seascapes, and picturesque views its 1,143 hectares hold.

The promising start was met with much anticipation and support, most especially through visible stakeholder engagement and the steady upward trend of eco-tourism influx.

Dotted by various islets, each shore and mountain of the reserve features different flora and fauna. Given the conservation task ahead, the local government unit of Nueva Valencia was awarded support from the GIZ-PAME in order to achieve the goal of implementing community-based and participatory eco-tourism activities. This objective must be complemented by also coming up with equitable and sustainable financing mechanisms, as well as establishing support amenities and sound policies.

Thus, the Management Board of TINMR first addressed the minimal participation of stakeholders by conducting public consultations and hearings on the Protected Area bill and the drafting of the eco-tourism management plan.

Alongside these, the delineation of management zones and protected area management plan were also reviewed. In working forward, the Management Board conducted regular quarterly meetings to discuss the plans.

The promising start was met with much anticipation and support, most especially through visible stakeholder engagement and the steady upward trend of eco-tourism influx. The zoning of the TINMR was also conducted, resulting to a fair to good condition of the coastal and marine ecosystems. These results were reflected in numbers, as the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores of the reserve exhibited an increase of at least 60% from its 2017 records in contrast with 2013.

Last October 2017, TINMR also bagged the recognition of best managed Marine Protected Area (MPA) at the national Para El Mar awards. It is an annual event spearheaded by the MPA Support Network and organised by the University of the Philippines Diliman Marine Science Institute and Academe.

Throughout the conservation and protection work of the TINMR, institutional support across different levels surfaced to be the primary contributive factor to its accomplishments. The help lent by the BMUB-IKI through GIZ-PAME, together with the aid of the barangay, municipal, and provincial governments proved to be utmost crucial for efforts to revamp the technical and administrative cooperation of TINMR.

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Intensifying law enforcement

The PAME Project Success Stories

Simbahan-Talagas-Talaytay Protected Landscapes · Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary · Poona Piagapo · Mount Matutum Protected Landscape

© Photo by DENR Region 3

Forest Protection, Resource Basic Inventory, and Information Education and Communication for the Simbahan Talagas Protected Landscape (STPL) and the Talaytay Protected Landscape (TPL)

Aurora, Region III

The Simbahan-Talagas Protected Landscape (STPL) and the Talaytay Protected Landscape (TPL) are two of the Protected Areas (PA) of the Philippines located within the Sierra Madre mountain range, in Aurora Province.

The STPL was declared a PA under the Presidential Proclamation no. 905 dated March 22, 1992. It has a dense forest making it an ideal destination for ecotourism. The forest occupants within STPL are about 151 households belonging to different ethnic groups like the Igorot, Ilocano, Ilonggo and Casiguranin, occupying more or less 156.9 hectares which includes their home lots and farmlots.

The TPL, on the other hand, was first declared as the Talaytay River Watershed Forest Reserve by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 670 dated December 3, 1990. Some portions are still undisturbed and considered as a haven for various flora and fauna which needs to be protected and managed in order to preserve its natural condition. It is also the principal source of water for irrigation and domestics purposes of the adjacent barangays. The natural resources and unique land/rock formations may serve as one of the major tourist attractions in the municipality.

These PAs are being promoted by the local government as watershed reserve and ecotourism destinations containing some of the most important patches of tropical forests in this part of the region.

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Its location in the Sierra Madre range provides a rich habitat to a diverse flora and fauna, including several species of amphibians, reptiles, and birds and a diverse reservoir of distinct flora. These PAs are adjacent to each other, forming a biodiversity corridor that is ideal for integrated management.

From 2014 to 2016, the GIZ-PAME, in cooperation with Peoples' Organizations, the Barangay LGUs, the Municipal LGU of

Its location in the Sierra Madre range provides a rich habitat to a diverse flora and fauna, including several species of amphibians, reptiles, and birds and a diverse reservoir of distinct flora.

Dinalungan, DENR , PAMB, and NGOs worked on a project that aimed to reduce the incidence of timber poaching, charcoal production and kaingin to increase awareness of at least 80% of community members on biodiversity conservation; and aimed for at least 20% of community members and other stakeholders to advocate or practice biodiversity conservation activities and measures.

The GIZ-PAME's involvement in the PAs resulted in the conduct of forest protection activities through coordination with local barangay officials, PAMB, protected area occupants, and some concerned citizens of the community. Patrolling activities were also done, which actually reduced the recurrence of illegal activities and threats within the PA.

Enhancing Protected Area Management for the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary (OIWS)

Cebu, Region VII

A patch of biodiversity in urbanized Lapu-Lapu City in Cebu province is the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary (OIWS), a protected area covered by the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992. With an area of 920 hectares, it forms part of the Asian-Australasian Flyway, a path taken by thousands of migratory shorebirds for temporary shelter and as breeding ground. Its incredible environmental importance caused for it to be the first Ramsar site in the Philippines.

In all these measures, the OIWS Management Board was able to cast more attention to the significance of stakeholder consultations.

However, management surveys of the sanctuary showed that there was a considerable need to strengthen law enforcement and the provision of more alternative livelihood opportunities. Thus, heightened participation of the Protected Area Management Board was of concern too. With support from the GIZ-PAME, the OIWS Management Board, and the local government of Lapu-Lapu City reviewed these pressing issues and came up with a set of responsive actions.

In relation to the need for more visible law enforcement, more wildlife officers were deployed in the sanctuary. This contributed significantly to the goal of a more stringent observation of the Environment and Natural Resources Law. A Protected Area Management Plan was also created and formulated to supplement these enforcement strengthening efforts.

In the said plan, management zones were also demarcated and delineated. Meanwhile, in relation to the need for more livelihood opportunities, project proposals were filed in order to draft a People's Organisation Business Plan. The plan also paved for the formulation of eco-tourism projects and packages. Information, education, and communication (IEC) strategies were also undertaken to spur awareness about the sanctuary and the biodiversity it houses.

These steps resulted in improved protection measures such as apprehensions, patrols, and biodiversity monitoring census. The OIWS Management Plan was also updated through PA planning, legal, financial, and monitoring frameworks. Ecotourism and business planning sessions were also drafted for an enhanced registration of protected area occupants (E-SRPAO). These mentioned tour packages may come opportune in light of the start of public awareness campaigns. These campaigns focused heavily on the avian biodiversity value of the sanctuary.

In all these measures, the OIWS Management Board was able to cast more attention to the significance of stakeholder consultations, priority setting, and the revamping of its bureaucratization. It was in their understanding that these would lead to the ultimate achievement of a holistic improvement of the conservation of the sanctuary.

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Harnessing Islamic Principles and Maranao Culture in Local Capacity Building for Forest and Biodiversity Conservation of Mt. Gurain in Poona Piagapo

Lanao del Norte, Region X

The Mt. Gurain mountain range in the Municipality of Poona Piagapo, Province of Lanao del Norte in Mindanao, Philippines, is a major part of the Munai-Tambo Complex Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). In local folklore, Mt. Gurain is one of the homes of the Tarabusao (monster), and the Maranaos believe that when Mt. Gurain is disturbed, the Tarabusao becomes angry and inflicts harm on the people. Thus, old Maranaos and the Sultans stopped logging Mt. Gurain.

However, they were caught in dilemma because their families depended on the forest for timber poaching as the main source of income of the 132 households in the area.

From 2014 to 2016, the GIZ-PAME partnered with the Municipal LGU of Poona Piagapo, the Provincial LGU of Lanao del Norte, DENR – City Environment Natural Resources Office, Iligan City, and the AFP- Philippine Army and embarked on a project that aimed to reduce by at least 70% the timber poaching activity in Mt. Gurain.

As a result, the remaining forest resources and biodiversity of Mt. Gurain were protected. Forest cover projected was improved by harnessing Islamic environmental stewardship principles and Maranao culture, strengthening enforcement of protection policies and by providing support to alternative and sustainable livelihoods for the timber poachers.

The fast-tracking of the approval of the Poona Piagapo ordinance helped in protecting, preserving, and conserving the remaining forest of Poona Piagapo. Further implementation of forest laws by government agencies responsible for the protection, management and development of biodiversity is needed to move forward.

The fast-tracking of the approval of the Poona Piagapo ordinance helped in protecting, preserving, and conserving the remaining forest of Poona Piagapo.

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Promoting Environmental Awareness and Planning Through Community-Based Law Enforcement (CBLE) in Mount Matutum

South Cotobato, Region XII

In southeastern Mindanao lies the Mount Matutum Protected Landscape (MMPL), an over-logged forest with 52% denuded areas. Proclaimed in 2016 as a Protected Landscape, the MMPL was losing its endemic biodiversity due to unregulated hunting of wildlife such as bats, wild pigs, mountain deer, and other mammals. Changes in the environment also resulted in the loss of several tree species.

Through good collaboration, policies set by the PAMB were realized such as a 1-year moratorium which resulted to minimized cutting of trees

The MMPL was threatened by illegal logging, hunting, and charcoal-making, leading to wildlife degradation, and eventually, wildlife extinction. The lack of Protected Area (PA) policy enforcement was evident and the residents had low awareness on the importance of the forest ecosystem and had no other source of livelihood and income.

From 2014 to 2016, the GIZ –PAME, in cooperation with the MMPL management, the DENR, LGUs, and NGOs, conducted a project to enhance the enforcement of PA laws and regulations and to heighten the awareness on biodiversity conservation.

The project utilized radio plugs which were effective in increasing the awareness of the PA occupants who were empowered with knowledge on prevailing rules and regulation, policies, and laws being implemented by the government and the PAMB.

Through good collaboration, policies set by the PAMB were realized such as a 1-year moratorium which resulted in minimized cutting of trees within MMPL; a 100% ban on charcoal-making within MMPL; and the collection of fines and penalties from trekkers without permits, poachers, and illegal treasure hunters.

The GIZ-PAME also successfully commissioned a bio-physical survey of the municipality and conducted training courses for the local residents and leaders to do the quarterly Biodiversity Monitoring System.

In the past, the barangays were adamant in enforcing PAMB policies, laws, and rules. With the passage of CBLE- IRP defining the scope and limitations of powers, the barangays can now call for an administrative hearing. If there was no agreement reached between the complainant and the respondents after a series of mediations and hearings, the issues are then endorsed to the PASU. If the issues are punishable by fines and penalties, the CBLE committees can penalize the offenders through the issuance of citation tickets or impose outright fines and penalties.

Empowering the communities through CBLE is one of the successes of this program. The challenge is the continuous capacitation of the communities, given the very limited funds of MMPL and PAMB.

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