



Process Evaluation of Critical Area Protection in the Philippines :

National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) and Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS)

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Outline:

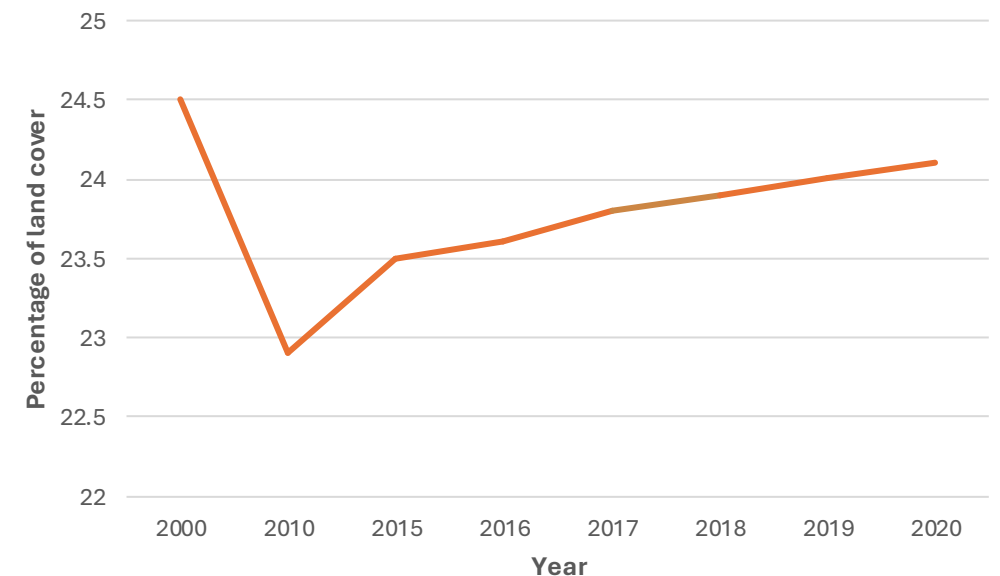
01	Background/Context
02	Overview of the augmented provisions of the ENIPAS Act of 2018
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04	Conceptual Framework
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Background

Only 24.1% of the Philippines' land area remains forested (DENR-FMB, 2022).¹

- Key issues: **logging, poaching, kaingin, conversion of forests to plantations, agroforestry or fishponds, grazing, mining, road construction, dam construction, typhoons, floods, landslides** (FMB Technical Working Group, 2023).
- Of the 6.8 million hectares of the remaining forest cover, around 2.7 million ha or 39% are protected areas (DENR-BMB, 2015).

Figure 1. Philippine Forest Cover 2000-2020



Source: lifted from Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (2023)

¹Source: DENR-FMB's Philippine Forestry Statistics 2022

- Protected area designation addresses key issues and sustains biodiversity.
- Guided by the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) Act of 1992, later expanded under the E-NIPAS Act of 2018.
- **Protected area** is defined by both legislation as: *“land and water with unique physical and biological significance that are managed to enhance biological diversity and protect against destructive human exploitation.”*

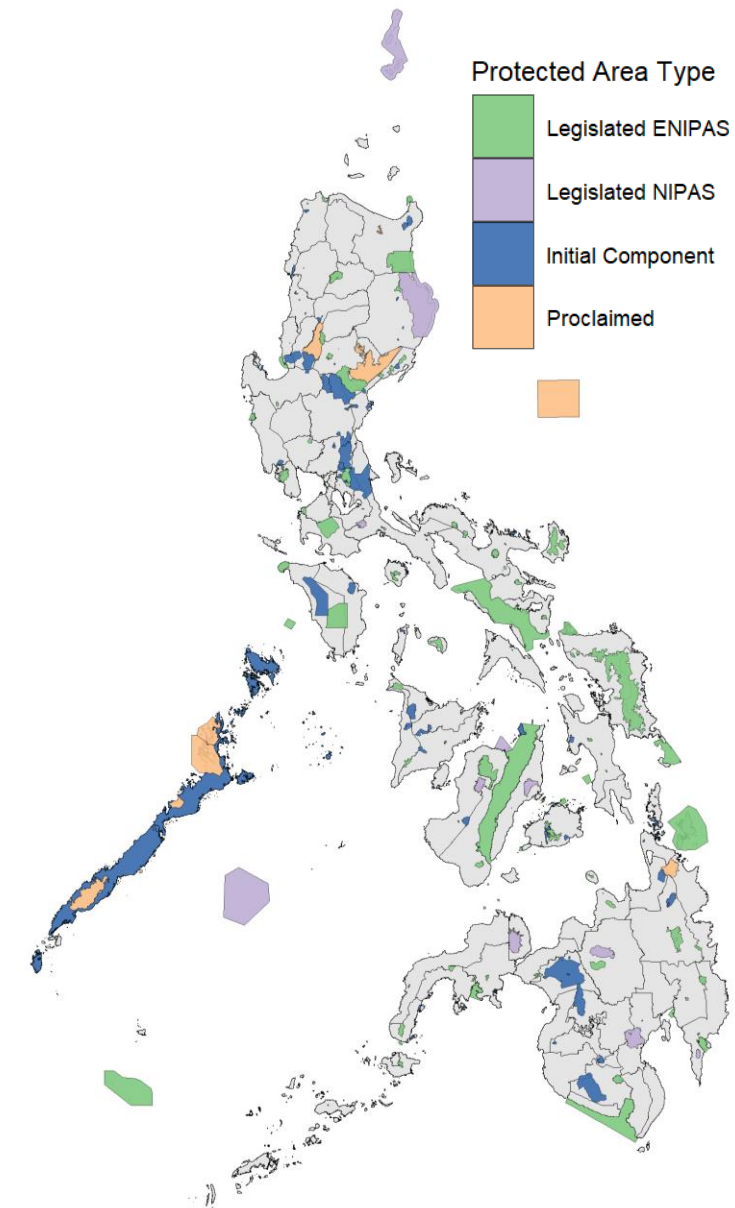


Figure 2. Philippine map of protected areas per status

Table 1. Status of Protected Areas in the Philippines

Total No. of PAs	Legislated Pas	Proclaimed Pas	Initial Component
251	121	12	117

- **Many protected areas in the country overlap with ancestral domains of Indigenous Peoples**, who have long practiced traditional forest management and stewardship.
 - Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) overlap with **1.44 million hectares of Protected areas** and **1.35 million hectares of key biodiversity areas**².
 - As of 2023, 257 Ancestral Domains were approved CADTs but only 55 (22 percent) of these were fully registered and 202 (78 percent) were still pending registration with Land Registration Authority.



Source: Photo taken during the fieldwork by the authors

²Source: World Bank's No data, no story: Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines (2024)

Overview of the augmented provisions under the ENIPAS Act of 2018 (RA 1103)

Sections	RA 7586	RA 11038
Establishment & Coverage	17 initial PAs, land-use plan only	94 new PAs, land & water use plans, NAMRIA-certified boundaries; includes private lands.
Zoning	Multiple zones (Strict Protection, Sustainable Use, Restoration, Habitat, Multi-Use, Buffer, Cultural, Recreational, Special Use).	Simplified to Strict Protection and Multiple Use Zones.
Management & Administration	DENR-PAWD for national, PAMB for site-level management.	DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau for national, PAMB for site-level management, Protected Area Management Office (PAMO) with permanent staff; DENR retains oversight over areas managed by other agencies.
Penalties	₱5,000–₱500,000 fine; 1–6 years imprisonment.	₱50,000–₱5,000,000 fine; 1–12 years imprisonment.
PAMB	DENR, LGUs, tribal reps, NGOs; 5-year term, no compensation except travel expenses.	Expanded membership including governors, congressmen, IP/ICC reps, private sector, academic institutions; terms aligned with official positions or 3 years for NGOs/IPs; committees for coordination.
Ancestral Domains & Rights	Extensive proof required for claims.	Recognizes CADT/CALT, uses Community Conservation Plans, requires FPIC for developments in ancestral areas, Coordination Committees for shared areas.

Objectives:

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive process evaluation of the NIPAS to ENIPAS policy augmentation more than three decades after the initial implementation. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- a) document functional policy and institutional changes upon the passing of the ENIPAS Act in 2018;
- b) identify policy weaknesses and implementation gaps, if any; and;
- c) propose actionable recommendations to strengthen the protection and management of the country's protected areas.

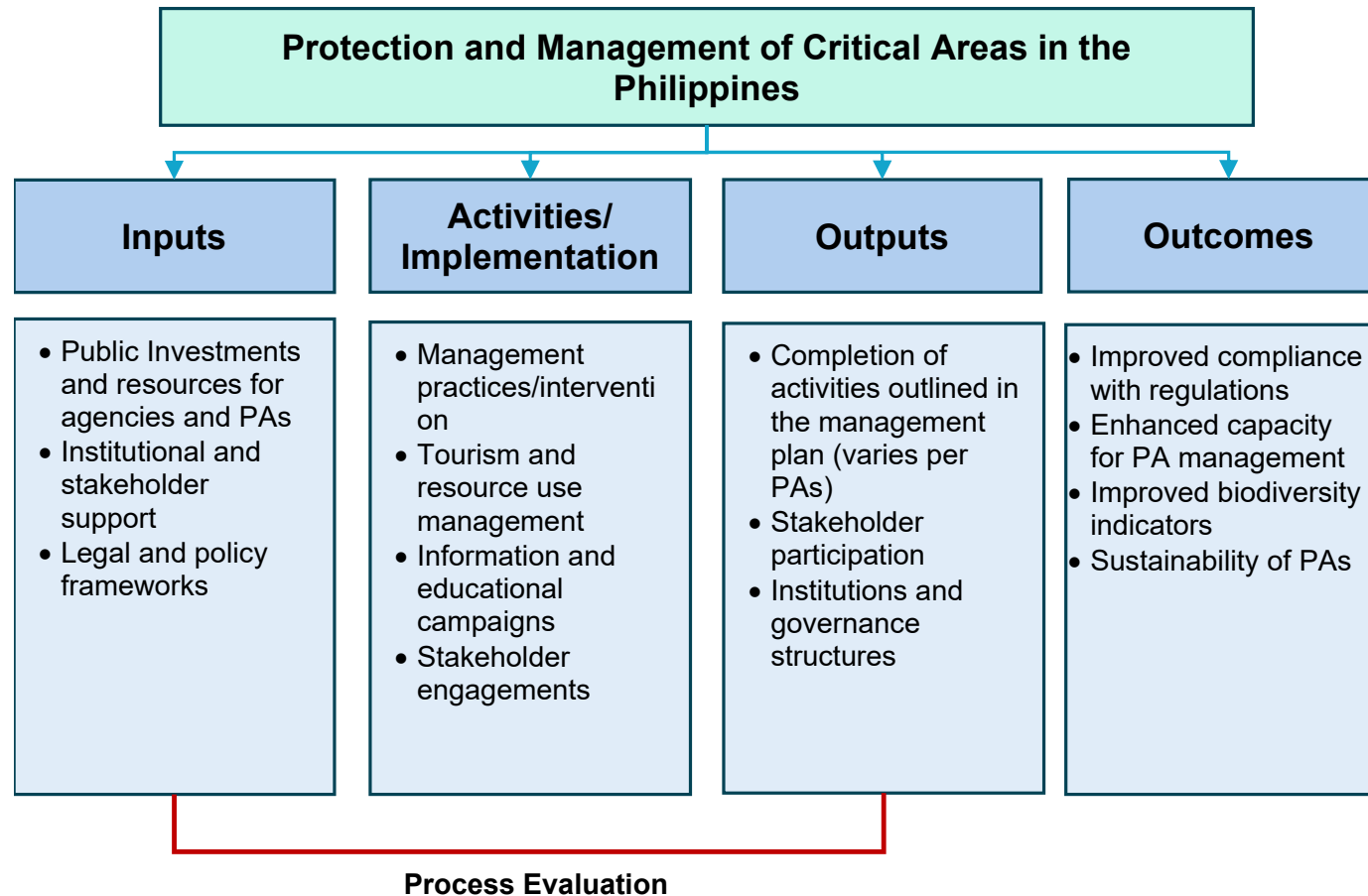
Policy questions:

The study seeks to answer the following policy questions:

1. What is the status of the grounding of the ENIPAS Act of 2018?
2. Have there been significant changes in the PAPs and resources related to the protection and management of protected areas after 5 years?
3. What policy and institutional enhancements are necessary to facilitate the grounding of E-NIPAS and bolster the protection of critical areas?

Conceptual Framework

Figure 3. Theory of Change of PA Management anchored on IUCN-WCPA Framework



Outputs and Indicative Intermediate outcomes with ENIPAS: *Governance Reforms*

Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader inclusiveness: inclusion of legislators (e.g. Senators and District Representatives), LGUs, private sector, academic institutions, and selected NGAs • Maintains DENR leadership (via RED), CSOs, and IP representations • Supposed enhanced technical and political support for better decision-making.
Institutionalization of Protected Area Management Office (PAMO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PASu heads the on-the-ground management and implementation of the PAs. • Amended law provided for more staff, increased funding control, and stronger reporting/monitoring.

Outputs and Indicative Intermediate outcomes with ENIPAS: *Legal and tenurial changes*

Expansion of legal coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic inclusion of 94 PAs • Streamlines future PA establishments, still led by DENR and stakeholders
Tenurial instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancestral domains: CADCs → CADTs under IPRA • Community-based tenure institutionalized via Protected Area Community-Based Resource Management Agreement (PACBRMA) • Regulated commercial/special uses permit (SAPA)

Outputs and Indicative Intermediate outcomes with ENIPAS: Financing Changes

NIPAS budget vs. ENIPAS Budget

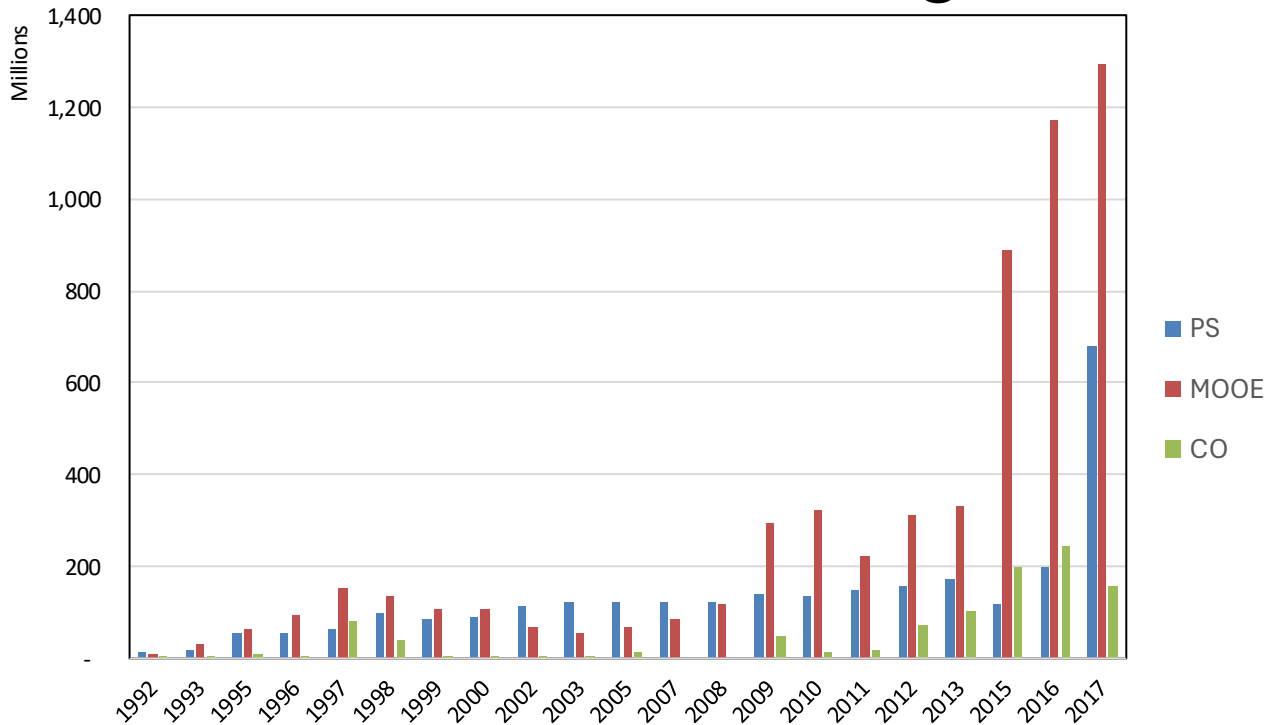


Figure 4. General Appropriations for PA Management by General Expense Class during the NIPAS Years (1992-2017) (in million pesos)

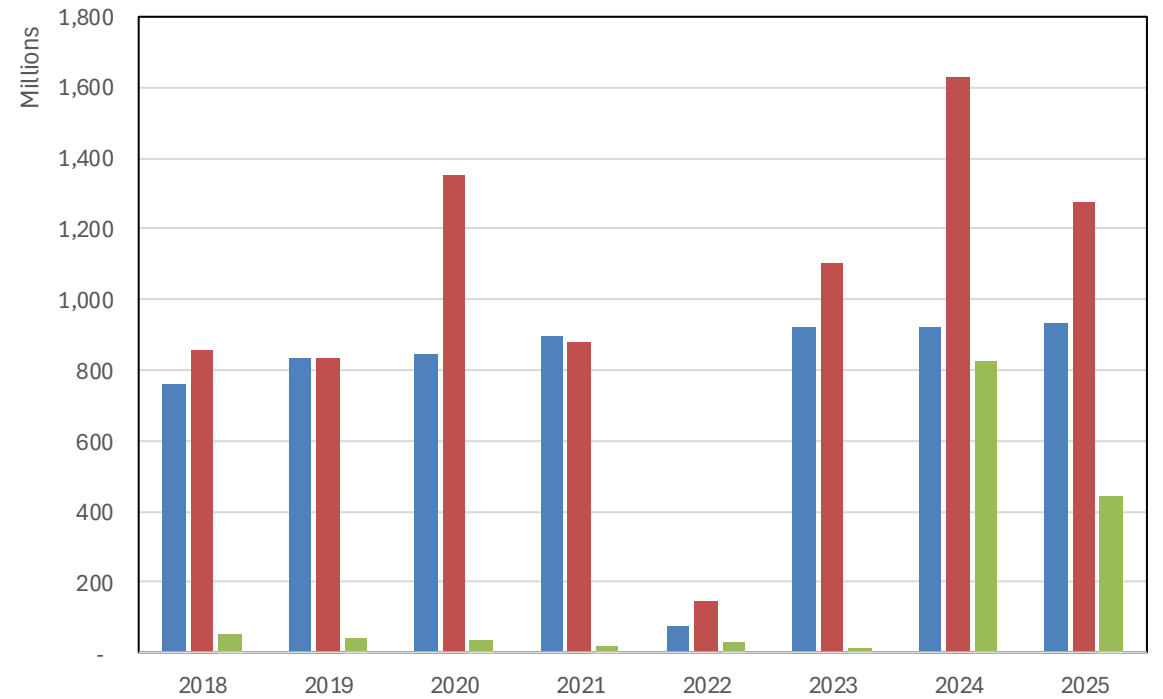


Figure 5. General Appropriations for PA Management by General Expense Class during the ENIPAS Years (2018-2025) (in million pesos)

Outputs and Intermediate outcomes with ENIPAS: *Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF)*

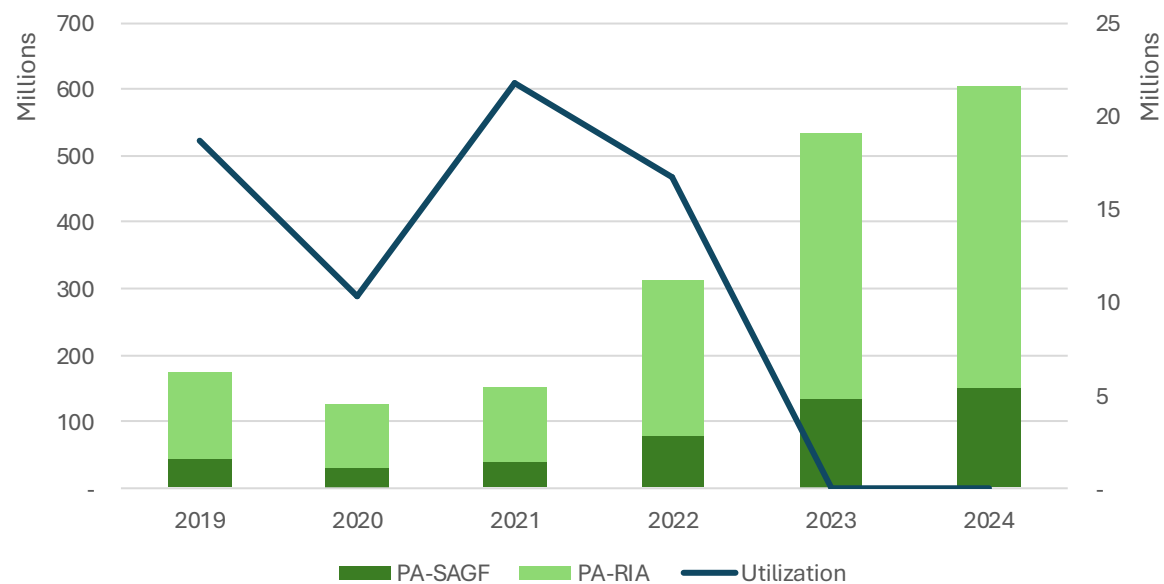


Figure 6. Total Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF) and Utilization by year for CY 2019-2024

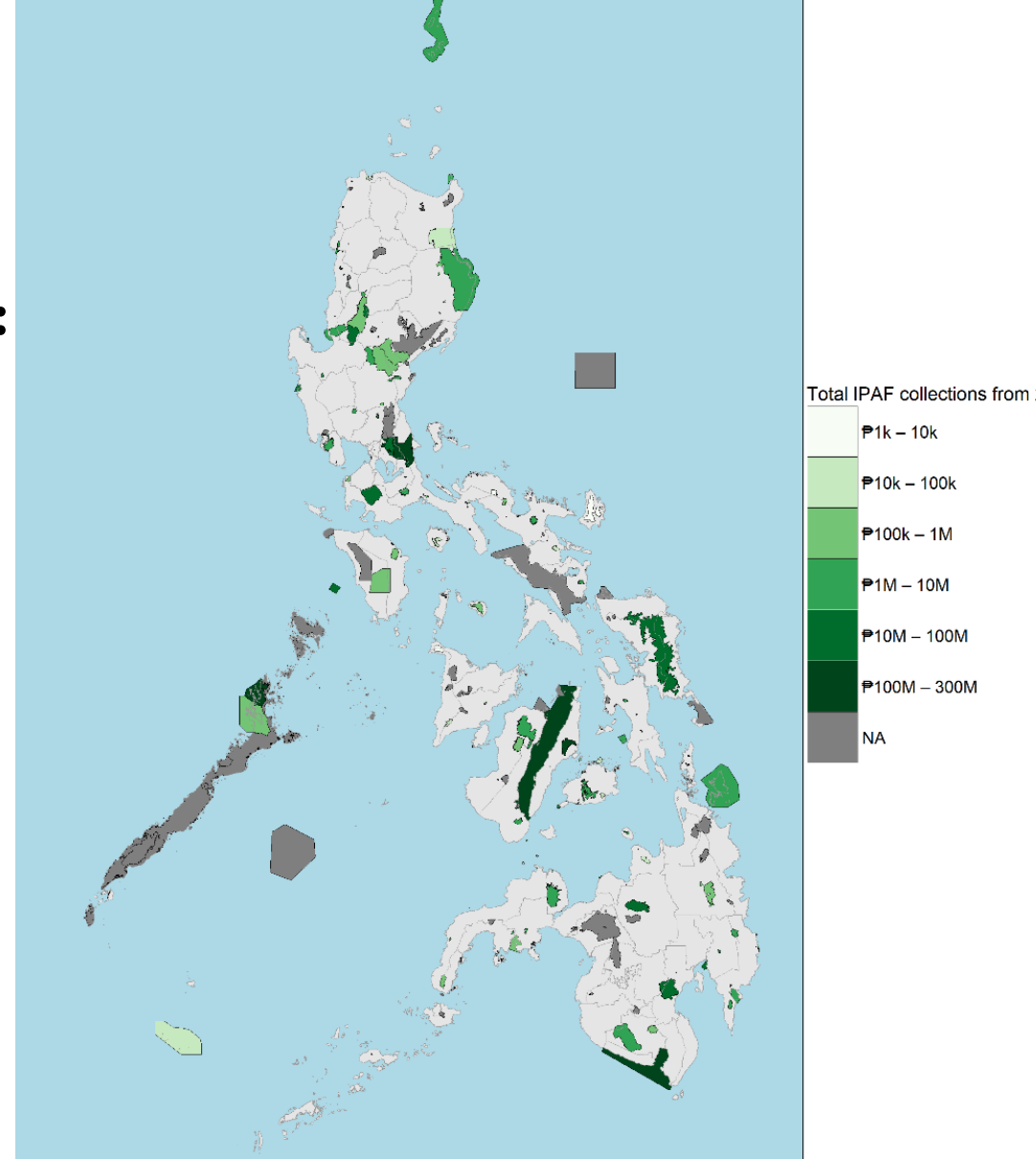
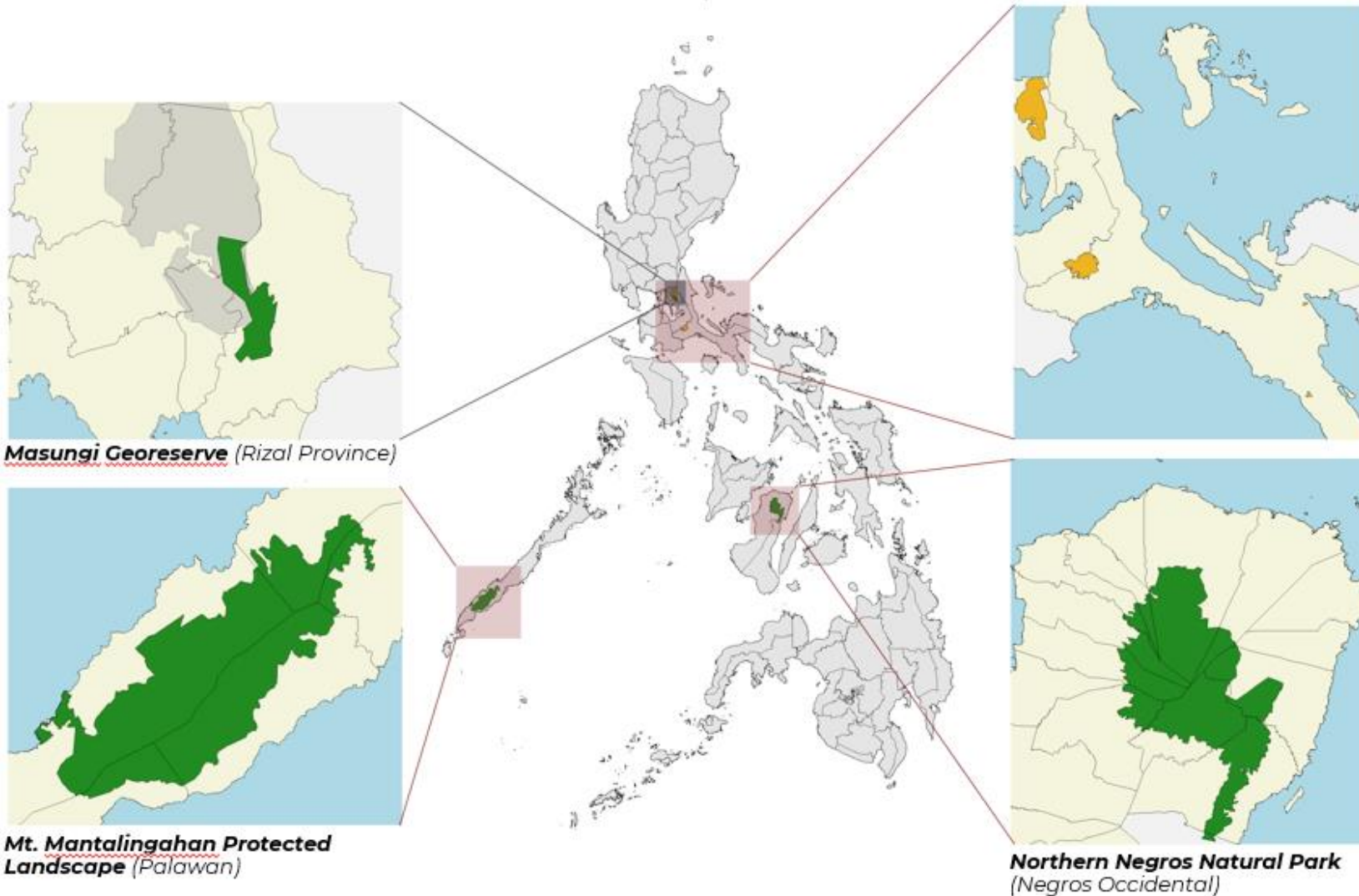


Figure 7. Total IPAF generated per protected area 2016-2024

Case Study Sites



Additional case study sites

(Rizal, Laguna and Quezon Province)

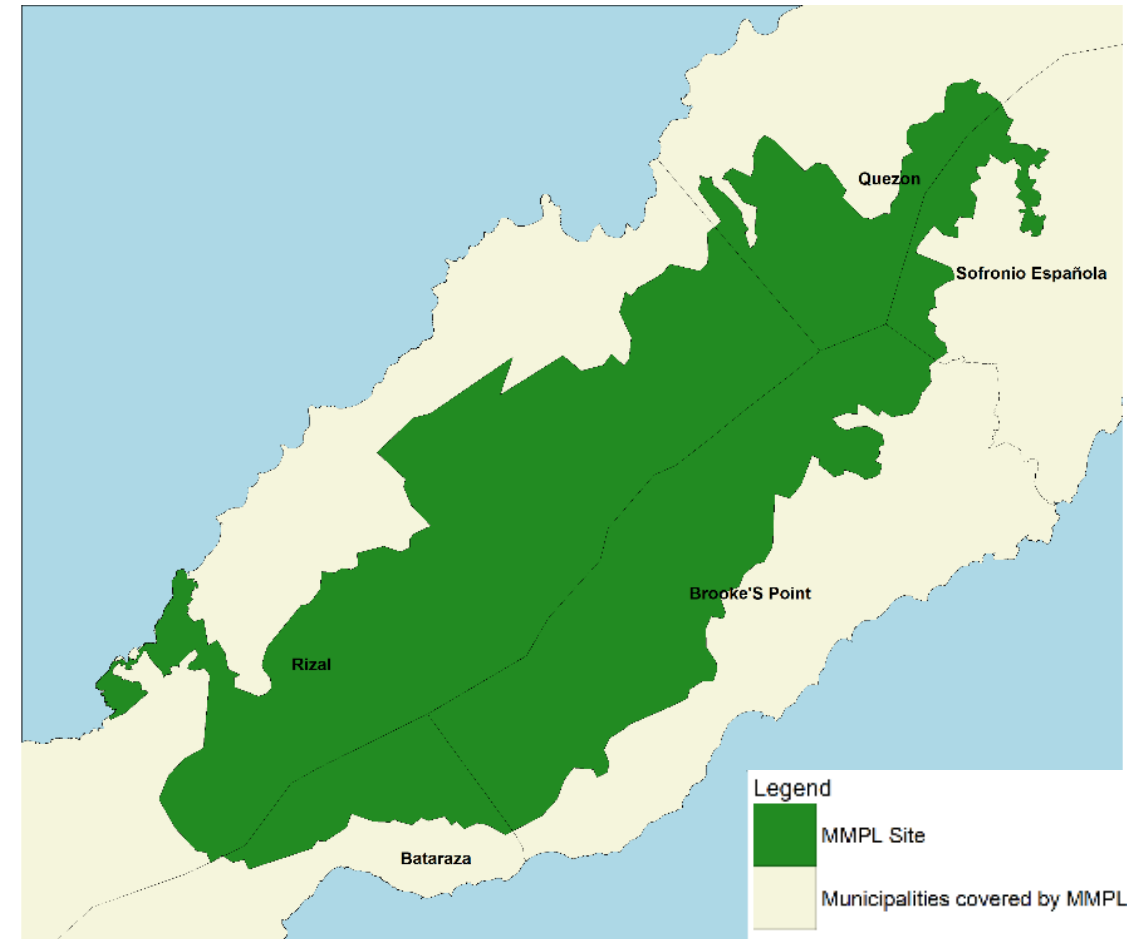
- Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape
- Mts. Banahaw-San Cristobal Protected Landscape
- Maulawin Spring Protected Landscape
- Buenavista Protected Landscape

Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape (MMPL)

Site Overview

- One of the eight protected areas in Palawan.
- **Total area:** 120,457 ha
- **Spans five municipalities:** Bataraza, Brooke's Point, Quezon, Rizal, Sofronio Española
- **Legislation status:** Proclaimed as a protected landscape on June 23, 2009 (Presidential Proclamation 1815)
- One of Alliance for Zero Extinction Sites.

Figure 8. Map of MMPL and municipalities covered

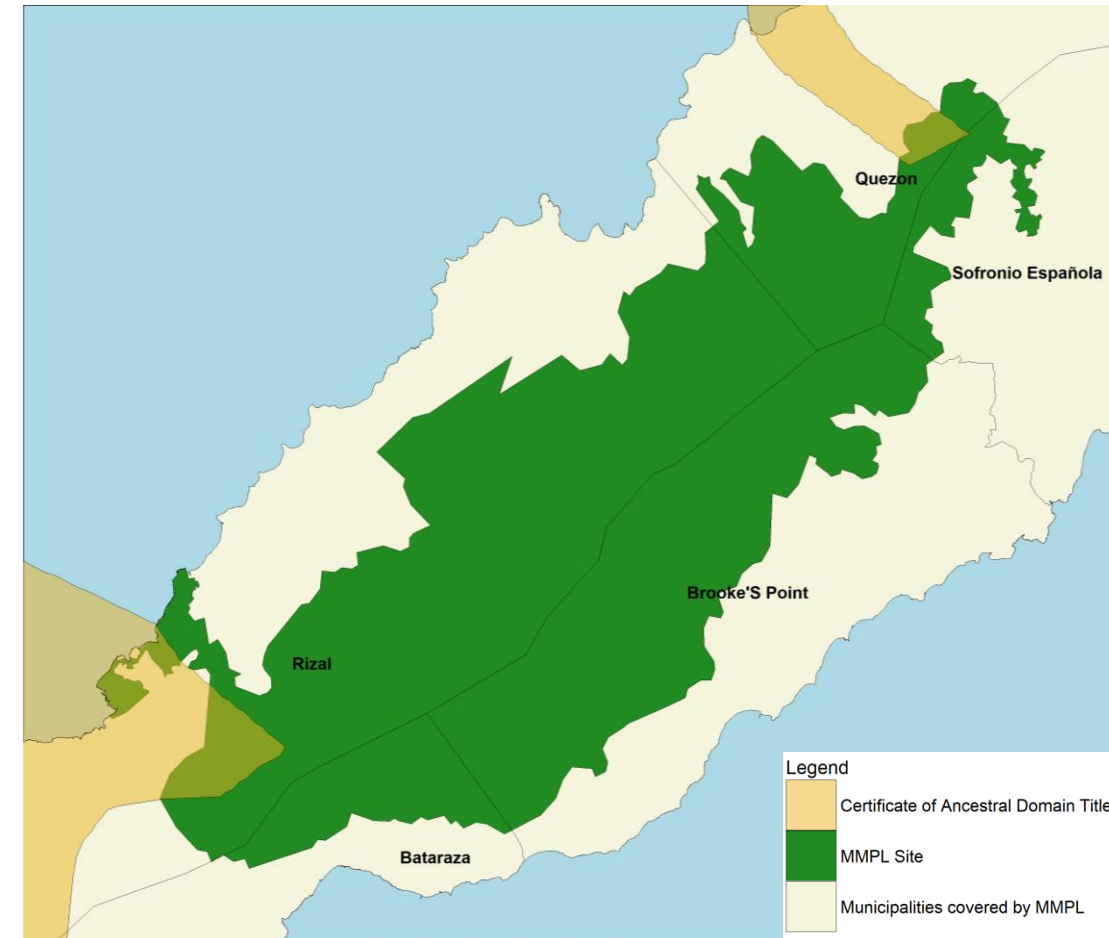


Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape (MMPL)

Changes brought by ENIPAS	Description
Institutional and Management Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded PAMO Staffing (from single PASu to multi-person functional office) Changes in PAMB Composition (including removal of select institutions)
Socioeconomic and community impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population changes based on 2010 and 2019 SRPAO Former illegal resource users have been engage as informants and community partners, contributing valuable local intelligence for enforcement
Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in budget since 2018, but still operates with limited resources IPAF remains inactive, preventing access to collected tourism fees. Endowment fund provided by external partners (Conservation Internationale) to provide sustainable financing
Ecological and conservation outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased in closed forest areas from 2010 to 2020 (suggesting recovery or regrowth) Pressures from settlement expansion, conversion of forests to agriculture and infrastructure development continue to threaten forest integrity Mining activities within the PA/buffer zone remain a critical conservation concern

Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape (MMPL)

- MMPL occupants comprise 15% of the total IP population in municipalities within MMPL.
- Practice: swidden (uma), hunting and gathering
- Possess extensive traditional ecological knowledge about local biodiversity and forest management.
- Indigenous communities participate in community monitoring and forest protected, and some serve as **informants or conservation partners**.



Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape (MMPL): *Remaining threats and pressures*

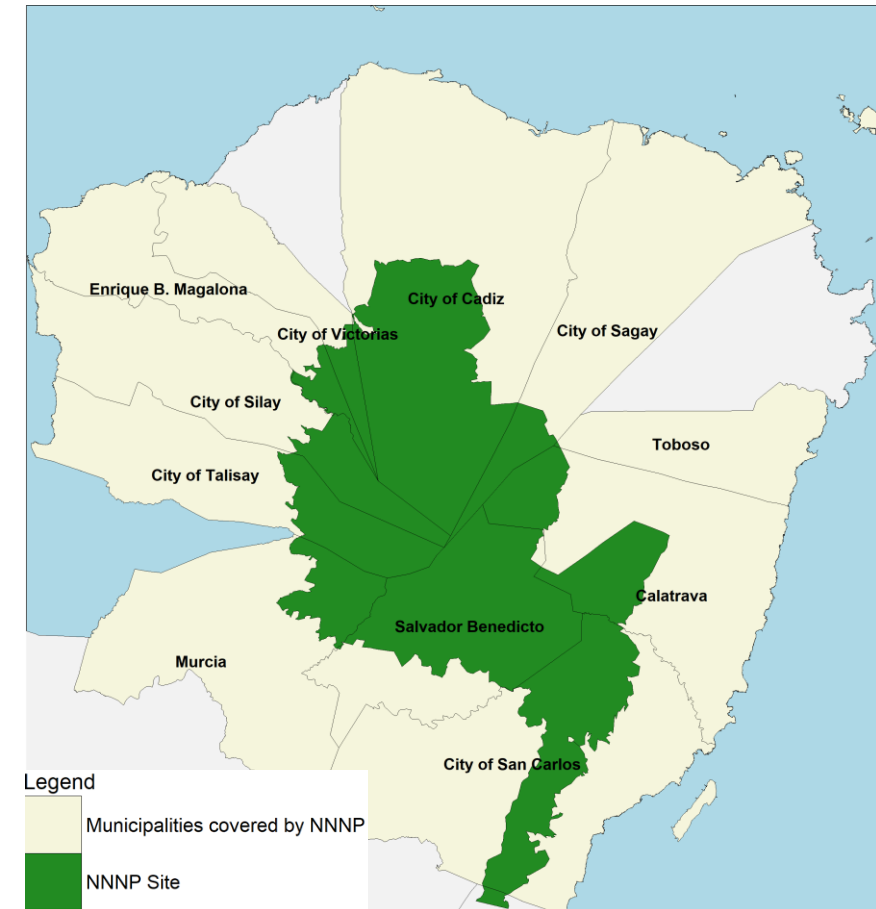
Protected Area Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent illegal activities such as illegal logging, land conversion, mining operations (predates the PA's proclamation), and the expansion or sale of land by tenured migrants • Traditional <i>uma</i> can contribute to forest loss when practiced widely. • Pressures for infrastructure and development (e.g. road construction)
Key issues affecting IPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing traditional land use and conservation rules. • Limited representation in the PAMB • Pressures from mining, land conversion, and infrastructure development. • Socioeconomic constraints and limited livelihood alternatives. • Native title/traditional rights vs CADT

Northern Negros Natural Park (NNNP)

Site Overview

- The largest forested area in the Visayas Region.
- **Total area:** 70,826.16 ha
- **Spans six cities** (Talisay, Silay, Victorias, Cadiz, Sagay, San Carlos) and **five municipalities** (E.B. Magalona, Murcia, Toboso, Calatrava, Don Salvador Benedicto)
- **Legislation status:** Declared a protected area under ENIPAS Act of 2018
- Recognized as an important bird area due to its high biodiversity and presence of globally threatened species.
- The Ati inhabit the mountainous, forested areas within the NNNP.
- As of 2025, only one IP community within the NNNP has been officially awarded a CADT.

Figure 10. Map of NNNP and municipalities/cities covered



Northern Negros Natural Park (NANNP)

Changes brought by ENIPAS	Description
Institutional and Management Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management changed from Northern Negros Forestry Reserve Management Council to NANNP PAMO and PAMB • The PASu concurrently serves as DENR-PENRO, leading to shared offices, facilities and divided responsibilities. • Support provided by other DENR offices (e.g. CENRO Bago)
Socioeconomic and community impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 % of residents within the NANNP depend on natural resources also found inside the PA • Agriculture is the main livelihood within the PA.
Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for the management of the area mainly comes from DENR via PENRO Negros Occidental • Personnel services budget remain low, restricting hiring of permanent staff. • NANNP is the highest IPAF earner in the region. • Access to IPAF remain slow and unclear due to lacking guidelines.
Ecological and conservation outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 2010 and 2020, closed forest (16,506 → 20,731 ha), open forest, and mangroves slightly increased. • Built-up areas also grew significantly (14,782 → 25,403 ha)

Northern Negros Natural Park (NNNP): *Remaining threats and pressures*

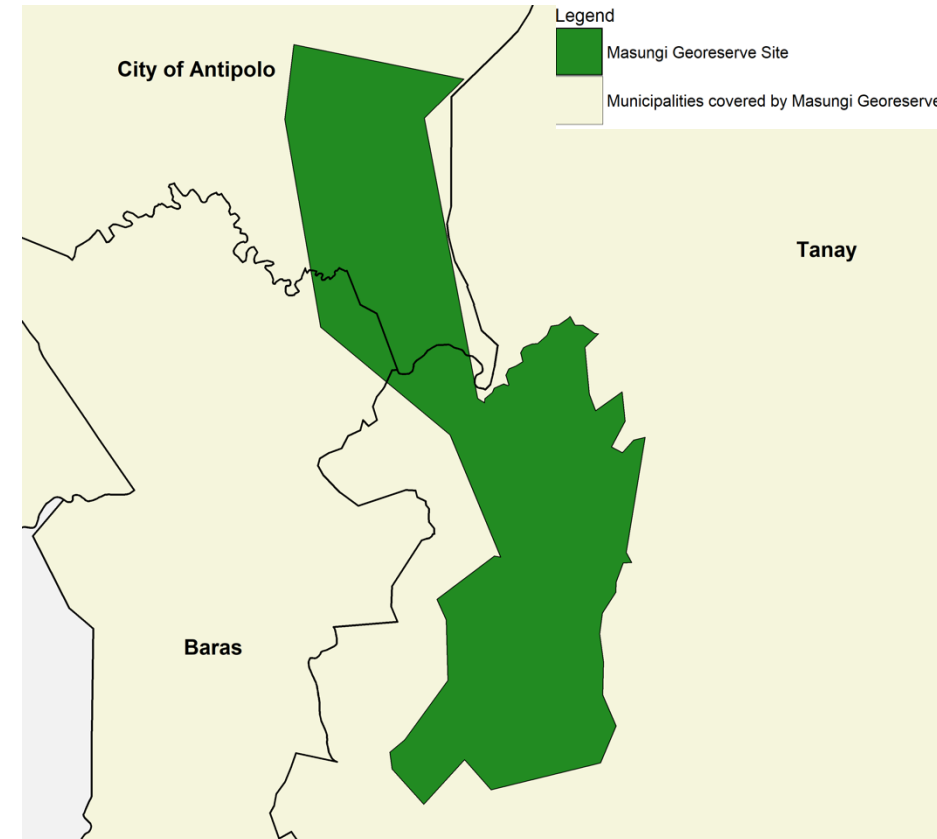
Protected Area Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited technical and scientific representation within the PAMB • Frequent turnover of PAMB members due to elections • Capacity constraints within the PAMO • Ongoing encroachment and land conversion for agriculture • Unauthorized structures inside PA; • Slow legal processes • Minor illegal logging due to livelihood needs.
Key issues affecting IPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CADT claims within the NNNP • Overlapping/ conflicting land claims • Representation issues

Masungi Georeserve

Site Overview

- A globally recognized conservation area in Rizal, Philippines
- **Total area:** 2,700 ha
- **Spans one city** (Antipolo) and **two municipalities** (Tanay and Baras)
- Privately managed by the Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc. (MGFI)
- Situated within three protected areas: Upper Marikina River Basin PL, Kaliwa River Forest Reserve and PP 1636.

Figure 11. Map of Masungi Georeserve and municipalities/cities covered



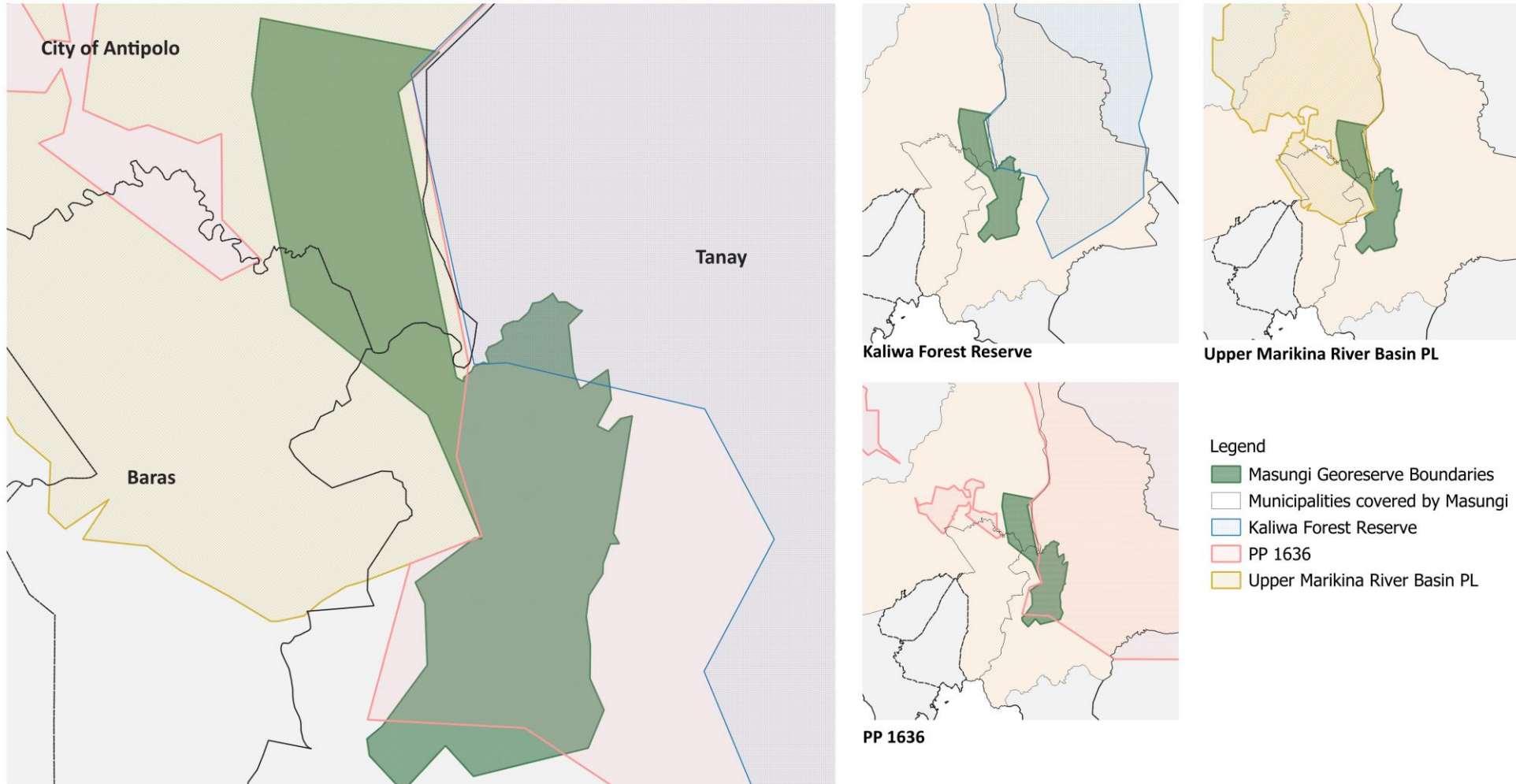





Figure 12. Map of Masungi Georeserve and the protected areas overlapping the area

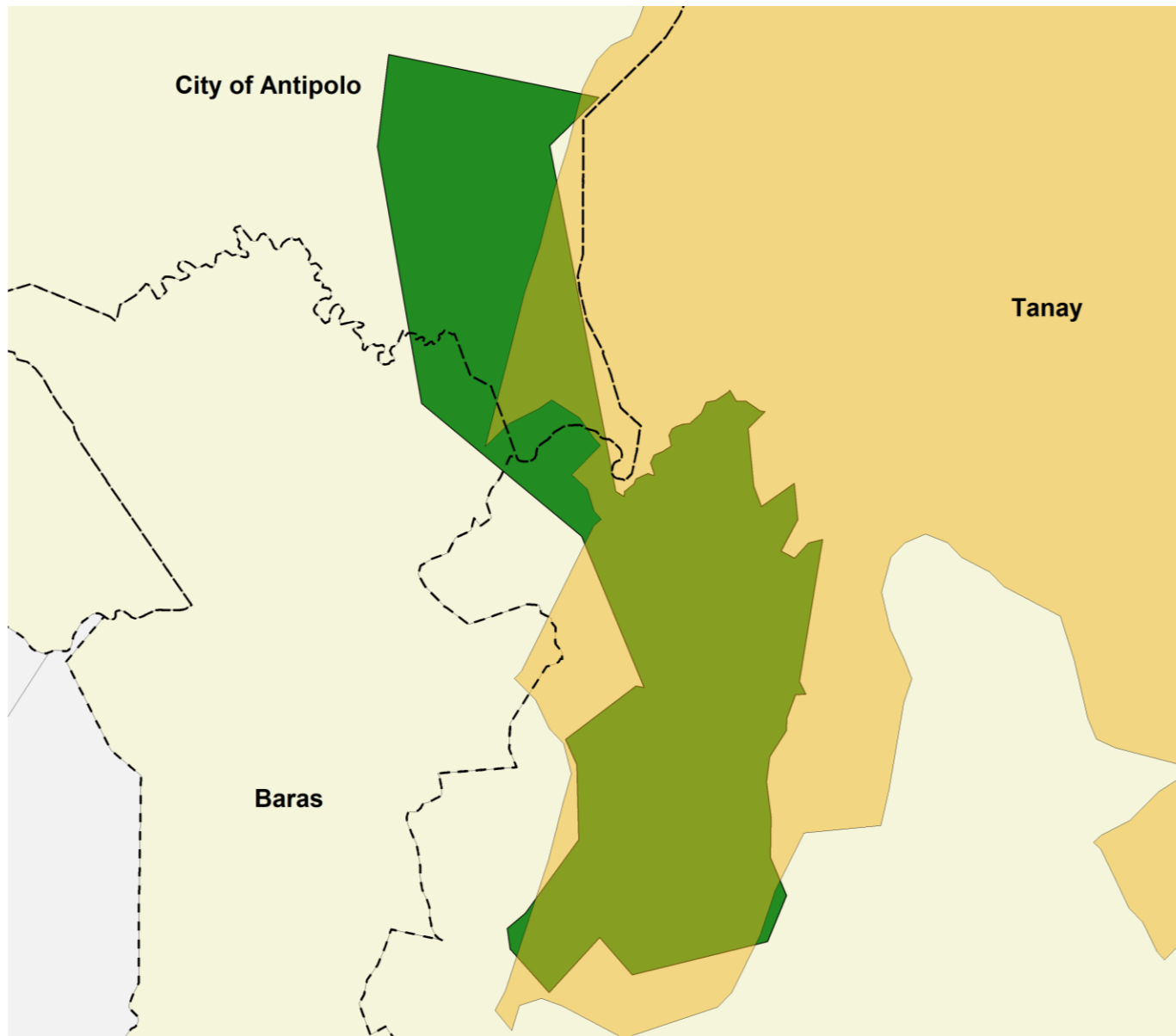
Masungi Georeserve

	Description
Legislative and policy challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal basis of MGFI's stewardship has been questioned by DENR, PAMB, and DOJ • DENR Investigative findings: No PAMB clearances, No FPIC from ancestral domain owners, no ECC and No DOT accreditation.
Socioeconomic and community impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers one city, two municipalities and five barangays • No residents inside the georeserve; access strictly controlled. • MGFI employs community members as staff and rangers • Job opportunities provided to former loggers/violators to conservation roles.
Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecotourism as primary revenue. • Conservation fees of Php 1500 to 2,000 per guests. • Revenues and donations for conservation, operations, and maintenance • Tourism generates economic opportunities for nearby communities.
Ecological and conservation outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration, protection and reforestation of native tree species. • Strengthened biodiversity and watershed health • Global recognition: 2022 IUCN-WCPA International Ranger Award, and 2022 Inspire Award for watershed restoration

Figure 13. Map of Masungi Georeserve and CADT/s within the area

Legend

-  Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title
-  Masungi Georeserve Site
-  Municipalities covered by Masungi Georeserve



Masungi Georeserve: *Remaining threats and pressures*

Protected Area Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarrying threats to limestone karst • Infrastructure and commercial development within UMRBPL • Persistent illegal logging and poaching • Increased threats and harassment against environmental defenders.
Key issues affecting IPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted access to Ancestral Domain • Reported incidents of property destruction and detentions • Lack of documented FPIC and incomplete IPRA processes.

Key issues from Additional Luzon Protected Areas

Key issues identified	UMRBPL	BPL	MBSCPL	MSPL
Staffing constraints	✓	✓	✓	
Growing settlements, land selling and infrastructure expansion	✓			
PAMB Capacity gaps/Political influence in decision-making	✓	✓	✓	✓
Encroachment	✓			
Soil erosion	✓			
Slow approval for IPAF access		✓		
Low zonal values may reduce SAPA fees		✓		✓
Low PAMB attendance and restrictive rules on alternates		✓		✓

Governance highlights from Additional Luzon Protected Areas

- Strong community involvement in smaller protected areas; volunteers can be deputized for patrolling
- Use of technology such as camera traps for patrolling.
- For protected areas covering two provinces (e.g. Mts. Banahaw-San Cristobal PL), strong coordination between the two PAMO is needed.
- Smaller protected areas may be significantly easier to manage – PAMO wise.



Maulawin Spring Protected Landscape

Key issues from Additional Luzon Protected Areas

Key issues identified	UMRBPL	BPL	MBSCPL	MSPL
Staffing constraints	✓	✓	✓	
Growing settlements, land selling and infrastructure expansion	✓			
PAMB Capacity gaps/Political influence in decision-making	✓	✓	✓	✓
Encroachment	✓			
Soil erosion	✓			
Slow approval for IPAF access		✓		
Low zonal values may reduce SAPA fees		✓		✓
Low PAMB attendance and restrictive rules on alternates		✓		✓

Key Remaining Concerns Across the Sites

**Governance Gaps
across PAMB Structures**

**Persistent Capacity
Constraints**

**Effects of Incomplete or
Delayed Legislation**

**Intensifying Threats and
Pressures**

**Overlapping Claims and
Policy Ambiguities**

**Ecotourism and
Community Engagement**

**Enforcement and Legal
Follow through**

Recommendations for Strengthening Integrated Protected Area Management

STRENGTHEN PAMB GOVERNANCE & DECISION-MAKING

- Supplementary national guidelines
- Science-and evidence-based decision-making
- Continuity mechanisms

ENHANCE PAMO STAFFING, COMPETENCIES, AND FIELD CAPABILITY

- Stable, legislated staffing patterns
- Compartmentalization of area protection
- Consistent logistics support

ACCELERATE LEGISLATION AND POLICY CLARIFICATIONS

- Prioritize legislation of remaining Pas
- Clear policies to reduce overlapping claims and enforcement delays

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS & CO-MANAGEMENT MODELS

- Workable partnership models (e.g. Masungi)
- Formalize collaboration mechanisms
- Develop multi-stakeholder enforcement teams

Recommendations for Strengthening Integrated Protected Area Management

IMPROVE THREAT PREVENTION AND LANDSCAPE-LEVEL MANAGEMENT

- Zone-based protection strategists
- Livelihood diversification
- Sustainable alternatives

STRENGTHEN PLANNING, CHARACTERIZATION, AND DATA-BASED MANAGEMENT

- Require comprehensive biophysical, socio-economic and cultural profiling
- Update and operationalize PAMPs and business plans

IMPROVE FINANCIAL ACCESS AND IPAF UTILIZATION

- Streamline IPAF access procedures
- Develop a transparent budgeting framework
- Encourage partnerships for blended financing

REVIEWING PRIOR RIGHTS AND EXISTING TENURIAL INSTRUMENTS

- Assess the validity and legality
- Established clear decision rules

STRENGTHEN DENR-BMB ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY

- Apply strict compliance checks and environmental safeguards
- Impose corrective measures, penalties or suspensions

ENHANCE OF REDESIGN SAPA

- Possible introduction of conservation-focused instrument

ENHANCE COMPLEMENTATION BETWEEN IPRA AND ENIPAS

- Protection and stewardship of critical areas
- Harmonization of development plans
- Inclusive platform for IP representation and participation in PA management



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