

Mt. Kalatungan Range National Park (MKaRNP)



Area:
22,225
hectares

**Administrative
unit:**
Bukidnon

Background

The Mount Kalatungan Range Natural Park (MKaRNP), located in Bukidnon, is a high-elevation Protected Area (PA) characterized by old-growth forest, lower montane forest, and upper montane (mossy) forests that provide habitat for numerous endemic and threatened wildlife species (e.g., the Philippine eagle, Philippine Hawk Eagle, Mindanao Pygmy Fruit Bat, flying fox, Philippine warty pig, and Philippine Brown Deer). It also serves as a critical watershed, supplying water to rivers and communities within and beyond Bukidnon.

The MKaRNP currently faces the following threats:

- **Deforestation and timber poaching:** Deforestation destroys critical habitats, driving mass biodiversity loss.
- **Wildfires:** This is a recurring threat, especially during prolonged dry periods associated with climate variability and drought. Fires may originate from agricultural burning, unattended campfires, or accidental ignition, and can spread rapidly into grasslands and forest areas.
- **Conversion of forestlands into agricultural lands:** The expansion of farms and the introduction of commercial cash (high-value vegetables) crops have accelerated forest clearing, particularly in areas adjacent to the remaining natural forests.
- **Wildlife poaching and hunting:** High demand for wildlife trade and domestication, along with the encroachment of migrants, has accelerated the rate of illegal hunting and trapping.
- **Increasing human settlement:** Population growth, expanding settlements in surrounding areas, and improved road systems have intensified anthropogenic pressure on natural resources. The resulting increase in demand for agricultural land, timber, fuelwood, and other forest resources has contributed to continued encroachment into forested areas.

Ecosystem Functions & Services

The MKaRNP delivers essential ecosystem functions, and holds rich cultural value rooted in its Indigenous heritage and landscape stewardship.



Provisioning services

The forests and headwaters of the MKaRNP are a vital source of water that feeds major river systems, including the Cagayan de Oro (CDO) River Basin, the Pulangi River, and the Maradugao River. These watersheds supply drinking water to households, sustain irrigation systems for rice, banana, and other agricultural crops, and support hydropower generation facilities that contribute to regional energy supply in Bukidnon and beyond.



Regulating services

The Park's extensive forest cover, particularly across steep slopes, plays a crucial role in regulating environmental processes. Vegetation stabilizes soil, reduces surface runoff, and minimizes the risks of soil erosion and landslides that could otherwise degrade water quality and agricultural lands downstream.



Economic products

In recent years, the MKaRNP has become a destination for ecotourism, particularly for experienced hikers and mountaineers who are drawn to its challenging terrain and rugged peaks. Following the reopening and regulation of ecotourism-managed routes, ecotourism activities contribute significantly to local economies. These include income opportunities for local guides, porters, homestay operators, transport providers, and community-based enterprises operating around the Park's entry points.



Supporting services

The MKaRNP is recognized as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) due to its high ecological value and relatively intact montane and mossy forest ecosystems. These support a wide range of endemic and threatened species, including the Philippine hawk-eagle, flying foxes, fruit bats, and a variety of forest-dependent flora and fauna.



Cultural value

The Park holds a deep cultural and spiritual value as part of the Ancestral Domain (AD) of the Manobo and Talaandig Indigenous Peoples (IPs), who consider the mountain sacred ("*Panumanan ha buntod*"), reflecting its role as a dwelling place of ancestral spirits and a source of identity and moral guidance. Customary laws, rituals, and traditional ecological knowledge continue to guide resource use and conservation practices in the area, reinforcing a long-standing system of Indigenous landscape stewardship and PA management.

Key Projects Supported by Forest Foundation Philippines

Project 1:

PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEMS SERVICES (PES) FORUM 2025: A COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT FOR MT. KALATUNGAN, WITH THE THEME “NATURE’S VALUE, NATURE’S VOICE: CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH ECOSYSTEM SERVICES”

**Grantee:**

Xavier Science Foundation (XSF)

**Project Duration:**

2025 (1 month)

**Project Amount:**

Forest Foundation Fund:

PHP 300,000

Counterpart Fund:

PHP 80,000

**Project Summary:**

The Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Forum 2025, themed “Nature’s Value, Nature’s Voice: Climate Action through Ecosystem Services,” deepened understanding of PES as an approach that recognizes and rewards communities for protecting and sustaining ecosystem services in forests. It also strengthened multistakeholder collaboration for inclusive conservation, biodiversity protection, and climate resilience, with a focus on the MKaRNP. The forum concluded with a shared commitment among participants to advance forest conservation through inclusive partnerships grounded in the IP’s respect for culture, shared responsibility, and sustainable landscape management.

Project 2:

COFFEE FOR CONSERVATION

**Grantee:**

Philippine Coffee Alliance (PCA)

**Project Duration:**

2025–2027 (2 years)

**Project Amount:**

Forest Foundation Fund:

PHP 15,280,295

Counterpart Fund:

PHP 1,000,000

**Project Summary:**

The project aims to strengthen the sustainability, productivity, and resilience of coffee-based agroforestry value chains by improving post-harvest operations, enhancing farm productivity, and building the capacities of farmer organizations in Misamis Oriental. It seeks to improve the management of 21,813 hectares of forestlands under coffee-based agroforestry systems in Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental, increase the incomes of six farmer organizations, and strengthen the capacity of two mature farmer organizations to mentor and support smaller cooperatives.

Building on earlier community-based coffee livelihood initiatives implemented by PCAI in IP communities, the project scales up efforts in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) through its Rural Agro-enterprise Partnership for Inclusive Development and Growth (RAPID Growth) Project. Through this initiative, the project is developing and documenting models of coffee agroforestry enterprises in communities situated within and adjacent to forest areas, demonstrating how forest-linked coffee enterprises can help deter forest encroachment driven by agricultural expansion and reduce dependence on illegal activities by providing sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Project 3:

EMPOWERING THE COFFEE VALUE CHAINS OF FOREST COMMUNITIES VIA COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL ENTERPRISES



Grantee:

Philippine Coffee Alliance (PCA)



Project Duration:

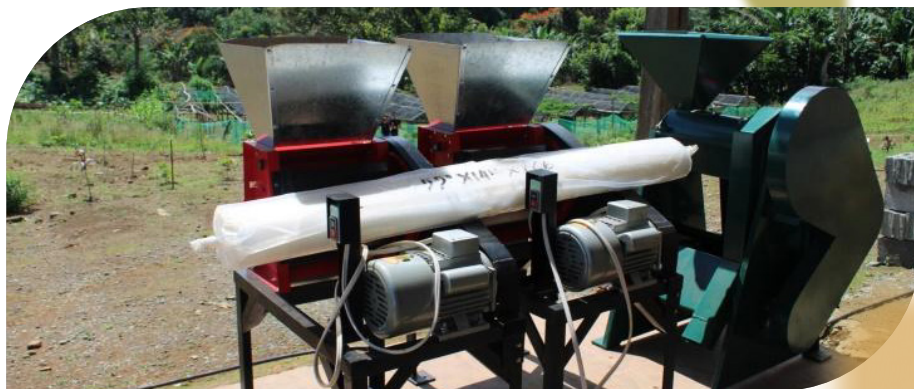
2017–2022 (5 years)



Project Amount:

Forest Foundation Fund:
PHP 23,377,810

Counterpart Fund:
PHP 1,155,000



Project Summary:

The project contributed to poverty reduction and environmental protection by establishing a social enterprise model that linked coffee production and livelihood opportunities with forest conservation in Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental. Over five years, it strengthened the capacities of coffee farmers, improved market networks, and supported 14 community-based coffee clusters using forest-friendly farming and enterprise development approaches.

A key accomplishment of the project was expanding from coffee production to trading, backed by a PHP 1.5 million seed fund that supported 14 Indigenous communities. This enabled trading and helped farmers transition into farmer-entrepreneurs. Communities also began packaging and branding their own coffee, increasing market appreciation for their products, and strengthening the link between livelihoods and forest conservation.

Moreover, the project also built partnerships with government agencies such as the DTI, the Department of Agriculture (DA), and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), linking communities to support programs like DTI's RAPID Growth Project. These linkages enhanced access to processing, packaging, and market opportunities, strengthening the communities' role in the local coffee industry while supporting long-term forest conservation efforts.

Project 4:

RECOGNIZING ECOLOGICAL SERVICES, INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP, AND LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT (RESILIENCE) IN MT. KALATUNGAN RANGE NATURAL PARK



Grantee:

Mindanao Integrated Management Foundation (MIMF)



Project Duration:

2017–2022 (5 years)



Project Amount:

Forest Foundation Fund:
PHP 13,961,666

Project Summary:

The project strengthened the governance and management of the MKaRNP by enhancing ecological knowledge, institutional capacity, community participation, and sustainable livelihood opportunities, in alignment with existing PA management and business plans. It supported the conduct of biodiversity assessments, documentation of Indigenous knowledge, flora and fauna, generation of spatial data, establishment of nurseries for native forest trees, capacity-building activities for the communities and the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), and implementation of public awareness campaigns.

A significant project output was a book publication on the biodiversity of the MKRaNP, documenting its flora and fauna. The project also produced an atlas and a nursery management primer, all of which helped inform the updating of the MKRaNP management plan. The project was grounded on the principle that effective governance depended on strong scientific information, inclusive participation, and empowered stakeholders.



Project 5:

ENHANCEMENT OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABLE ECOLOGICAL PROTECTION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – PHASE 2 (EcoSEED-2)



Grantee:

Xavier Science Foundation (XSF)



Project Duration:

2017–2022 (5 years)



Project Amount:

Forest Foundation Fund:

PHP 23,996,403

Counterpart Fund:

PHP 353,000



Project Summary:

Building on the gains of the previous EcoSEED project, this initiative expanded its coverage to an additional five IP communities within the MKRaNP to further address forest degradation and poverty. These include the Catal Lumad Development Association (CALUDA), Nagkahiusang Manobong Manununod sa Yutang Kabilin (NAMAMAYUK), Bayawon Lucday Lungayan Pendonay Tandacol Tribal Association (BLLUPENTTRAS), Manggayahay Talaandig Tribal Association (MANTALA), and Tumindok Association (TUMINDOK). It strengthened forest rehabilitation and protection, developed IP women-managed social enterprises, improved coordination among LGUs and partner institutions, and increased environmental awareness by integrating scientific and Indigenous knowledge.

The project also supported the construction of tribal halls (“Tulugan”) in each IP community and strengthened the capacities of the Bantay sa Yutang Kabilin (BYK), or local forest guards. Additionally, it facilitated the legal registration and opening of bank accounts for IPOs, alongside capacity building and organizational-strengthening initiatives. Moreover, the project established approximately 150 hectares of reforested and agroforestry areas using native tree species intercropped with coffee and abaca. Women-led groups were also organized and trained, enabling the development of income-generating social enterprises. A water quality study was also conducted in Pangantucan to inform the current state and the need for improved management of water resources and watershed protection efforts in the municipality.

Overall, the project improved the IPOs’ forest management capacity, strengthened their organizations, and contributed to local policy development and greater awareness of landscape-level environmental issues.

Project 6:

ENHANCEMENT OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABLE ECOLOGICAL PROTECTION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (EcoSEED) PHASE 1 (EcoSEED-1)



Grantee:

Xavier Science Foundation (XSF)



Project Duration:

2014–2016 (2 years)



Project Amount:

Forest Foundation Fund:

PHP 2,000,000

Counterpart Fund:

PHP 442,000



Project Summary:

Implemented in the Talaandig communities of Miarayon in Talakag and Portulin in Pangantucan in the province of Bukidnon, the project addressed the urgent need for forest restoration and protection following the devastating impacts of Tropical Storm Sendong and the ongoing threats of timber poaching, deforestation, encroachment, and land-use conversion. The project supported the conservation efforts of the Miarayon-Lapok-Lirongan-Tinaytayan Tribal Association (MILALITTRA) in Talakag and the Portulin Talaandig Tribal Association (PTTA) in Pangantucan.

Over its implementation period, the project supported the development of sustainable reforestation management plans and community PES schemes, strengthened the capacities of and provided equipment for forest guards (Bantay Lasang), identified priority reforestation areas within the watershed, facilitated the formulation of an intercommunity forest enforcement plan, and established agroforestry-based livelihood initiatives. A tribal hall for MILALITTRA was also constructed as a venue and physical manifestation of their AD claim and management.

It also enabled community participation in forest governance, promoted environmentally friendly economic activities, such as coffee production, and reinforced collaboration among tribal communities, local institutions, and watershed stakeholders. Through these efforts, the project contributed to improved forest protection, strengthened watershed management, and increased community capacity to sustain conservation and livelihood initiatives within the MKaRNP, while enhancing the management and governance of the Ancestral Domains.

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