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The Biodiversity Finance Initiative in the Philippines

BIOFIN Phase II 2018 - 2030



Endemic to Luzon, Panay, and Negros islands, this Spotted Wood Kingfisher was sighted inside Sibalom Natural Park, during the protected area ecotourism products launching of the Imparayan Bantay Gubat Association peoples' organization in May 2024. Photo by BIOFIN.



The Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN)

BIOFIN Phase II 2018 to 2030

Full Project Title	Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN)
Development Partner	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Project Cost	USD 4.465 million (as of September 2025)
Project Sites	Mounts Iglit Baco Natural Park, Sibalom Natural Park, Peñablanca Protected Landscape and Seascape, Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental, DENR Regions 2, 3, 4A, 6, 7, 9 & 12
Duration	June 2018 to December 2030
Implementing Agency	Biodiversity Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (BMB-DENR)
Target Beneficiaries	Local government units (LGUs), DENR Regional Offices, and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Protected Areas

VISION

The Philippines' vision for biodiversity financing reflects the importance attributed to the country's biodiversity resources, the urgency in addressing underlying threats, and the resolve to protect, enhance, and restore what is a critical component of national wealth, beneficial to the well-being of present and future Filipinos. The vision, goals, and targets of the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) defines the scope and magnitude of financing requirements based on the Finance Needs Assessment (FNA). The third iteration of the PBSAP 2015-2028 is accompanied by a Biodiversity Finance Plan or BFP. **This plan's vision is to attain a financing envelope for biodiversity totaling 20 billion pesos by the year 2020, measured from a baseline of 5 billion pesos.** The BFP implies a clearer understanding and appreciation of the need to conserve and sustainably manage the country's biodiversity resources through sustainable financing for nature.



BACKGROUND

The Philippines is a megadiverse country in league with 16 others that are considered biologically richest in the world. Several benefits are derived from these resources (e.g., clean water, food, energy, disaster control, climate and air quality regulation) but various threats to their integrity remain unaddressed resulting to their continuous degradation. Lack of financing, perverse incentives that promote further resources degradation, and spending priorities compound these threats. The BFP for the Philippines completes and crystallizes efforts to “construct a sound business case for increased investment in the sustainable and equitable management, protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.” Its main objective is to ensure that all priority actions of the PBSAP are fully implemented by promoting a sufficient funding stream, improving delivery systems and efficiencies, and engendering broad participation across national and local government agencies as well as the private sector. Using a knowledge-based and systematic approach, this plan is the culmination of a methodology that examines the policy and institutional framework for biodiversity financing; an expenditure analysis of primary and secondary biodiversity institutions; and a financial needs assessment on investment and recurrent expenditure requirements across the implementation timeframe of the PBSAP.

This BFP is the first of its kind to be developed specifically to address the country's biodiversity financing needs. It presents a broad vision for biodiversity finance which is anchored on national development policies and plans. Urgent and sustained implementation of this plan is borne by the following: first, notwithstanding the enormous economic and financial values derived from biodiversity resources, degradation continues. Second, policy and economic drivers such as population growth, lack of enforcement, and lack of awareness exacerbate the rate of decline and/or hamper restoration. Lastly, investment levels are paltry when compared to national income and budget. In fact, the natural resources and environment sector consistently represented less than one percent of the total budget from 2008 - 2018 (UNDP-BIOFIN 2015 & 2020).

Five priority programs have been carved out of the more than 100 actions of the PBSAP. A comparison of the investment requirements and the “rate of returns” reveals a strong business case for all priority programs. PBSAP targets will be achieved using a suite of finance solutions, many of them focusing on resource mobilization and some of them will rely on traditional and tested modalities. Some finance solutions will not necessarily raise new revenues but will target realignments and mainstreaming. Other proposed finance solutions have been tested in other sectors such as health and education but not in biodiversity. Private-public sector partnerships will test new grounds in the biodiversity sector such as in protected areas (PA) and in areas covered by tenurial instruments issued by the government such as mining contracts and forest tenurial instruments. After having studied the potential of these options and the context for their application, a matching of these solutions is proposed with the priority programs and a projection of financial returns is done. This plan concludes by proposing concrete steps towards full implementation.

BIODIVERSITY FINANCE INITIATIVE (BIOFIN)

Biodiversity finance is the practice of raising and managing capital and using financial and economic incentives to support sustainable biodiversity management. It helps leverage and effectively manage economic incentives, policies, and capital to achieve the long-term well-being of nature and our society.

BIOFIN is a UNDP-managed global partnership working with countries on biodiversity finance. It uses detailed country-level assessments to develop a BFP, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, innovative methodologies, and expert input. It provides a stepwise, and adaptable approach that enables countries to:

- Assess the policy, institutional, and economic context for biodiversity finance and map existing finance solutions;
- Measure and analyze current biodiversity expenditures, from the public and private sectors, donors and NGOs;
- Make a reliable estimate of the finance needed to achieve a country's biodiversity goals, and compare this to current biodiversity expenditures and other resources available; and
- Develop a biodiversity finance plan that identifies and mobilizes the resources and policies required to implement the most suitable finance solutions.

Finance solutions can achieve their desired impact if they:

- **Avoid future costs and expenditures** through strategic biodiversity investments like nature-based solutions and policy changes;
- **Deliver better** on conservation through improved effectiveness, efficiency, and synergies;
- **Mobilize resources (new money)** targeted towards biodiversity; and
- **Realign existing resources** to reduce negative impacts and improve positive outcomes.



Yellow-faced Flameback (*Chrysocolaptes xanthocephalus*)
Photo by Gregg Yan



Capturing the Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park's Lake Balinsasayao and Lake Danao in Negros Oriental during the Year of the Protected Areas Campaign in 2022. Photo by Department of Tourism (DOT) & DENR.



Spinner Dolphin
Photo by Gregg Yan

PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL RESULTS

BIOFIN PH uses the "whole of society" approach in implementing finance solutions, targeting the public sector, private sector, LGUs, and the citizenry to accomplish the project targets.

Since 2018, BIOFIN PH is implementing several finance solutions including conduct of studies and support to policy development on biodiversity finance in the Philippines. Refer to [Annex 1](#) for the detailed physical and financial accomplishments.

BIOFIN PH's work on policy formulation covered the following:

	Led the formulation of Department of Agriculture (DA)-DENR Special Order (SO) 2023-01 Creating the National Oversight Committee and Regional Technical Working Groups for the implementation of Joint Administrative Order (JAO) 2021-01 on Biodiversity-friendly Agricultural Practices in Protected Areas and Wider Agricultural Landscapes		Supported House Bill 9143 or the Philippine Genetic Resources and Access and Benefit-sharing (PGRABS)
	Led the formulation of Department Administrative Order (DAO) 2022-04 Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Protection in Mining Operations		Currently leading the formulation of a proposed DAO on Private Sector Engagement for Biodiversity Conservation
	Supported formulation of BMB Technical Bulletin 2021-05 Guide in the Formulation of Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan		Currently leading formulation of a proposed DAO on Public-Private Partnership Guidelines on Ecotourism in Protected Areas
	Supported formulation of DAO 2019-95 on Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS) Implementing Rules and Regulations		Currently leading development of a policy study on biodiversity credits
	Supported House Bill 8299 institutionalizing the Tamaraw Conservation Program with administrative and funding mechanisms. DAO 2025-01 strengthens the program and implements the Tamaraw Conservation and Management Action Plan (TCMAP), which BIOFIN PH helped formulate in 2018.		

BIOFIN PH also conducted studies to support development of finance solutions:

	Compilation and synthesis of existing valuation studies on Philippine biodiversity (completed in 2016) The report provides a compilation and synthesis of available information on resource/ecosystem valuation in the Philippines as part of BIOFIN's attempt to make a case in financing biodiversity conservation in the Philippines.
	Feasibility study on consolidator funds as a finance solution for biodiversity projects (completed in 2019) An environmental trust fund can be a vehicle to mobilize additional resources from donors, national governments, the private sector as well as private citizens by providing assurance about the effective allocation of resources and if well-designed and capitalized, they become a driver for improving the effectiveness and scale of environmental and climate projects. Anticipating revenues from crowdfunding activities and sales of gaming apps and peripherals, BIOFIN conducted a feasibility study to assess efficiencies in creating a new biodiversity fund or a sub-fund managed by a third-party organization.
	Nature-positive impact investing for nature-based solutions and enterprises (completed in 2021) The study focuses on impact investing with regard to trends in Asia and the Philippines, challenges and opportunities, key players, principles, and policy frameworks that the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) can adopt in the development of a financial portfolio to support nature-based solutions and enterprises.
	Scoping study on private sector engagement strategy to accelerate biodiversity financing in the Philippines (completed in 2021) The scoping study provides recommendations for private sector investment and financing through program and policy proposals and strategic direction for BIOFIN private sector initiatives.
	The Philippine mining industry: leveraging resources to improve the outcome of biodiversity objectives in the country (completed in 2022) The study assesses the extent and potential contribution of the mining industry to biodiversity conservation looking at the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Plan (EPEP), Social Development and Management Plan (SDMP), Environmental Work Plan (EWP), and the Final Mine Rehabilitation and Decommissioning Fund (FMRDF).
	Unlocking private sector financing for biodiversity: the journey towards a shared language (completed in 2022) The report looks at recent developments in the world of sustainability and provides updates on the ongoing initiatives at the global, regional and national level. However, regulators are grappling with putting together common standards and scorecards that will align financial goals with sustainability impact. From insights derived from existing developments at macro and micro levels, the report presents possible financial products and services that may be considered by the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) and other funding organizations who are finding ways to properly direct their financial resources towards biodiversity rehabilitation.
	Is the Philippines ready for nature-related financial disclosures? an assessment of global trends, reporting frameworks, institutions and state of practice (completed in 2023) This study assess the institutional, policy, and regulatory readiness for disclosure of nature-related finance and risks; assess the institutional arrangements readiness and capacities of national and local associations of economic agents; and develop recommendations and an action plan. The study recommends strengthening environmental risks disclosures by developing standardized frameworks, mandating sector-specific reporting, and promoting tools like mapping portals and spatial finance. It also urges investments in data, broader sustainability reporting (including for MSMEs), and collaboration with key regulatory bodies to adopt science-based and innovative natural capital accounting practices. Inception meetings followed by a series of capacity building activities where the Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) resources will be adapted to the Philippine milieu and tested with volunteer companies will be completed in 2025.
	Agricultural practices and agricultural programs as applied in ecologically sensitive hilly lands: environmental footprints, drivers and strategic recommendations (completed in 2023) This study develops an agrobiodiversity framework that will integrate all related PBSAP targets and estimates potential agricultural subsidies in selected regions that enable and/or constrain biodiversity. The study looked at answering the following questions: 1) What are the agricultural programs being implemented in PAs and other high conservation areas?; 2) What are the associated subsidy systems and costs and varying impacts on biodiversity and environment?; 3) How can these programs be strengthened and a portion of subsidies be better repurposed towards overall biodiversity and agrobiodiversity conservation?; and 4) What are the next steps and policy recommendations?



Update on compilation and synthesis of existing valuation studies on Philippine biodiversity (completed in 2023)

The update provides more recent data, information, and highlights of new studies. This review goes beyond conventional assessments, offering a nuanced understanding of the intricate relationship between ecological health and economic values.



Coral reef vulnerability data for developing insurance in the Philippines (ongoing)

The study aims to gather, compile, and analyze relevant data from a selected pilot (Bindoy, Negros Oriental) to support the development of a marine protected area (MPA) insurance scheme in the Philippines. Specifically, secondary information on the vulnerability of a coral reef MPA from both natural and anthropogenic threats will be collected.



Philippine Pangolin
Photo by Gregg Yan

DESCRIPTION OF FINANCE SOLUTIONS



Greater Crested Terns
Photo by Gregg Yan

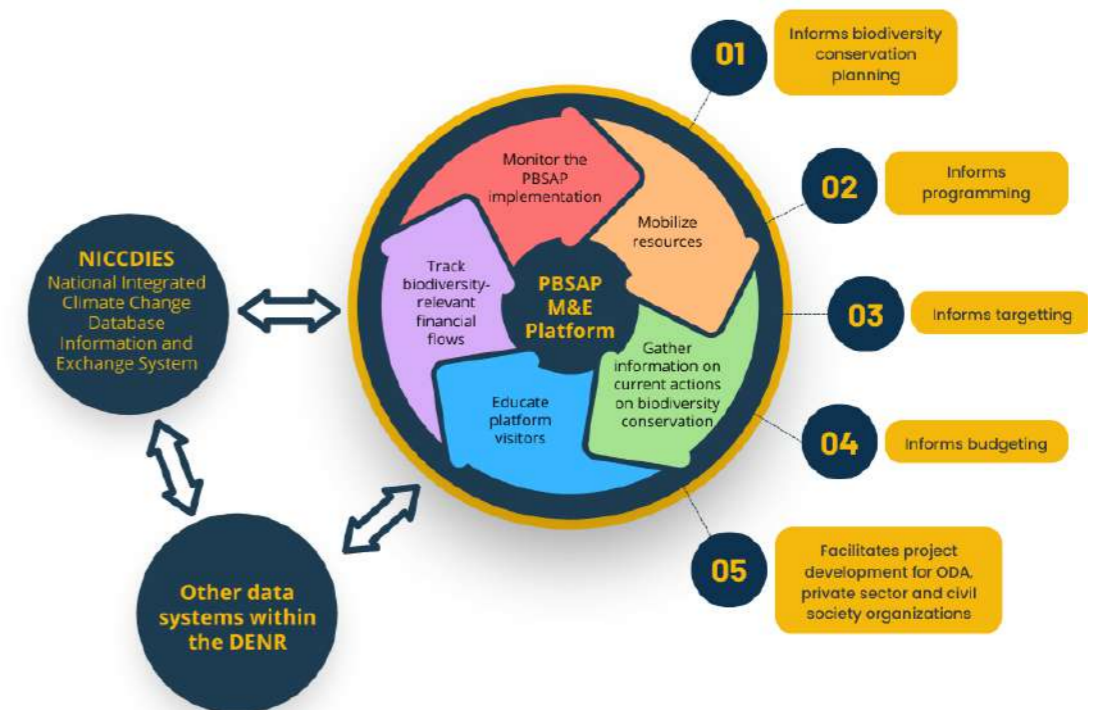
Improving Biodiversity Expenditure Reporting

1. Improving biodiversity expenditure reporting at the DENR

The finance solution promotes an improved system for attribution of biodiversity expenditures to reflect a better understanding of biodiversity within the Philippine government's main environment management agency. It results in accurate reporting and better planning and programming. This finance solution was implemented through a series of consultations with relevant bureaus and offices within the DENR in 2014, 2021, and 2024. The last tagging exercise utilized the Global Biodiversity Expenditure (GLOBE) taxonomy developed by the BIOFIN Global team to assess changes in biodiversity expenditure.

Other Results:

A monitoring and evaluation or M&E Platform for PBSAP implementation was developed for utilization of DENR and partners. The platform is an information management system that will monitor implementation and financing of the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. It will use a web-based software that will enable data collection, analysis and reporting needs of the Biodiversity Management Bureau. The platform will host integrated data analysis tools as well as advance projects, initiatives, accounting and user management capabilities.



2. Improving biodiversity expenditure reporting among other national government agencies

There are more than 60 national agencies indirectly supporting biodiversity but are unaware or are not reporting as such. This solution focuses on building the knowledge and capacities of other national agencies to better mainstream biodiversity in the agencies' plans and programs as mandated by the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

• Mainstreaming biodiversity in DPWH and DSWD programs

BIOFIN PH's tagging exercises have identified key entry points within major national government programs to mainstream biodiversity conservation.

BIOFIN PH is continuing its partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The collaboration focuses on integrating citizen science marine litter modules into the Family Development Sessions for beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).

In parallel, BIOFIN PH is working with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to incorporate nature-based solutions (NbS) into its flood control projects through the Design Guidelines, Criteria and Standards (DGCS) and the Design Procedures Manual (DPM). This aims to ensure that infrastructure planning and implementation increasingly support ecosystem resilience and biodiversity outcomes.

3. Aligning environmental trust funds with the PBSAP

This finance solution seeks better alignment between PBSAP priority actions with the grant criteria applied by two environmental trust funds in the country - the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE) and the Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation (PTFCF), also now known as the Forest Foundation Philippines (FFP). In 2019, BIOFIN PH completed this and has made recommendations to the two organizations based on the results of the alignment exercise and shared the same results to BMB-DENR. This will be updated in 2025 to align with the fourth iteration of the PBSAP.

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in DENR Regional Programs

4. Budgets for DENR regional biodiversity programs

This solution aims to boost funding for DENR Regional Offices by realigning spending towards biodiversity and builds on the regional targeting workshops facilitated by the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB). BIOFIN PH assisted in the formulation of guidelines for DENR field offices, provincial and municipal governments and stakeholders to create a standardized procedure for the development of local biodiversity strategy and action plans (BSAPs) with finance and investment plans to ultimately unlock finance for nature.

Other Results:

- BIOFIN PH has been working with the Climate Change Commission of the Philippines or CCC to incorporate biodiversity expenditure in the current climate change expenditure tagging.
- The refined Global Biodiversity Expenditure or GLOBE Taxonomy has been integrated in the updated biodiversity expenditure tagging led by BIOFIN PH

Finance Solutions Involving the Citizenry

5. Mobilizing resources from individual donors for biodiversity programs and projects through crowdfunding

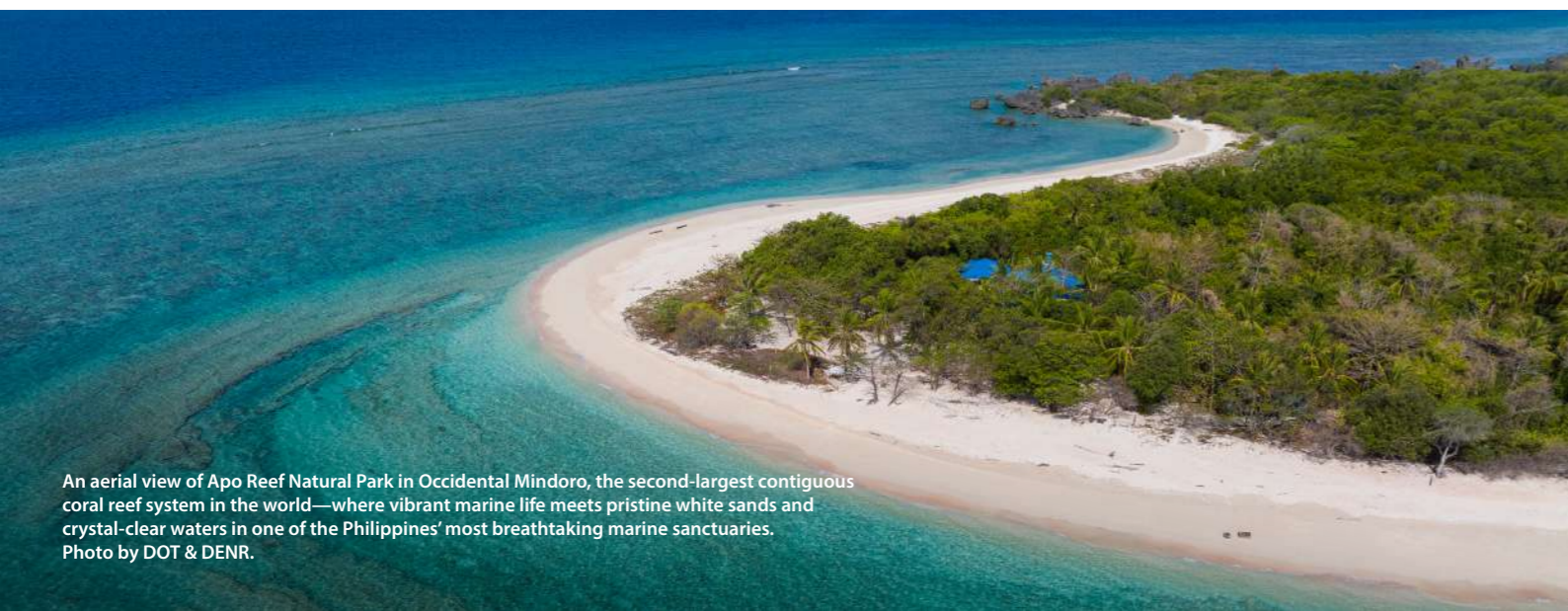
Crowdfunding is a method of collecting many small contributions usually by means of an online funding platform to finance or capitalize a project. Crowdfunding can be a powerful way to raise funds for nature and increase public knowledge around critical biodiversity-related issues. This finance solution has two tracks: 1) implementation of crowdfunding schemes and 2) capacity building of civil society partners, local governments, and relevant staff of DENR and other national agencies on crowdfunding techniques. BIOFIN PH launched the "Together for Tamaraws" crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to cover six months' salaries (July – December 2020) and food packs for 33 furloughed tamaraw frontliners due to Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park's closure in March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and to immediately disburse proceeds to beneficiaries. The campaign was able to raise funds equivalent to 139% of its target.

Also included in this finance solution is BIOFIN PH alliance with GCash, a leading mobile wallet in the Philippines. In 2019, BIOFIN PH provided technical inputs on forest restoration when GCash developed GForest, a gamified app for forest restoration. BIOFIN PH facilitated GCash's partnership with World Wildlife Fund-Philippines (WWF) to reforest more than 300 hectares in Ipo Watershed. BIOFIN PH continues to identify NGO and corporate partners for GForest.



6. Mobilizing funds from gaming applications and peripherals

Gaming applications pose large opportunities for financial revenues and can be designed focusing on biodiversity. The objective of this finance solution is to generate resources through in-app purchases and ads that will be directed to biodiversity conservation projects included in the PBSAP. BIOFIN PH developed a game application named *Animal Town*, which utilizes information about Philippine endangered species while generating funds through in-app purchases and ads. It is a simple, casual, simulation game where the user plays as a new recruit in a biodiversity advocates team to help a group of talking animals manage a town to efficiently conserve biodiversity. Change to Forest Foundation Philippines, a local trust fund, was engaged to develop an operations manual for revenue management, which was approved by the BMB upon recommendation of the BMB Animal Town Technical Working Group (TWG) established in 2023.



An aerial view of Apo Reef Natural Park in Occidental Mindoro, the second-largest contiguous coral reef system in the world—where vibrant marine life meets pristine white sands and crystal-clear waters in one of the Philippines' most breathtaking marine sanctuaries. Photo by DOT & DENR.



Philippines' very own Rainbow River, the Mau-It River, snakes through the Sibalom Natural Park. Boulders of all hues – from reds to blues, greens and oranges – adorn its banks, which abound with semi-precious stones like onyx, quartz and jade. Photo by BIOFIN.

Since its soft launch on August 22, 2023, it has gained a total of over 22,000 users globally and has generated over Php32,000.00 as of November 2025. Proceeds will support DENR-BMB's conservation priorities and maintenance of the mobile app.

To simulate the grant cycle provision of the operations manual, Forest Foundation graciously provided a PhP810,000 grant that was awarded to the Balatahan Higaonon Tribal Council of Mt. Balatukan Range National Park. Launched nationally and globally in 2024, the app can be downloaded for free from Apple Store and Google Play.



BIOFIN team together with Region 10 participants to the multi-sectoral regional roundtable discussion on agrobiodiversity and harmful subsidies examine a rubber tree during a site visit to the Conservation Agriculture with Trees led by Dr. Agustin Mercado on February 2023. Photo by BIOFIN.

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in LGUs

7. Increasing LGU budgets for biodiversity conservation

The Negros Island Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NIBSAP) is the central document that guides biodiversity conservation efforts of Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental provinces. The finance solution seeks to work directly with local governments to implement a broad suite of finance mechanisms including local budgets, market-based mechanisms and transfers from national government. It will also take advantage of the Mandanas-Garcia decision which will effectively allocate more resources to LGUs through the devolution of selected national government functions. The finance solution seeks to continue this trend of budgeting for biodiversity conservation by supporting the formulation of local BSAPs, doing budget advocacy between and among the relevant offices and local committees. name of Department of Energy (DOE) and the generation company.

8. Accessing and synergizing with national government agencies (NGAs)

The finance solution will align priority provincial programs and/or projects on biodiversity conservation with national government agency programs that can finance these.

9. Proposed environmental fee system for LGUs (Tourism Ecological Fee)

The finance solution is a tax that will be imposed on non-Negros tourists for every night of stay. The province of Negros Oriental was chosen by the Department of Tourism (DOT) as a Tourism Development Area and has identified sustainable tourism as one of its priorities. As one of the most visited destinations in the country, the economic benefits of tourism are directly attributed to nature. The proposed Tourism Ecological Fee complements its Environment Code and will mobilize resources to conserve biodiversity to sustain its ecotourism activities.

10. Accessing the trust fund created under Energy Regulation (ER) 1-94

The trust fund created under Energy Regulation ER 1-94, as amended, requires the generation company and/or energy resource developer to set aside one centavo per kilowatt hour (Php 0.01/kWh) of the total electricity sales as financial benefits to host communities. The P0.01/kWh is monitored through trust accounts established specific for (EF) Electrification Fund, (DLF) Development and Livelihood Fund and (RWMHEEF) Reforestation, Watershed Management, Health and/or Environmental Enhancement Fund in the name of Department of Energy (DOE) and the generation company.

The finance solution seeks to identify projects eligible for support from the financial benefits of the trust fund.



Photo by BIOFIN

BIOFIN PH partnered with the Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PhilBio) in the implementation of finance solutions together with the Negros Island provinces. Memoranda of Understanding with Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental were signed in the third quarter of 2023. Using the Negros Island Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NIBSAP) as a basis for biodiversity conservation activities and programs in Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental, both provinces allocated approximately PhP443 million in two years. (USD7.8M) in budget allocation in two years. A total of PhP37.6 million (USD737k) private sector funds were also mobilized for local biodiversity conservation activities in both provinces from 2023-2024. This includes grants to NGOs amounting to PhP35M through the Philippines-Canada Partnership on Nature-based Solutions for Climate Adaptation (PCP4NbS).



Visayan Spotted Deer
Photo by Godfrey Jakosalem

Negros Occidental's San Carlos City BaLANCE (Biodiversity and Landscape Approach in Nature Conservation and Negros Oriental's LASaNG (Local Action to Save Negros Gems) are the provinces' key notable programs aligned with the national priorities on forest restoration and biodiversity conservation. A city ordinance established a Project Management TWG, which created an action plan subsequently approved by the Sanggunian Bayan. This led to the signing of a partnership agreement between PhilBio and San Carlos City with the latter allocating USD 26,314 (PhP1.5M) for its implementation in 2025. On the other hand, BIOFIN PH supported the drafting of a resolution for Project LASaNG, which aims to establish a forest corridor. The resolution has since been submitted to the Provincial Legislative Council for consideration.

11. Optimizing the gender and development budget for biodiversity conservation

In 1995, the Gender and Development (GAD) budget policy was institutionalized in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) which mandates all departments, bureaus, offices and agencies to set aside 5% of their total budget for gender and development concerns.

To optimize the GAD budget, the finance solution will integrate biodiversity conservation in relevant programs and activities of GAD Fund of Negros Occidental.

12. Development and roll-out of biodiversity indicators for the "Seal of Good Local Governance" (SGLG)

This finance solution looks at the feasibility of mainstreaming a biodiversity component in the existing SGLG criteria of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) for LGUs. The SGLG, being a progressive assessment system that gives distinction to remarkable local government performance across several areas, highlights integrity and good performance to institutionalize local governance reforms in the continuing pursuit for meaningful local autonomy and development. Through BIOFIN PH, the DENR successfully integrated biodiversity-related indicators into the Environmental Management governance area of the SGLG - (1) Wetlands and Water Management and (2) Parks and Green Spaces Development - in the 2023 assessment, and is working toward the inclusion of (3) Strengthened Wildlife Law Enforcement in the next assessment cycle.



Golden-crowned Flying Fox (Acerodon Jubatus)
Photo by Godfrey Jakosalem

To aid in the development of a policy on ecotourism taxation, BIOFIN organized a benchmarking visit to Puerto Princesa City, Palawan province in November 2023 and February 2024 for Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental provinces, respectively.



In August 2024, Negros Oriental accessed PhP53,456 (USD938) earmarked by Amlan Hydro Power Corporation as provided for by ER 1-94 with assistance from BIOFIN through its partner PhilBio.

The project will procure native tree seedlings for rainforestation and livestock as support to rainforestation stakeholders.



Meet Batch 10-01 Katala. Comprised of 31 Park Superintendents, 10-01 or the tenth trained batch of DENR frontliners (coded as 01), shows off its Batch Cheer. ENRA Batches adopt a batch name from an endangered plant or animal species. Each student also belongs to a 'House' or team, just like in Hogwarts.
Photo by BIOFIN.

Increasing investments in the Protected Areas

13. Developing an investment program for PAs

This solution aims to increase investments in PAs with the long-term outcome of all PAs receiving sufficient funding from government for recurrent and capital expenses based on long-term management plans. BIOFIN PH supported the 2018 passage of the RA 11038 or ENIPAS law, ensuring government funding for all 117 legislated PAs and the formulation of its Implementing Rules and Regulations (DAO 2019-05). With its enactment, the 2019 national budget for PAs pegged at PhP1.469 billion increased to PhP2 billion in 2020. The national government allocated an additional PhP500 million for PAs following a Congressional Manifesto addressed to the House Speaker, signed by nearly 100 representatives whose jurisdictions include PAs. BIOFIN PH closely coordinated with the Office of Cong. Josephine Ramirez-Sato, principal author of RA 11038, in having this manifesto signed. With the pandemic, budget in 2021 dropped to PhP1.5 billion but was restored to PhP2.5 billion in 2022, dipped to PhP1.8 billion in 2023, rose to PhP3.1 billion in 2024 and slightly dipped again to PhP2.4 billion in 2025. The budget supports the Protected Area Management Offices and their operations which include protection measures, support to communities in the development and implementation of their biodiversity-friendly enterprises (BDFE) — mainly ecotourism — , awareness raising, research and park infrastructure.

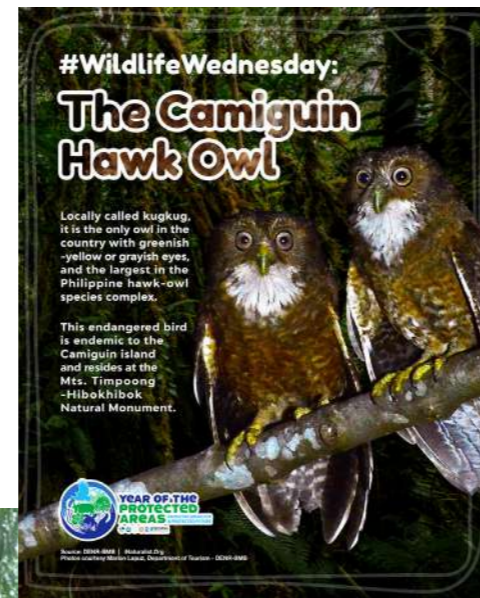
In collaboration with DENR-BMB, BIOFIN PH developed a training module on protected area finance planning (PAFP) that was rolled out to more than 20 PAs. It is anchored on the BIOFIN methodology, localized for protected areas and is now integrated into the Protected Area Management Specialized Course under the Environment and Natural Resources Academy (ENRA) of the DENR. It was officially launched during the 3rd National Protected Area Conference (3NPAC) on June 2024 and the pilot batch ran for 38 days from September to October of the same year. The PAFP module ran for a week from October 12-17, 2025. The PAFP preparation is further institutionalized through conduct of training of trainers and through DENR-BMB's updated guidelines on protected area management planning which is still undergoing the bureau's Technical Review Committee (TRC).



Workshop participants discussed the best ways to integrate biodiversity conservation and facilitate compliance to the new biodiversity indicators in the SGLG's Environment Governance Area during a learning event in Bacolod City last January 27-28, 2025. This will enable sustainable funding of LGU conservation programs and projects.
Photo by Negros Occidental Provincial Information Office.

14. Year of Protected Areas (YoPA) Campaign

This finance solution is closely partnered with the finance solution on developing an investment program for PAs. This solution is an information campaign led by the DENR, DOT, and the DILG seeking to increase awareness on the value of protected areas, instill an appreciation among the new generation of Filipinos on the beauty and heritage therein, establish partnerships with the private sector for the benefit of the PAs, and result to increased visitation rates and revenues from visitors. The campaign was from April 2022 to December 2023 with a line up of promotional activities online and face-to-face utilizing the tri-media, engaging celebrity ambassadors, running TV and radio plugs and interviews, and creating various promotional materials such as videos, webinars, etc. BIOFIN PH is working on a proposed Presidential Proclamation to declare April of each year as Month of the PAs.



Happy Tourists, Happy Tourguides. Participants, guides and organizers of the Sibalom Natural Park's inaugural community-led eco-tour gather under the park's distinctive welcome arch. Photo by BIOFIN.

Under this campaign, BIOFIN PH supported the development of ecotourism products in Sibalom Natural Park (SNP) through a series of workshops for its partner people's organization, the Imparayan Bantay Gubat Association (IBGA), from 2022 to 2024. These efforts culminated in the launch of five new ecotourism products during a familiarization tour with media and partners on May 10, 2024. SNP—spanning 6,778.44 hectares across 18 barangays and municipalities and home to five flagship species—served as the backdrop for the launch. Drawing on the skills gained from BIOFIN's capacity-building, IBGA members took on the roles of tour guides and hosts, offering guests locally inspired meals and drinks made from native ingredients. Following the launch, the SNP Protected Area Management Office reported a marked increase in income from rentals, entrance fees, and donations, alongside heightened social media engagement and visitor inquiries

Finance Solutions Involving the Private Sector

15. Reporting on private sector investment

The private sector is seen as a major partner in biodiversity conservation. One mechanism is through corporate social responsibility (CSR) which is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is generally understood as being the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives ("Triple-Bottom-Line- Approach"), while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders.

Resources mobilized by BIOFIN PH from this finance solution is estimated at PhP 3,997,388, or USD 77,366.80 (mobilized) and PhP 156,971, 177 or USD 3,037,879.87 (tagged) to date *exchange rate 2019: 51.668.

16. Using digital platforms for market access of biodiversity-friendly enterprises (BDFEs) and protected area

This finance solution seeks to leverage a digital platform developed by UBX, the fintech arm of UnionBank, for market access of BDFEs and PAs to mobilize resources for biodiversity conservation. However, the platform has been decommissioned, thus, BIOFIN PH will explore other opportunities with UBX.



A meeting between the PPP Center of the Philippines, UNDP, and the DENR on January 2023 highlighted the next steps to operationalize the MOU between the two agencies. Photo by BIOFIN.

17. Harnessing public-private partnership (PPP) collaboration in the protected areas sector through policy development

PPP is a contractual arrangement between the government and the private partner for the provision of a public asset or service. The role of the private partner is to finance, design, construct, operate and/or maintain government facilities. It embodies optimal risk allocation between the parties – minimizing cost while realizing project developmental objectives. Thus, the project is to be structured in such a way that the private partner gets a reasonable rate of return on its investment. This finance solution seeks to tap investments by the private sector in specific protected areas using the PPP modality. Private sector investments in PAs under NIPAS have been proposed to help bridge the biodiversity financing gap, with PPP modalities being explored alongside the special use agreement in protected areas (SAPA). The passage of ENIPAS is expected to further boost both public and private investments in PAs.

In 2021, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between BMB-DENR and PPP Center of the Philippines to provide a framework for cooperation and coordination to: (1) develop a robust pipeline of PPP projects in selected PAs; (2) conduct policy enhancements and capacity building to DENR, Protected Area Management Boards (PAMBs) and Local Implementing Agencies (LGUs included) as well as community organizations, on how PPPs in PAs can be structured and designed sustainably and responsibly.

18. Non-fungible tokens (NFT)

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) are a unique digital identifier that are recorded on a blockchain and are used to certify ownership and authenticity. Through UBX and its partner, Unit 256, BIOFIN explored NFTs for fund raising through the sale of Noel Guevara's Tubbataha wildlife art via a campaign called "Art for Nature." To date, a total of PhP 476,000 (USD8,350.29) was raised.



A wild, critically endangered tamaraw peeks through the tall grasses of the expansive Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park in Mindoro. Photo by BIOFIN.

19. Nature-related financial disclosures

Nature-related financial disclosures are a way for businesses and financial institutions to report on their impact and dependencies on the natural world. These disclosures aim to integrate environmental considerations into decision-making and reporting, shifting global capital towards nature-positive outcomes.

As of November 2025, a total of four capacity-building activities have been conducted: two general sessions involving financial and non-financial institutions, and two focused sessions for specific stakeholder groups. These activities aimed to support financial institutions and corporates in integrating nature-related considerations by adopting the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) framework into their sustainability reporting and overall business strategies. For training institutions, the goal is to embed these topics into their academic and professional development curricula. Further engagements are in the pipeline.

20. Biodiversity credits

Biodiversity credits are a way to channel private investment into projects that protect and enhance biodiversity. They are similar to carbon credits but instead of measuring carbon sequestration, they focus on measuring and valuing biodiversity outcome. These outcomes can include the protection of endangered species, the restoration of habitats or the implementation of sustainable land management practices.

The Philippines participated in a regional workshop organized by BIOFIN Global which highlighted experiences in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. Furthermore, a policy study on biodiversity credits will be conducted in 2026.

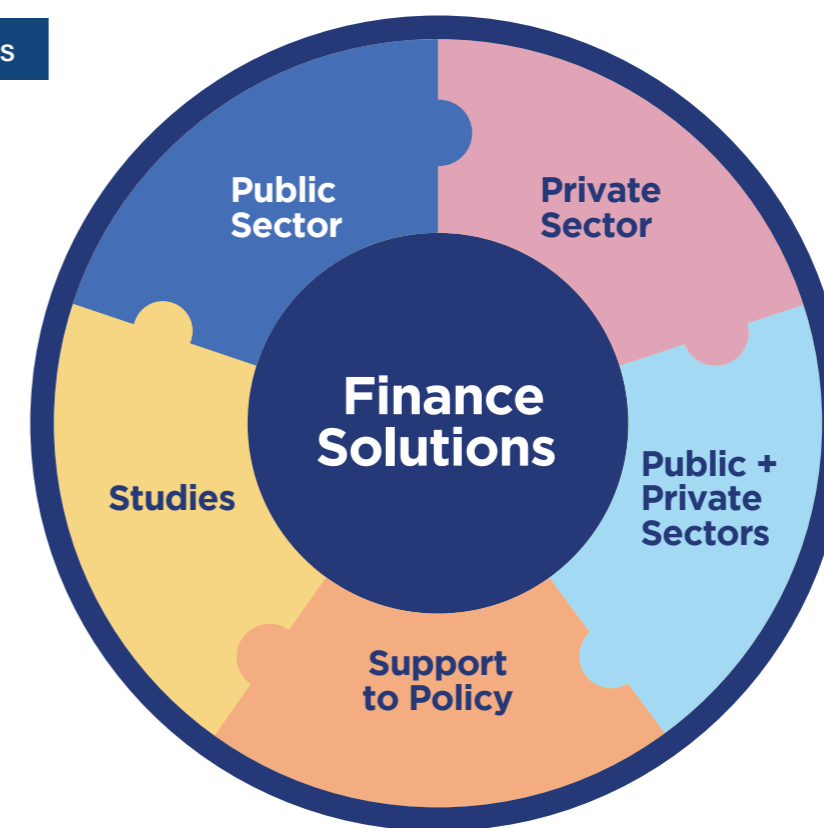
21. Subsidies

BIOFIN PH's study "Agricultural Practices and Programs as Applied in Ecologically Sensitive Hilly Lands: Environmental Footprints, Drivers and Strategic Recommendations," conducted jointly with the DENR and DA, estimated subsidies with potential unintended environmental footprints in the rice, corn and high value crops programs in selected regions at PhP471 million. Study results were presented to key officials to mutually identify acceptable entry points for further work anchoring on DENR-DA Joint Administrative Order (JAO) 2021-01 on the implementation of biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices (BDFAPs). In line with this, BIOFIN PH spearheaded the formulation and issuance of Joint Special Order 2023-01 and supported meetings of the National Oversight Committee. BIOFIN PH will explore implementing onsite interventions on subsidies for yellow corn in the Penablanca Protected Landscape and Seascape (PPLS).



A site visit to the Tikala Natural Farms in Misamis Oriental where Region 10 participants to the multi-sectoral regional roundtable discussion on agrobiodiversity and harmful subsidies learned about sustainable agricultural practices from Engr. Gerry Burdas in February 2023. Photo by BIOFIN.

Finance Solutions



Public Sector

- Improving Biodiversity Expenditure Reporting
 - o Improving biodiversity expenditure reporting at the DENR (p. 8)
 - o Improving biodiversity expenditure reporting among other national government agencies (p. 9)
 - Mainstreaming biodiversity in DPWH and DSWD programs (p. 9)
 - o Alignment of environmental trust funds with the PBSAP (p. 9)
- Mainstreaming biodiversity in DENR Regional Programs
 - o Budgets for DENR regional biodiversity programs (p. 9)
- Mainstreaming biodiversity in LGUs
 - o LGU budgets (p. 14)
 - o Synergy with national programs (p. 14)
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Private Sector

- Involving the citizenry
 - o Crowdfunding (p. 10)
 - o Mobilizing funds from gaming applications and peripherals (p. 10)
- Involving the private sector
 - o Private sector engagement i.e. CSR (p. 18)
 - o Digital platform (p. 18)
 - o Policy in PPP for protected areas (p. 18)
 - o Non-Fungible Tokens (p. 18)
 - o Nature-related financial disclosures (p. 21)

Public + Private Sector

- Increasing Investments in Protected Areas
 - o Developing an investment program for protected areas (p. 16)
 - o Year of the Protected Areas campaign (p. 17)

Support to Policy

- DA-DENR Special Order 2023-01 Creating the NOC and RTWG for the Implementation of Biodiversity-friendly Agricultural Practices in Protected Areas and Wider Agricultural Landscapes
- DAO 2022-04 Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Protection in Mining Operations
- BMB Technical Bulletin 2021-05 Guide in the Formulation of Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- DAO 2019-95 ENIPAS Implementing Rules and Regulations
- House Bill 8299 or an Act to Institutionalize the Tamaraw Conservation Program, creating its Administrative and Implementation Mechanism, Providing Funds Therefore and for Other Purposes
- House Bill 9143 or the Philippine Genetic Resources and Access and Benefit-sharing (PGRABS)
- Proposed DAO on Private Sector Engagement for Biodiversity Conservation
- Proposed DAO on PPP Guidelines on Ecotourism in Protected Areas

Studies

- Compilation and synthesis of existing valuation studies on Philippine biodiversity
- Feasibility study on consolidator funds for biodiversity projects
- Nature-positive impact investing for nature-based solutions and enterprises
- Scoping study on private sector engagement
- The Philippine mining industry: leveraging resources to improve the outcome of biodiversity objectives in the country
- Unlocking private sector financing for biodiversity: the journey towards a shared language
- Readiness study on nature-related financial disclosures
- Development of an agrobiodiversity framework and a stocktaking of harmful subsidies
- Update on the compilation and synthesis of existing valuation studies on Philippine biodiversity
- Coral reef vulnerability assessment for insurance development
- Policy study on biodiversity credits