

Global ICCA Database
Tanabag Kabatakan, Palawan, Philippines

Basic data

Site Name : the Tanabag *Kabatakan* (the Batak land of Tanabag) or '*lugta it amula kat Tanabag*' (the land of the ancestors in Tanabag). Tanabag is the local name of the main river crossing the Batak CCA, and is also the name of the coastal barangay.

1. Country: Philippines
Municipality of Puerto Princesa
Palawan Province
2. Area encompassed by the CCA (specify unit of measurement) : about 5,000 hectares of which 3,458.70 hectares fall within the CBFMA area.
3. GIS Coordinates (not available)
4. Whether it includes sea areas : No
5. Whether it includes freshwater : Yes
6. Marine: No
7. Concerned community: Kalakuanan community - 31 households (153 persons)
8. Is the community considering itself an indigenous people? Yes. The Batak, however they also intermarry with Tagbanua, a neighboring indigenous group.
9. Is the community considering itself a minority? Yes
10. Is the community permanently settled? They keep moving between the Kalakuanan permanent settlement and their upland swidden huts
11. Is the community local per capita income inferior, basically the same or superior to national value?

Answer: Yes – it's inferior
12. Is the CCA recognized as a protected area by the governmental agencies?

Portions of the Batak CCA are considered core or restricted use zones under the Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan (SEP or RA 7611) and its Environmentally Critical Areas Network (ECAN) guidelines. It would appear, that those portions of their CCA that are close to the Puyus mountain (also known as Cleopatra Needle) might have been incorporated into the expansion of St. Paul Subterranean National Park. This process, however, was carried out with no consultation with the local community. The CCA is also part of a 25 years renewable Community Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) area signed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Tanabag Batak.

13. Conflicts with land tenure, natural resource use? Not on permanent basis, but they might arise during specific periods of food-shortage and financial crises.

14. What is the main management objective (e.g. livelihood, cultural, spiritual...)

Answer: none of the selected terminology would be adequate. It should be said that the area is customarily managed by the community since time immemorial and provides the cultural foundation and livelihood dimension on which their whole society depends.

15. By definition, a CA fulfils a management objective. To which IUCN management category do you consider it would best fit (this does not imply that the management objective is consciously pursued by the concerned community, but that it is actually achieved):

Category VI: Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources

Additional qualitative information

1. Main ecosystem type

Evergreen Dipterocarp Forest

2. Description of local ethnic groups and languages spoken:

Some of the local neighboring groups are not indigenous in the real sense but they do speak a local language/dialect: they are the Cuyonin. The closest indigenous communities leaving around the Batak area are the Tagbanua. Migrants, instead, come from different provinces, all speak the national language (Tagalog) as well as their own language/dialect (Visaya, Cebuano, Bicolano, etc).

3. Broad historical context of the CCA

See report

4. Governance structure for the CCA (who takes management decisions, how?)

As far as concerning environmental-based decisions, each individual is free to use the plant and animal resources available in the area for domestic consumption. The use of certain resources (e.g. *agathis* resin) is generally regulated by the same individuals who, over the years, have acquired certain 'tapping' rights to the use of specific trees. Other decisions for more large-scale exploitation of resources (eg. commercial gathering of rattan), as well as agreements with buyers, middlemen, etc. are taken in the course of consultative meetings headed by the community elected chieftain (*kapitan*). All other matters relating to the exploitation of particular resources, either by community members or by outsiders, are dealt with by the community as a whole and implemented through the *kapitan*. Generally, the assistance of shamans as managers of natural resources is sought only during community rituals for the propitiation of rice, honey and, on some occasion, of freshwater resources. Other decisions not related to the management of natural resources can be dealt with various degrees of flexibility, depending on the circumstances. On some occasions, the *kapitan* may have one or several subordinates (*vice-kapitan*) helping him in the performance of his duties, but – overall - he has no power of coercion. His assistance may be requested to settle internal disputes, to discuss the transferring of the community to temporary locations, the building of new houses, the location of swidden fields, the organization of certain festivities. He may be in charge of co-ordinating group labor for the maintenance of village infrastructures and trails and of representing community needs to government agencies. Cases such as divorce, stealing, adultery or the abduction of married women are settled by the council of elders (*surugiden*) and are usually resolved through the payment of a fine. Under particular conditions, adulterous spouses and those responsible for stealing, may be requested to leave their community.

5. Length of time the governance model has been in place

Management roles have changed over the years. Until 1960, a community elder was consulted about the everyday affairs of the community. Any residential aggregate had one of such leaders, unanimously selected by the people for his 'good personality' and other virtues. The people consulted the leader to resolve personal grievances or for any other problem involving the community. Today, elders seldom play a leading role, and leaders (generally of mid-age) are elected (every three years) and acquire the titular position of *kapitan*

6. Land and resource ownership in the CCA

Customary communal ownership,

7. Type of land use in the CCA

Primary forest, secondary forest, mountain forest, swidden fields and follow land.

8. Existence of written or oral management plans and specific rules for the use of natural resources in the CCA

Information on the traditional uses of resources is transmitted orally and there are no old texts containing such prescriptions. On the contrary, with reference to their CBFMAs contractual obligations, Batak need to submit an Annual Work Plan (AWP) and a Community Resource Management Framework (CRMF) to the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO). Such plans contain information on the yearly quantity of NTFPs that people intends (or anticipates) to collect, as well as on the location where such resources are found. It should be pointed out that these reports are to be written according to strict government standards and Batak, being illiterate, do not have the technical skill to prepare them. Because Batak are unable to produce such reports, the buyers of NTFPs - who have vested interests in the use of certain resources found within the Batak CCA - are now producing such reports – and because of their political connections – they are generally capable of having such documents approved.

Some examples of Batak ‘non-textual’ prescriptions for the management of specific resources.

- **Tapping**

Batak gatherers claim that their way of extracting the resin does not damage the *Agathis* tree, since the first cut is only *dua kamrut* (two fingers) wide, and tapping takes place no more than twice a month. Moreover, trees are tapped in such a way that the cut is protected from direct rain, and thus from fungi-related diseases. On the contrary, they complain about the destructive tapping techniques employed by Filipino gatherers. Each Batak individual is in charge of a certain number of trees, which are not utilized by other gatherers, unless permission is obtained.

- **Rattan harvesting**

Batak protection measures for rattan include the exclusion of good palm groves from swidden clearings, and the cutting of single stemmed rattans before the plant has produced fruits. In addition, Batak are aware that when rattan is harvested, a portion of the palm’s cane should be left attached to the plant, in order to allow the growth of the young stems. They also avoid frequent harvesting from the same plant and the cutting of small diameter canes.

- **Checking traps**

Traps should be checked regularly to avoid that the trapped animal will get rotten and, thus, its meat will no longer be edible. The killing of game animals that are not consumed for food is said to upset the master of such animals (e.g. Napantaran – the Master of Pigs).

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