



Chapter 3

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The data about a certain area's natural resources and indicators relating to their respective environmental conditions are necessary in the formulation of policies and programs designed to bring about a more effective environmental protection and resource utilization. There has been a growing awareness and national concern on the country's natural resources and environmental conditions for the past years. This resulted from the development vision long espoused by the national and local leaders which implies a balance between resource utilization and the development, protection and conservation of the country's environment and natural resources. In this fashion, development will benefit not only today's generation but the future ones as well. All these concerns underscore the need for more reliable, timely and comprehensive environment-related data. These pieces of information are critical to the government, private sector and even to the international community in their formulation of measures and related interventions to safeguard the environment and natural resources while at the same time remedy the destruction and degradation of these areas.

The Provincial Government of Negros Occidental has also been doing its share in the protection, preservation and rehabilitation of its environment. It has identified environmental concerns as one of its main priority in the HEARTS-PLUS agenda, an enhanced development perspective of the recent administration. As a major thrust, it has allocated funds to support its various programs in the upland, lowland and coastal areas in close coordination with other Local Government Units (LGUs), national agencies and other non-government organizations. These conscious efforts of the province have been acknowledged through the awards it has received locally and internationally. To ensure future development initiatives for our environment more comprehensive and properly focused, the need for accurate and timely data are basic requirements to evaluate existing and implemented programs/projects aside from serving as bases for plans and future development directions. Thus, data on environment are gathered for the sector.

This chapter contains data on existing/available land, forest, mineral, watershed areas and environmental programs/activities in Negros Occidental that are collected from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Regional Social and Economic Trends (RSET) for Region VI, and the Provincial Environment Management Office (PEMO).

Sectoral Highlights

INDICATOR	PARTICULARS
Land Area	<p>The whole of Western Visayas occupies an area of 2,022,311 hectares. Negros Occidental has the largest land area among the 6 provinces with 792,607 hectares or 39.2 percent of the total land area in the region, 68 percent of which are alienable and disposable land while the remaining 32 percent is forest land area.</p>
Mineral Production	<p>The total mineral production in Negros Occidental decreased by 63 percent in 2006 valued at PhP85,380,292 from P1,505,445,214 in 2001 because of non-production in metallic mineral and decrease in the non-metallic production.</p>
Mineral Reserves	<p>As of 2004, Negros Occidental has an estimated geologic reserve of 25,200,000 MT primary gold ore that can be found mostly in Sipalay City, Negros Occidental.</p>
Protected Areas	<p>Protected areas in the province of Negros Occidental are classified as Natural Parks, National Marine Reserves and Watershed Forest Reserves. There are 3 major watershed forest reserves in the province, namely: Bago River Watershed; Ilog-Hilabangan Watershed; and Kabankalan Watershed with total areas of 61,926 hectares, 10,211 hectares, and 432 hectares, respectively. Another river that has been important in the lives of Negrenses is the Upper Caliban River located at Mt. Managaksak along Mount Mandalagan Mountain Range. Though not yet proclaimed as a Protected Watershed, this river has been the source of Bacolod City Water District (BACIWA).</p> <p>Other protected areas under Natural Parks are Mt. Canlaon, with an area of 24,558 hectares, North Negros Forest Reserves, with an area of 80,000 hectares and Sagay City Marine Reserve with an area of 32,000 hectares.</p> <p>Three sites are currently undergoing necessary preparations for its declaration as Marine Protected Areas (MPA). These are Hulao Hulao Reef in Brgy. Caliling, Cauayan, Campoma-nes Bay in Brgy. 4 and Brgy. Maricalum in Sipalay and Palm Leaf in Brgy. Pook, Hinobaan.</p>

INDICATOR	PARTICULARS
Reforestation and Rehabilitation	The Provincial Government of Negros Occidental , through the Provincial Environment Management Office (PEMO) , has reforested and rehabilitated 49 coastal sites in 2008. In the same year 71 upland sites were planted with a total of 153,000 forest trees. Mt. Canlaon and North Negros Forest Reserves are both protected areas under Republic Act 7586, otherwise known as the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act.
Environment-Friendly Technologies	Adoption of environment friendly technologies, such as Slopping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT), have been applied and implemented as early as 1993.
Enforcement Activities	Community-based enforcement groups, such as Bantay Bukid Brigade (Forest Warden) and Bantay Katunggan (Mangrove Forest Warden), have been created to act as forest guards to undertake monitoring and surveillance activities to strengthen enforcement activities .
Provincial Mining Ordinance	The Provincial Mining Ordinance provides procedures in the regulation of quarry and small-scale mining operations. The Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) has been operational since 1995.
Geographic Information System	A Geographic Information System (GIS) has been in operation since 2000 as a tool in environmental planning and management.
Environmental Awareness Programs	With the continued drive towards massive information campaign, Negrenses are now more aware of the importance of conserving and protecting our natural resources. In line with the Environmental Awareness Program, the province itself is holding a Provincial Environment Week Celebration among others.
Eco-Solid Waste Management Program	The Provincial Government institutionalized an active Provincial Solid Waste Management Board with functions to plan and implement programs of the province on solid waste management.
Livelihood Projects	The Provincial Government also provide alternative projects to partner beneficiaries in coastal and upland areas to lessen dependency on forest and marine resources as their sources of income.

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