



Ikalahan Ancestral Domain

Mean annual rainfall: 4,000 mm

Who is planting trees?

The Ikalahan Ancestral Domain is the home of the Ikalahans, an indigenous community belonging to the Ikalahan-Kalanguya tribe. Other members of the community include the Ifugao, Ibaloi and Kankana-ey indigenous tribes, as well as few Ilocano and Tagalog. Their interrelations are good. They are known for their ‘indigenous knowledge practice systems’ that are environmentally-sustainable. Most of them practice subsistence swidden farming and are very dependent on forest resources for their livelihoods. Many are growing and/or integrating trees on farm, while some have started to engage in high-valued vegetable production.



- The Ikalahans are generally swiddeners who plant rootcrops, such as sweet potato, ginger, taro, cassava and vegetables. They make terraces to plant upland rice. Tiger grass is an important farm component to prevent soil erosion and as raw material for broom straw for extra livelihood.
- Tree species planted on their farms are coffee, guava, cacao, guyabano while native tree species like narra, oak trees, tuai are being planted inside the forest.

- They use ‘Forest Improvement Technology’ (FIT) to expedite the growth of their forest trees, and consequently enhance biodiversity and improve its potential to sequester and store more carbon. In this technology, mature trees that have stopped growing are removed to create favourable condition for forest rejuvenation. Farmers within the ancestral domain share this practice, as well as neighbouring villages through Kalahan Educational Foundation’s (KEF) organized lectures and seminars.

The Kalahan Educational Foundation (KEF), organized by the tribal elders, was established to protect their environment from land grabbers and to continue their traditional farming practices. Among these practices are the following:

- Day-og and Gengen are composting techniques on level and sloping land, respectively;
- Balkah is a contour line of deep-rooted plants, which trap eroded topsoil at the belt line; and
- Pang-omis is a method of expediting the fallow, where farmers intercrop tree seedlings in swidden farms along with the sweet potato.

KEF organized lectures and trainings to farmers on sustainable and traditional farming practices.

Table 1. Ikalahans criteria and preferred tree species

Criteria in choosing tree species	Preferred tree species	
	Local name	Scientific name
Marketability and usability	Coffee	<i>Coffea canephora</i>
Ecologically-beneficial	Guyabano	<i>Annonamuricata</i>
Suitability (easy to propagate)	Guava	<i>Psidiumguajava</i>
Can address sufficiency and sustainability of raw materials	Oak	<i>Lithocarpus sp.</i>
	Cacao	<i>Theobroma cacao</i>
Availability of planting materials	Others	
Low maintenance	Litoko/Oway	<i>Calamusmanillensis</i>
Availability and adaptability of technology	Hagid	<i>Thysanolaena maxima</i>
	Native passion fruit	<i>Passiflora sp.</i>
Alternative source of raw materials	Dikay	
Culturally-acceptable	Lemon Grass	<i>Cymbopogoncitratatus</i>

Source: World Agroforestry Centre. 2013. Mainstreaming Climate Change in Biodiversity Planning and Conservation in the Philippines. Final Report.

- There is a strong social capital among Ikalahans. They have customary rules and regulations in relation to forest within their ancestral domain (e.g. Natural resources development program and agroforestry rules and regulations). Council of elders, barangay officials and KEF conduct monitoring to ensure their proper implementation.