

# ISABELA

HERITAGE MEETS INNOVATION







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## FIRST EDITION NOVEMBER 2024

**Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation** Coffee Table Book is published by the Provincial Government of Isabela with Editorial Office at the Provincial Information Office, 3rd Floor, Capitol Building, Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela.

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## ABOUT THE COVER

**Heritage Meets Innovation** encapsulates the spirit of Isabela, a land where heritage intertwines with innovation. Framed by the breathtaking Northern Sierra Madre Mountain Range, the cover features golden fields of rice, symbolizing the hard work and dedication of Isabeleño farmers who tirelessly nurture the land. This striking imagery embodies the province's commitment to honoring its roots while embracing the future.

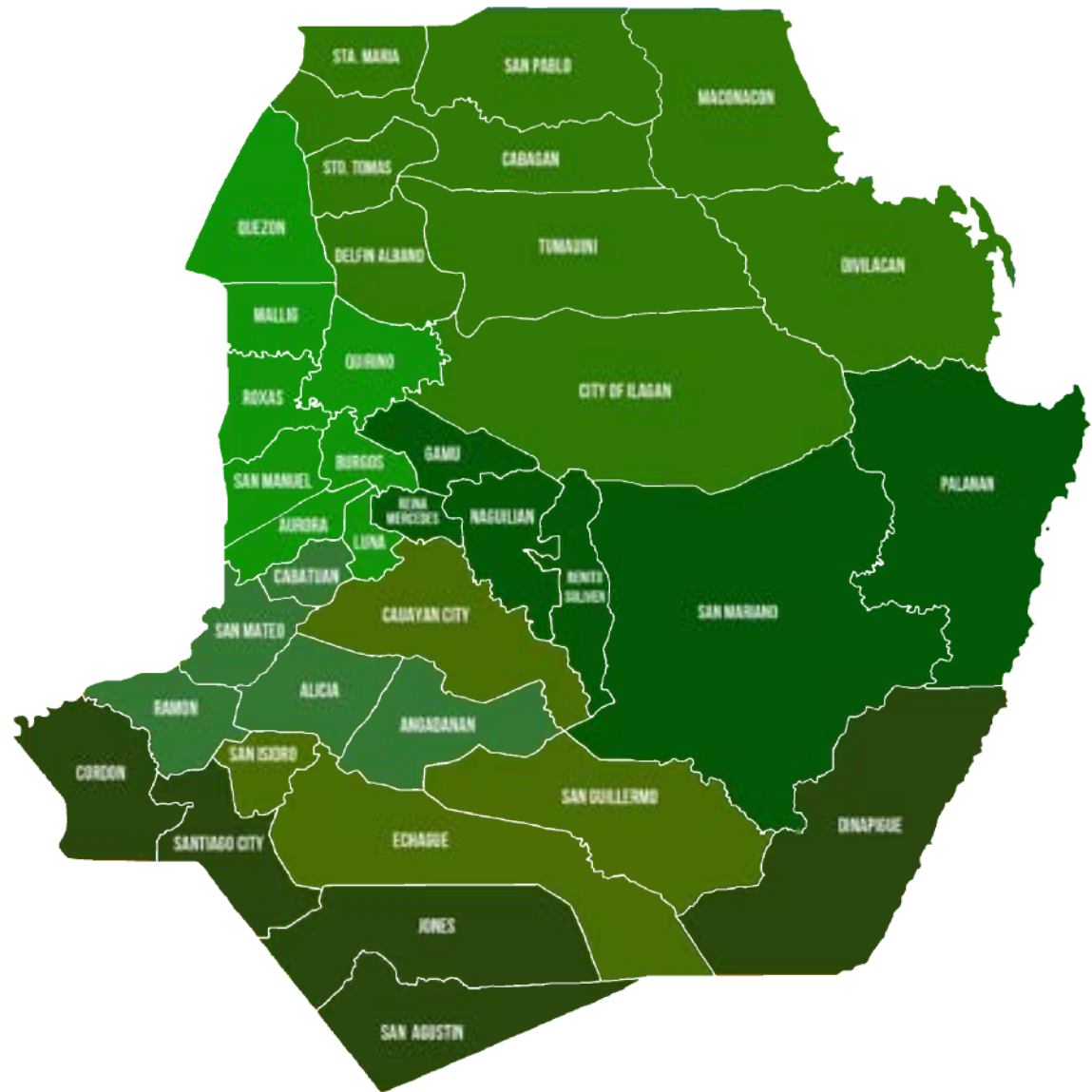
This visual narrative also highlights the diverse beneficiaries of the Isabela Rice Assistance Program, underscoring the provincial government's thrust—to investing in its people. Featuring farmers, vendors, fisherfolk, persons with disabilities (PWDs), barangay frontline workers, and members of the Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association (TODA), each group exemplifies the program's impact, with their stories reflecting the province's dedication to uplifting the lives of Isabeleños.

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**“Isabela is a new frontier... a province brimming with mystique. To truly uncover our unique cuisine and bask in the warmth of our people, you must journey to Isabela. You'll be pleasantly surprised—yung nakikita mo, magugulat ka—uy, may ganito pala.”**

**GOV. RODOLFO T. ALBANO III**



## MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

It is with immense pride and excitement that I present *Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation*, a stunning chronicle of our province's remarkable journey. Beyond being a tribute to our beloved province, this book is a celebration of Isabela's indomitable spirit, unyielding resilience, and limitless potential. Through these pages, you are invited to explore how our deep-rooted heritage harmonizes with groundbreaking innovation, leading us toward a future brimming with promise.

Isabela has long stood at the intersection of culture and progress. As the second-largest province in the Philippines, our rich cultural heritage is woven into the fabric of our daily lives, even as we embrace cutting-edge advancements. This coffee table book beautifully captures the very essence of Isabela—a place where the past and future converge to create a lasting legacy of sustainable growth and innovation.

In this book, you will discover the true heart of Isabela: our landscapes, vibrant communities, and pioneering initiatives. Our province's programs in agriculture, renewable energy, disaster preparedness, and economic development are manifestations of our constant commitment to sustainability, resilience, and excellence.

Yet, our strength transcends these achievements. The true heartbeat of Isabela lies in its people—our creativity, determination, and dedication to progress. It is through our collective efforts that Isabela has become a shining example of hope and progress, inspiring the nation and embodying a vision of leadership rooted in action and compassion.

This book is both a celebration of our successes and a powerful reminder of the bright future that lies ahead as we continue to build on our shared legacy.

Thank you for being part of this extraordinary journey. Together, let us strive for even greater heights, ensuring that Isabela remains a model of sustainable development and progress for generations to come.

Mabuhay ang Isabela!

  
**RODOLFO T. ALBANO III**  
Governor



## MESSAGE FROM THE VICE GOVERNOR

Thank you for picking up this book and taking the time to explore its pages.

Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation is not just a collection of stories and images, but an invitation to experience the heart of our beloved province. Within these pages, you'll witness how nature, culture, and progress come together to shape Isabela into what it is today.

This book tells the story of our transformation—a journey rooted in tradition, fortified by the unity of our people, and driven by a shared passion to elevate our province. It highlights Isabela's vibrant festivals, rich culinary heritage, abundant harvests, and the forward-thinking leadership that has positioned us as one of the leaders in renewable energy and sustainable development.

Each page reflects Isabela's commitment to progress, embodied in sustainable practices, thriving industries, and inclusive governance.

From the tales of Isabela's resilience and perseverance, to the showcase of its heritage and tourist attractions, and the development of key industries, Isabela's story is truly remarkable. These stories and images reveal the beauty of our land and the enduring spirit of our people—steadfast, resourceful, and united in the pursuit of shared prosperity.

I hope Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation deepens your appreciation for how we balance rich traditions with bold innovation. This balance defines us—a province that treasures its past while embracing the future.

May it inspire you and leave you with a reminder of the strength, unity, and potential that define our province.



**FAUSTINO G. DY III**  
Vice Governor

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation** is a visually captivating coffee table book that thoughtfully combines the province's rich cultural history with its drive for progress.

As the second-largest province in the Philippines, Isabela is brought to life through evocative photography and engaging narratives that celebrate its stunning landscapes, vibrant communities, and innovative strides. The book is a tribute to the province's exceptional governance and steadfast commitment to sustainable growth.

With an introductory message from Governor Rodito T. Albano III, the book sets the tone for a province that looks ahead while remaining deeply connected to its roots. Governor Albano highlights Isabela's focus on sustainability, featuring its pioneering programs in agriculture, disaster preparedness, and renewable energy—efforts that have established Isabela as a leader in sustainable development.

The book is organized into five distinct chapters, each offering a deeper look into Isabela's unique identity:

**Chapter I: Isabela in a Nutshell** – An overview of the province's history, geography, and physical attributes, revealing how these have shaped its culture and people.

**Chapter II: The Soul of Isabela** – A deep dive into the province's cultural core, exploring festivals, gastronomy, local products, religious landmarks, and the spirited lives of its people.

**Chapter III: Isabela's Breath** – A showcase of the province's stunning natural beauty, including beaches, caves, rivers, and parks, as well as its pledge to preserve biodiversity.


**Chapter IV: The Heartbeat of Isabela** – A focus on Isabela as an agricultural province, featuring rice, corn, high-value crops, livestock, fisheries, and dairy, along with its ventures in renewable energy and economic investments.

**Chapter V: Excellence in Governance** – A highlight of Isabela's innovative governance initiatives, including sustainable agriculture, disaster resilience, and the iconic "1 Million Trees/Bamboos in One Day," a reforestation/riparian project of the provincial government.

Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation captures the spirit of a province that respects its past while boldly embracing the future. With its striking visuals and thoughtful commentary, the book is a tribute to Isabela's enduring legacy and a source of pride for all who call the province home.

CHAPTER I

# Isabela in a Nutshell



Province of Isabela, established in 1856, was named after Queen Isabella II of Spain, who ruled from 1833 to 1868. The province was created by merging portions of Cagayan and Nueva Vizcaya, making it one of the largest provinces in the Philippines.

## ■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Isabela's history stretches back over 25,000 years, beginning with the Agtas, who settled in the region during the Pleistocene Epoch, commonly known as the Ice Age. These indigenous groups, known for their deep connection to the land, continue to inhabit the mountainous forests of eastern Isabela and its coastal areas today.

Later, between 200 BC and 1500 AD, waves of Indonesian and Malay migrants arrived, whose descendants—including the Ibanag, Gaddang, and Yogad—formed communities primarily centered around corn agriculture.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Spanish colonization brought Christianity, the encomienda system, and the tobacco monopoly to Isabela. Spanish rule, marked by oppression, sparked revolts led by local

chieftains like Dabo and Marayag. In 1856, Isabela de Luzon was officially established, named after Queen Isabella II of Spain. The province originally consisted of towns from the larger Cagayan and Nueva Vizcaya provinces, created to aid in the conversion of the local population to Catholicism.

In the late 19th century, migration surged, particularly from the Ilocanos and other ethnolinguistic groups, earning Isabela the nickname **"Melting Pot of the North."**

During the Philippine-American War, the coastal town of Palanan gained historical significance when General Emilio Aguinaldo, the first President of the Philippines, was captured by U.S. forces in 1901. This event marked a pivotal moment in the conflict and the beginning of American colonial rule.

Under American governance, Isabela's political system changed, but its economy remained largely agricultural.

The province endured Japanese occupation during World War II from 1942 until its liberation in 1945. Following the war, the Philippines gained independence in 1946, and despite the challenges during those turbulent times, Isabela continued to thrive and develop.

From the late 20th century to the present, Isabela has emerged as a leading province in the Philippines. Santiago achieved independent city status in 1994, followed by Cauayan in 2001 and Ilagan in 2012.

Today, Isabela's rich cultural heritage and dynamic progress make it a key player in the region.

## ■ GEOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE

Situated in the Cagayan Valley Region of the Philippines, Isabela occupies the northeastern section of Luzon and ranks as the second-largest province in the country, covering an expansive area of 10,664.56 square kilometers (1,066,456 hectares).

The province is organized into 34 municipalities and 3 cities, with the City of Ilagan serving as its capital. It is further divided into 6 legislative districts and includes a total of 1,055 barangays.

Isabela is divided into three physiographic areas:

Eastern Isabela is rugged and densely forested. The massive Sierra Madre Mountain Range extends the entire length of the province from north to south. This region features a vast natural park that is home to a variety of wildlife and is known for its high-quality timber.

Western Isabela is a vast, fertile valley bordered by the Cordillera Central to the west. This flat, rolling terrain is interspersed with smaller valleys and plains, carved by the Cagayan River—the longest river in the Philippines.

Coastal Isabela, generally flat to gently rolling, this area is distinguished by its 113-kilometer shoreline facing the Pacific Ocean. This area includes the province's expansive fishing grounds, beautiful bays, caves, small islands, and white sand beaches.

Isabela's varied landscapes offer a wealth of opportunities for tourism and investment, from eco-tourism in the mountainous east to agricultural ventures in the fertile west, and coastal development along its picturesque shores.





## ■ ETHNOLINGUISTIC GROUPS

**Based on the 2020 census, Isabela is home to 1,697,050 people, reflecting a steady growth rate of 1.33%. This diverse population includes a variety of ethnolinguistic groups that contribute to the province's rich cultural fabric.**

The influx of Ilocanos into Isabela has made them the dominant group in the province's population. Their migration, which began during the Spanish colonial period, greatly contributed to the development of agriculture, especially in rice and corn farming.

The Ibanags, the second-largest ethnolinguistic group in Isabela, are primarily concentrated in Cabagan, Santa Maria, San Pablo, Tumauini, and City of Ilagan. Proud of their heritage as the original inhabitants of the northern Cagayan Valley, the Ibanags were among the first settlers along the Cagayan River and continue to preserve their distinct cultural identity.

Another important indigenous group in the province is the Yogad, who primarily reside in the municipalities of Echague, Jones, Angadanan, and Santiago City. Alongside them, the Gaddang community, known for its diverse cultural practices, can be found in southern Isabela, including Santiago City, Angadanan, Cauayan City, Gamu, and Reina Mercedes.

In the remote and rugged Sierra Madre Mountains, the Agtas and Dumagats live in close connection with nature, maintaining a traditional lifestyle based on hunting, fishing, and gathering forest products.



CHAPTER II

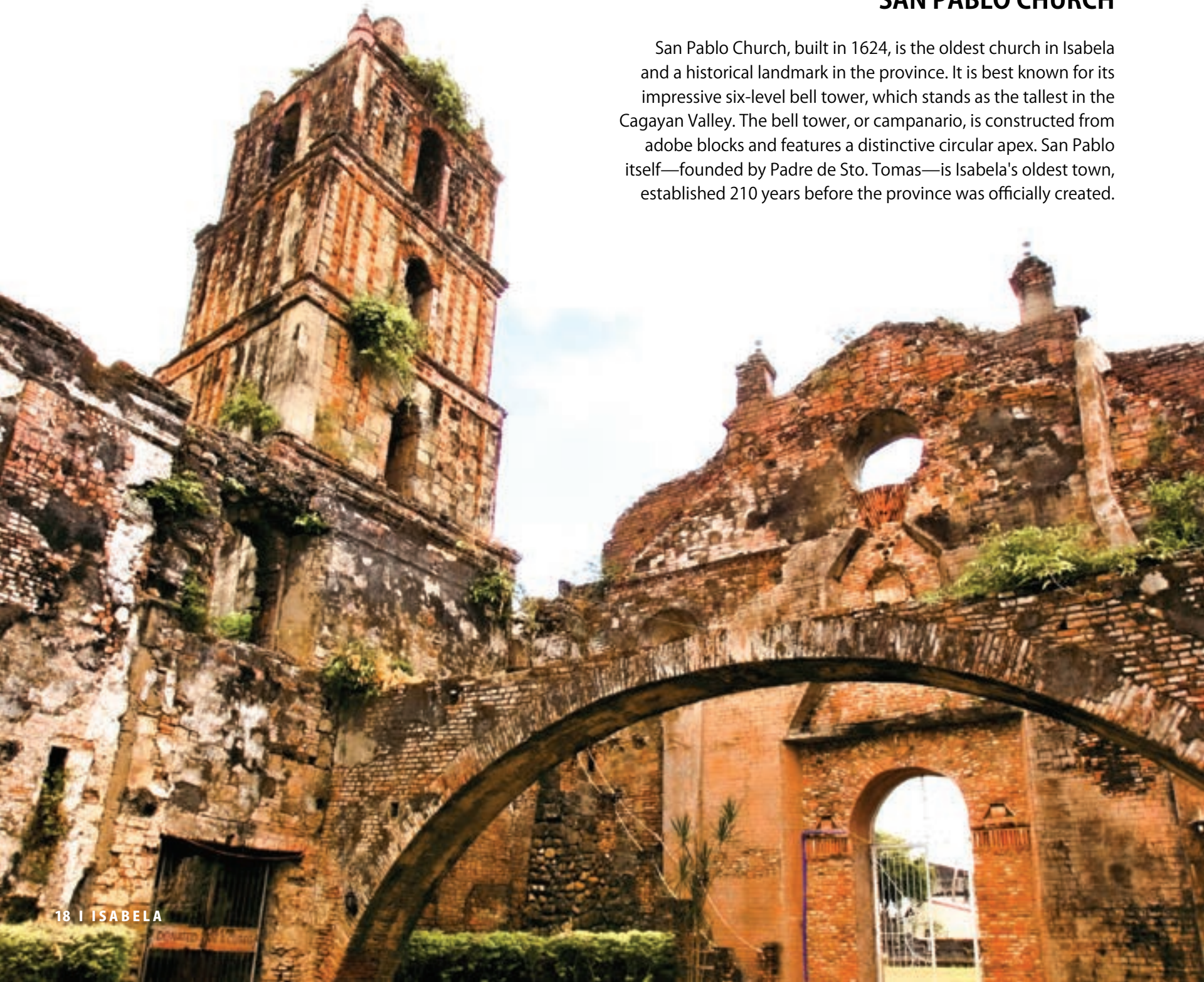
# The Soul of Isabela



## ■ HISTORICAL CHURCHES

### SAN PABLO CHURCH

San Pablo Church, built in 1624, is the oldest church in Isabela and a historical landmark in the province. It is best known for its impressive six-level bell tower, which stands as the tallest in the Cagayan Valley. The bell tower, or campanario, is constructed from adobe blocks and features a distinctive circular apex. San Pablo itself—founded by Padre de Sto. Tomas—is Isabela's oldest town, established 210 years before the province was officially created.



## SAINT MATTHIAS PARISH CHURCH

Saint Matthias Parish Church is an ultra-Baroque church renowned for its extensive use of bricks in both its exterior and interior ornamentation, a choice made due to the lack of good-quality stones in the area. A closer look at the brick façade reveals numbers and dates, marking the correct sequence of bricks in Forto's design.

Attached to the church's façade is a unique cylindrical belfry, built in 1805 during the colonial era. It is the only known Spanish colonial-era cylindrical tower in the country, with a tiered structure that notably resembles a wedding cake. The belfry houses a historical, bullet-ridden bell that was never recast.

## OUR LADY OF ATOCHA CHURCH

The Our Lady of Atocha Church in Alicia is a notable example of Castilian architecture, originally built by Spanish missionaries in the 18th century. Dedicated to Nuestra Señora de Atocha (Our Lady of Atocha), this historic church has become one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in Isabela, especially during Holy Week.

## ■ POPULAR FESTIVALS

### BAMBANTI FESTIVAL

Bambanti Festival, aptly called the "**mother of all festivals**" in Isabela, draws locals and foreigners worldwide, with 34 municipalities and three cities participating.

The festival has bloomed into a vibrant, week-long celebration that engages all sectors of the province. It showcases the best of Isabela—from world-class products, rich heritage and culture, and the people's ingenuity to its mouthwatering cuisine and captivating street dance performances.

There is more to the Bambanti Festival than just the scarecrows. It is primarily celebrated as a communal gesture of thanksgiving for the bountiful harvest, resilience, strength, and determination of the Isabeleños.



## MAMMANGI FESTIVAL

Corn production was one of the significant farming activities among the first ethnic inhabitants of the City of Ilagan, the Ibanags, who were referred to as “**mammangi**” or corn farmers.

The Mammangi Festival is celebrated every May to pay tribute to the strength, industry, resilience, and perseverance of Ilagueño farmers.



## GAWAGAWAY-YAN FESTIVAL

The Gawagaway-yan Festival is observed from the last week of March to the second week of April in Cauayan City as a way of giving thanks for the city’s progress and development.

Gawagaway-yan, a Gaddang word meaning bountiful livelihood and merriment, traces the ancestry of the Cauayeños to the Gaddang ethnolinguistic group and recognizes the cultural diversity of the groups residing in the city.

© Gawagaway-yan Festival facebook page

## PAGAY FESTIVAL BALITOK TI ALICIA

The Pagay Festival upholds Alicia's cultural identity and heritage while promoting the municipality's primary agricultural product, pagay (Ilocano for rice).

It showcases the industriousness of the town's people, who put their hearts into the laborious, muscle-numbing work in the fields to yield the golden grains.



## BALATONG FESTIVAL

The Balatong Festival of San Mateo honors the mung bean, which has become an additional source of income for the town between rice harvests.

The first Balatong Festival was held in 2008, after the townspeople discovered a solution to the reduced harvest yields caused by chemical-intensive farming.





## **BAKA FESTIVAL**

San Pablo, the northernmost town with vast cattle ranches, is known for its Baka Festival. Held every mid-January, the festival aims to promote the local cattle industry in the province.

## **PANSI FESTIVAL**

The Pansi Festival is an annual event in Cabagan, celebrated every third week of January in tribute to the town's flourishing native noodle industry.

Pansi, the Ibanag term for pancit, is the most beloved noodle dish in the Cagayan Valley and has gained widespread recognition throughout the Philippines.

## **KANKANEN FESTIVAL**

The municipality of Cabatuan is home to the Kankanen Festival. This annual event, held in early November, showcases various native cakes and pastries made from sweet rice. The festival aims to enrich the cultural heritage of Cabatuan, particularly in the culinary preparation of native delicacies.

## **BATO ART FESTIVAL**

The Bato Art Festival has become a symbol of Luna's industrial potential. By utilizing the town's natural stones, residents have turned their creative passions into income-generating activities, further enhancing Luna's appeal as an emerging town.

## **BALAMBAN FESTIVAL**

The Balamban Festival, previously known as the Balamban Butterfly Festival, is the founding anniversary celebration of Santiago City, held during the first week of May.

Balamban, an Ilocano term for butterfly, is a cultural dance of lowland Christians that originated in Santiago City.

The dance mimics the graceful movements and fluttering of butterflies in Dariuk Hills' scented gardens.

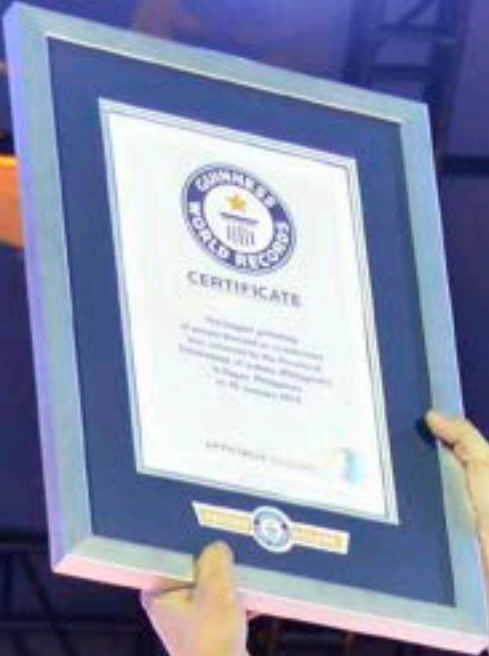
## A GUINNESS WORLD RECORD HOLDER

**Bambanti Festival** set a world record for Guinness when 2,495 performers wearing scarecrow costumes did a simultaneous street dance number in Ilagan City, Isabela.

**“You are officially amazing!”** Pauline Ann Sapinska said, adjudicator for the Guinness World Records, after proclaiming the new world record set by the province for the largest gathering of people dressed as **“bambanti”** (the Ilocano term for scarecrows).

The number of performers during the event exceeded the prerequisite of the Guinness World Record of 250 performers who danced at the same time for five minutes or less.





## ■ GASTRONOMY

### PANCIT CABAGAN

Pancit Cabagan is a noodle dish that originated from the municipality of Cabagan. It was introduced by Sia Lang, popularly known by locals as Diang-ga, a Chinese trader from Amoy (now Xiamen in China) sometime in the 19th century.

Pancit Cabagan is cooked using locally made noodles called Miki Cabagan, sautéed with pork belly strips, pork broth mixed with soy sauce, and topped with vegetables, igado, carajay, and egg.





## POOR MAN'S PANCIT

In Ibanag culture, the Poor Man's Pancit offers a unique variation of Pancit Cabagan, featuring tiny clams known as "**asisi**," harvested from local rivers and served as a flavorful topping in a delightful savory stir-fry.

## BINALLAY

Binallay, Isabela's unique version of suman, originates from the City of Ilagan. This traditional rice cake is made of glutinous rice flour mixed with water, wrapped in banana leaves, and steamed to perfection.

Served with a rich caramel sauce called "**laro**," made from coconut milk and raw sugar, Binallay holds deep cultural and religious significance, especially during Holy Week when it symbolizes the body and blood of Christ.



## INATATA

Inatata is a traditional Isabela delicacy made from sweet glutinous rice wrapped in banana leaves. Tied in batches of ten, it resembles a magazine of bullets, symbolizing patience, industriousness, and perseverance of the Isabeleños.

Known locally as bala-bala, Inatata has been a cherished part of Isabeleño cuisine for generations, reflecting deep cultural values and culinary heritage.

## MORIECOS

Moriecos is a cherished native delicacy made from galapong (ground glutinous rice) and sweetened with a rich latik filling. Wrapped in banana leaves, this suman variation boasts a smoother texture and a delectable coconut milk and sugar paste.

Originally a backyard industry, Moriecos has become a hallmark of Cabatuan, with its reputation spreading to various towns, cities, provinces, and even abroad.





## ■ LOCAL PRODUCTS

### SABUTAN

In Palanan, the Sabutan, a species of Pandan plant, is crafted into beautiful handmade products including bags, hats, fans, mats, and placemats. Each item showcases traditional weaving techniques and vibrant local culture. These crafts are highlighted annually during the Sabutan Festival, underscoring the town's rich heritage and providing essential income for its local weavers. The unique artistry of Sabutan reflects Palanan's cultural pride and craftsmanship.



With skilled hands and a deep connection to tradition, an elder in Palanan prepares Sabutan leaves for weaving, preserving an age-old craft. From cutting and drying to weaving intricate patterns, these fibers will soon become hats, baskets, and home decor.



## INABEL

Inabel is a cherished textile originating from the Ilocos region. In Isabela, the municipality of Quezon and Cauayan City are actively producing exquisite Inabel products, such as traditional garments and home decor items.

The term "**abel**" means "**weave**" in Ilocano, and "**inabel**" specifically denotes the woven fabrics that embody the unique artistry of Ilocano craftsmanship. Crafted primarily from cotton, inabel fabric can feature either plain or intricate patterned designs. This cloth is celebrated for its stunning aesthetics and durability. Skilled weavers in Quezon and Cauayan City utilize hardwood pedal looms, applying various design techniques to create each piece.

## RATTAN PRODUCTS

The Agtas and other local producers have honed their skills in creating a variety of products, including rattan chairs, flower vases, baskets, lampshades, the iconic butaka, and detachable beds. This craftsmanship has been enhanced through hands-on training provided by the Rattan Processing Shared Service Facility (SSF) in Cabisera 10, City of Ilagan.

The DTI is expanding its programs to include the training of indigenous Agtas, not only as rattan gatherers but also as skilled craftsmen, further broadening opportunities for marginalized communities.

## GIN-C

Gin-C is a refreshing, natural juice drink made with turmeric and calamansi, proudly produced in Jones. Originally conceived as a token of gratitude for frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, it soon captured the attention of Gov. Rodito T. Albano, who encouraged the team to aim higher. With his support, along with Jones Mayor Leticia Sebastian and LPGMA Partylist Rep. Allan Ty, the Jones Producers Cooperative (JPC) was established.

National recognition quickly followed, enabling Gin-C to scale up production and expand its reach when former President Rodrigo R. Duterte endorsed the product, inspiring Filipinos to support local brands. Today, Gin-C is a proud symbol of Isabela's resilience, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit.

## MUNG BEAN PRODUCTS FROM SAN MATEO

San Mateo, known as the “**Munggo Capital of the Philippines,**” is the nation’s largest producer of mung beans. Among its innovative offerings are the delectable and healthy munggo noodles, which stand out as an alternative to traditional flour or wheat noodles, appealing to health-conscious consumers and those seeking gluten-free options.

The municipality also produces sprouted munggo for lumpia and pancit, as well as ingredients for local favorites like butchi, empanada, pulvoron, and munggo coffee. New products include fried munggo sprouts, instant munggo soup, and crispy mung bean chips. With support from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), local cooperatives have improved the development, packaging, and marketing of these products.



## BIG BROTHER CORNIKS

A beloved pasalubong from Cauayan City, Big Brother Corniks is made from locally sourced native white corn and seasoned with natural garlic flakes. This family recipe snack delivers a satisfying crunch and rich, savory flavor.

Now available in major grocery stores nationwide, Big Brother Corniks brings a taste of Cauayan to every corner of the Philippines.



CHAPTER III

# Isabela's Breath



## ■ KEY DESTINATIONS

Isabela is a province rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage, offering a diverse range of destinations for travelers. Its pristine beaches provide peaceful getaways with stretches of white sand and clear waters, perfect for those seeking relaxation by the sea. The province is also home to scenic rivers and lakes, ideal for boating, picnics, and picture taking.

For adventure seekers, Isabela offers extensive caves waiting to be explored by spelunking enthusiasts. Gardens and nature parks offer serene spots for relaxation and wildlife observation, while shrines provide places of spiritual reflection, drawing visitors from all over for pilgrimage and cultural immersion.



The coastal municipalities of Palanan, Divilacan, Maconacon, and Dinapigue in Isabela are home to powdery white beaches and crystalline waters.

## **This 113-kilometer expanse of pristine white sand stretches along Isabela's Pacific coast.**

The beaches of Coastal Isabela fringe the azure waters of the Pacific Ocean. In Palanan, surfers enjoy excellent wave breaks and strong winds, all while taking in breathtaking views of the Sierra Madre Forest. The Palanan Rainforest, part of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, is one of Asia's last remaining virgin forests and was declared a protected wilderness area in 1979.

Coastal Isabela's extensive seacoast is rich in untapped fisheries and marine resources. Pointed-nose dolphins and humpback whales have been sighted in the hidden paradise of Dicotcotan Beach, a three-kilometer stretch that borders a coastal forest and a seafront village.



## DIPUDO SHORELINE

Dipudo's shoreline in Divilacan features powdery white sand mixed with crushed shells and striking black rocks. Its shallow waters make it perfect for snorkeling, beachcombing, and sunbathing, along with enjoying fresh coconut treats and seafood. It is ideal for a relaxing sea, sun, and sand adventure.

## DIMASILONG

Recognized as an eco-tourism site under Municipal Resolution No. 2022-19, Dimasilong Eco-Tourism Park in the municipality of San Agustin is a serene retreat featuring caves and a scenic river with depths of up to four meters. Visitors can enjoy boating, swimming, picnicking, and fishing just 19.5 kilometers from Poblacion.



## MALASI LAKE IN CABAGAN

Malasi Lake in Brgy. San Antonio, Cabagan, Isabela, is officially designated as a municipal bird sanctuary, crucial for migratory birds and renowned for its population of endemic Philippine Ducks (*Anas luzonica*).

The sanctuary is celebrated among birdwatchers for its diverse avian species.

It consists of two natural lakes set in open grassland west of the Cagayan River. One lake serves for irrigation, while the other, fringed with reeds, provides essential breeding grounds for waterbirds.

Local ordinances safeguard the site by prohibiting hunting, egg collection, and limiting agricultural development around the lakes.

Administrative Order No. 2012-01, issued by former DENR Secretary Ramon Paje, designates Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary as a critical habitat. This designation ensures that any development activities are subject to thorough assessment to preserve the area's ecological integrity. It aligns with Republic Act 9147, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, and addresses the decline of the Philippine duck, which is classified as "**vulnerable**" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).







An aerial photograph of a lush, green landscape. A winding river flows through the center, surrounded by dense vegetation and rolling hills. The water is a vibrant blue-green color. In the background, a dam is visible, creating a reservoir. The overall scene is a picturesque natural setting.

## **MARANNAO SWIP DAM: A HIDDEN OASIS IN SAN MARIANO**

Maranna SWIP Dam, a water-impounding project in the municipality of San Mariano, collects rainwater during the wet season, providing vital irrigation for crops and supporting fish farming during the dry months. Visitors can enjoy serene boating on the tranquil waters and relax with family and friends in this picturesque setting.



## KWEBA DANUM

Located in Barangay Cumabao in Tumauni, Kweba Danum is a hidden gem within the Tumauni Watershed Natural Park, managed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). It is a pristine cave renowned for its captivating water tunnel that originates from the surrounding mountains. The name “**danum**,” derived from the Ilokano word for water, aptly reflects the cave's defining feature.



## STA. VICTORIA CAVES

Nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountain Range in City of Ilagan, Isabela, the Sta. Victoria Caves consist of over 12 limestone caves, renowned for their striking rock formations, subterranean waterfalls, and glittering stones.

These caves hold archaeological significance, as they are believed to have once been home to the nomadic Dumagat or Agta people.

## BONSAI FOREST

The Bonsai Forest in Dinapigue is a breathtaking scenery that calls for exploration. Covering approximately 5,000 hectares within the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, this extraordinary sanctuary is home to a stunning collection of stunted and dwarfed trees.

Ranging from just one foot to seven feet tall, these Bonsai trees form a magical and tranquil landscape, set against the majestic Sierra Madre mountains. The forest offers sweeping panoramic views and an exhilarating ascent accessible by motorcycle or 4x4 vehicles, culminating in a refreshing trek.







## ABUAN RIVER

Supported by the local government of City of Ilagan, private sectors, and NGOs, Abuan River is gaining popularity as a must-visit destination for nature enthusiasts. Once regarded by the Department of the Interior and Local Government as the **“cleanest river”** in Cagayan Valley in the 1990s, the river has been a favorite spot for villagers and tourists who enjoy whitewater rafting, rappelling, waterfall trekking, kayaking, and other water activities.



## **MERAKI GARDEN: THE MOST POPULAR GARDEN IN REGION 2**

Located in Brgy. Napaccu Pequeño in Reina Mercedes, Meraki Garden offers a cultural blend of Greek-inspired charm and Filipino warmth. Adorned with bougainvillea, bonsai trees, and Santorini-inspired blue and white hues, this Instagram-worthy spot is a haven for relaxation and entertainment.

With attractions ranging from playgrounds and delectable café treats to live local bands and enchanting magicians, Meraki Garden promises a delightful experience for all ages. Experience its soul, creativity, and love—all for just a P50.00 entrance fee.



## ISABELA MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

The Isabela Museum and Library (IML) Building, located in Barangay Osmeña, City of Ilagan, was originally the Isabela Provincial Capitol Building, serving as the seat of the provincial government from 1950 to 1991.

Over the years, the IML has undergone various uses and renovations. It served as a temporary office shelter for the municipal government of Ilagan from 2004 to 2006 and was later utilized by several organizations.

Significant renovations were undertaken in 2017 under then-governor Faustino "Bojie" G. Dy III, and by 2020, the building was fully

rehabilitated. In 2019, over 46,000 books were donated by Children's International (Kansas, USA), which were distributed to isolated and disadvantaged areas.

The museum's ground level features diverse exhibits, including the Tilamsik ng Liwanag Exhibit and the Art Capital of the North Gallery, while the library houses 22,000 books, periodicals, and other materials.

Supervised by the Isabela Tourism Office, the museum is affiliated with the National Library of the Philippines and was officially accredited by the Department of Tourism on September 21, 2023. This

accreditation, conferred during a ceremony in Tuguegarao City, recognized the IML as a Gallery/Museum.

The IML houses the "**Paglikom sa Kayamanan ng Lahi**" program, dedicated to collecting and preserving cultural treasures and safeguarding Isabela's vibrant cultural legacy for future generations.

The IML has also significantly contributed to the province's Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) in tourism, culture, and the arts. The museum is open from Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

## SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF THE VISITATION OF GUIBANG

Pilgrims flock to the miraculous shrine of Our Lady of the Visitation of Guibang every July 2 to pay homage, seek intercession, and express gratitude for blessings received.

This pilgrimage site deepens Catholic devotion to Mama Mary as a compassionate mother and intercessor, with countless devotees experiencing miracles and answered petitions through her intercession.

This growing spiritual significance led to the expansion of the pilgrim church, which was blessed and dedicated on February 3, 2023 by Papal nuncio Archbishop Charles Brown, alongside the clergy of the Diocese of Ilagan.





## ■ ENDEMIC BIODIVERSITY IN ISABELA

The Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP) is one of the Philippines' most biodiverse protected areas, renowned for its rich ecosystems and species diversity. The park plays a crucial role in protecting species that are critically endangered or extinct elsewhere.

Among its inhabitants are 128 species listed as threatened or near-threatened on the global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (2018). Isabela proudly supports a remarkable array of endemic species, each vital to its distinct ecosystems.





## **PHILIPPINE CROCODILE** *(Crocodylus mindorensis)*

Once widespread, Philippine crocodiles now number fewer than 250. Found in isolated pockets like San Mariano and Divilacan, these freshwater crocodiles play a crucial ecological role and are protected in local sanctuaries.

Philippine Crocodile, critically endangered, thrives in Isabela's coastal habitats, supported by local conservation efforts.

Endemism: Endemic to the Philippines  
IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered (CR)




## **GOLDEN-CROWNED FLYING FOX** *(Acerodon jubatus)*

The Golden-crowned Flying Fox, among the largest bats globally with a wingspan of 1.5 meters, is endemic to the Philippines and faces severe threats from hunting and habitat loss.

Isabela's Northern Sierra Madre Mountains host vital roost sites, like Divilacan, where local efforts protect these endangered bats.

Golden-crowned Flying Fox, endemic to the Philippines, finds refuge in Isabela's Northern Sierra Madre, where conservation initiatives are crucial.

Photographer: Merlijn van Weerd / Mabuwaya Foundation  
Endemism: Endemic to the Philippines  
IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered (CR)



**PHILIPPINE EAGLE** (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*)

The national bird of the Philippines, the Philippine Eagle, faces extinction due to habitat loss and hunting. Recent sightings in the Northern Sierra Madre highlight ongoing conservation efforts to protect this majestic bird.

Endemism: Endemic to the Philippines  
IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered (CR)



**ISABELA ORIOLE** (*Oriolus isabellae*)

Named after Isabela, this bird was thought extinct until rediscovered in the Northern Sierra Madre. With only around 50 left, conservation efforts are essential in preserving this symbol of Isabela's biodiversity.

Isabela Oriole, critically endangered, embodies the province's promise and continuous efforts to safeguard its unique avian species.

Endemism: Endemic to Luzon  
IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered (CR)

### LUZON HORNBILL (*Penelopides manillae*)



Known locally as Tarictic, the Luzon Hornbill is a vital seed disperser in Isabela's forests. Despite being less threatened, habitat loss and illegal pet trade pose significant challenges to its conservation.

Endemism: Endemic to northern Philippines  
IUCN Red List: Not Threatened

### LUZON BLEEDING-HEART (*Gallicolumba luzonica*)



Known for its distinctive red chest marking, this ground-dwelling pigeon faces threats from hunting and forest fragmentation, underscoring the need for conservation actions in Isabela.

Luzon Bleeding-heart, endemic to Luzon, exemplifies Isabela's rich biodiversity amidst conservation challenges.

Endemism: Endemic to Luzon and satellite islands  
IUCN Red List: Near Threatened

### WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon gularis*)



Known locally as Salaksak, the White-throated Kingfisher is a familiar sight along Isabela's rivers, its distinctive call echoing through the province's diverse landscapes.

Endemism: Endemic to the Philippines  
IUCN Red List: Not Threatened

### SPOTTED WOOD KINGFISHER (*Actenoides lindsayi*)



Found in lowland forests, the Spotted Wood Kingfisher is characterized by its distinct call and serves as an indicator of forest health in Isabela.

Endemism: Endemic to the Philippines  
IUCN Red List: Not Threatened

CHAPTER IV

**The Heartbeat  
of Isabela**

# Isabela stands as the economic powerhouse of Cagayan Valley, accounting for 44.8% of the region's total economic output in 2022.

It is one of the most prosperous and progressive provinces in the Philippines, boasting a first-class income classification primarily supported by agriculture and agri-based industries.

## ■ RICE PRODUCTION

Isabela plays a vital role in rice production in the Philippines, significantly impacting the country's overall staple supply. It is the second-largest producer of rice in the country, following Nueva Ecija.

In 2023, the province recorded a total rice production of 1.48 million metric tons, an increase of 1.5% from the previous year, driven by the return of economic activities to pre-pandemic levels.

In the first half of 2024, Isabela produced approximately 751,110 metric tons of rice—still the highest in the region.

Within Cagayan Valley, Isabela consistently ranks as the top rice producer among all provinces, accounting for nearly half of the region's rice production. Isabela's contribution is crucial to the surplus needed for the country's goal of rice self-sufficiency.

Under the MRIDP, the national government aims to achieve 97.5% rice sufficiency by 2028. In 2023, Isabela had already reached a rice sufficiency level of 460.64%—the highest in the country.

**The rice sufficiency level achieved in 2023 marked a sharp improvement from 457.71% in 2022, 451.70% in 2021, and 386.99% five years ago.**





## ■ CORN PRODUCTION

### **Isabela maintains its status as the top corn-producing province in the Philippines.**

In just the first half of 2024, Isabela recorded a total corn production of 538,230 metric tons, the highest in Cagayan Valley.

In 2023, Isabela ranked as the top corn producer among the five provinces, accounting for 55.5% of the total regional corn production.

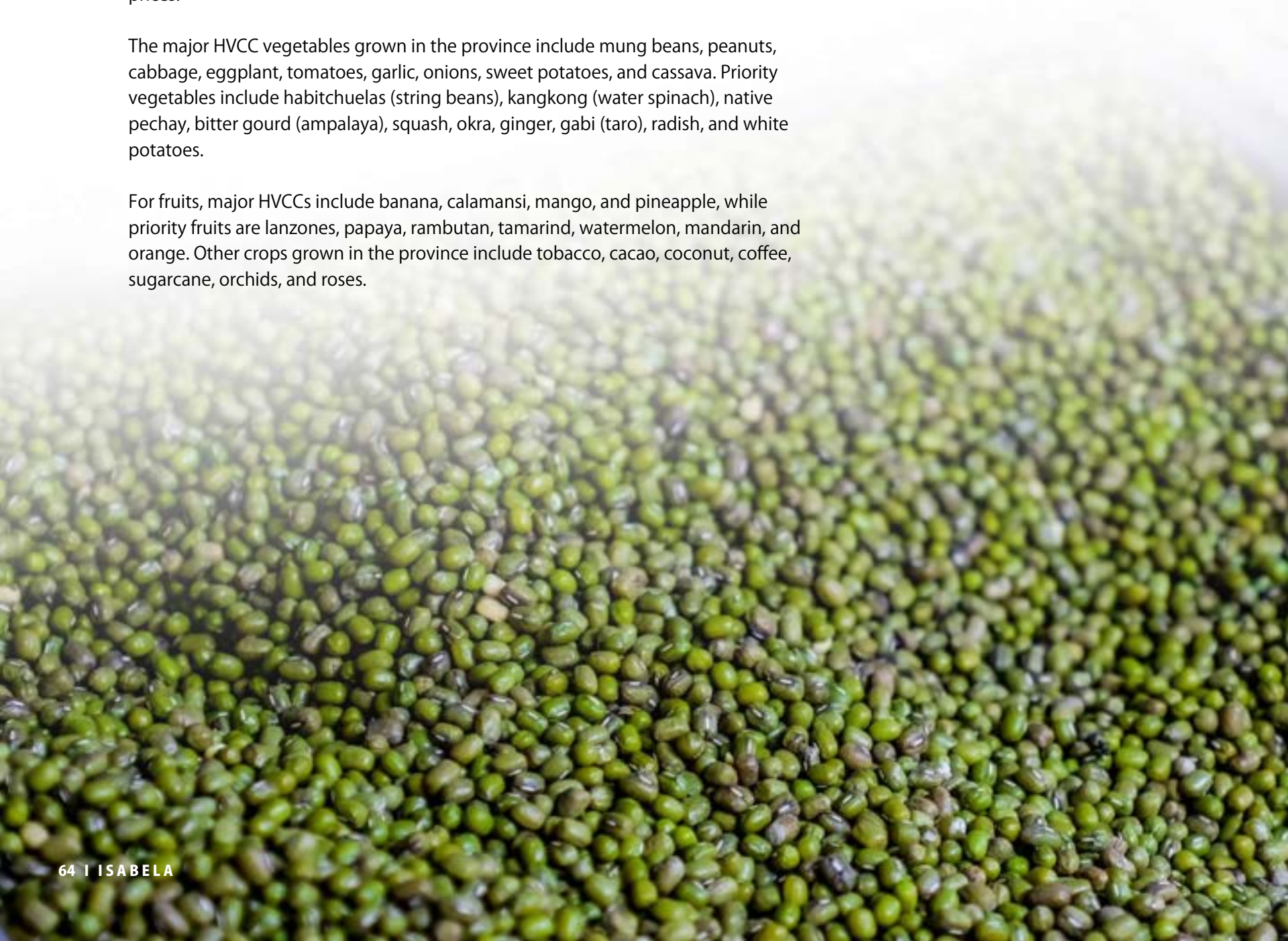
In the same year, the province produced a total of 1.09 million metric tons of corn, nearly unchanged from the previous year, contributing about 12.96% of the total corn production in the Philippines.

## ■ HIGH-VALUE COMMERCIAL CROPS PRODUCTION

In addition to its traditional crops, Isabela continues to enhance its high-value commercial crop (HVCC) production to boost farmers' incomes and create alternative livelihood opportunities in the province. HVCCs are distinguished by their defined niche markets, potential for domestic and regional trade, and typically higher market prices.

The major HVCC vegetables grown in the province include mung beans, peanuts, cabbage, eggplant, tomatoes, garlic, onions, sweet potatoes, and cassava. Priority vegetables include habitchuelas (string beans), kangkong (water spinach), native pechay, bitter gourd (ampalaya), squash, okra, ginger, gabi (taro), radish, and white potatoes.

For fruits, major HVCCs include banana, calamansi, mango, and pineapple, while priority fruits are lanzones, papaya, rambutan, tamarind, watermelon, mandarin, and orange. Other crops grown in the province include tobacco, cacao, coconut, coffee, sugarcane, orchids, and roses.





## ■ FISHERIES

Fisheries is another flourishing industry in Isabela, supported by aquaculture and inland fishing across 1,108 hectares of developed freshwater fishponds and 450 hectares of fish cage culture at the Magat Dam Reservoir.

Rich marine resources are found along the coastal seaboard towns of Maconacon, Divilacan, Palanan, and Dinapigue. The province also has numerous lakes, small water impounding projects (SWIPs), diversion dams, small farm reservoirs (SFR), rivers, and rice fields that serve as vital fishery resource areas for development.

Isabela ranks second to Cagayan in total fish production, but leads as Cagayan Valley's top tilapia producer. This confirms that the aquaculture industry is a promising venture in the province.

The province contributes around one-fourth of the total fish production in the region annually. In 2023, the volume of fish production in Isabela totaled 9,615 metric tons, the second-highest level recorded in five years.



## ■ DAIRY PRODUCTION

Another emerging enterprise in the province is dairy production. The Provincial Government of Isabela, with support from the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP), the World Bank, and the Department of Agriculture, has been continuously modernizing the industry by providing essential infrastructure and assisting dairy cooperatives.

In fact, dairy production and processing are among the province's priority investment areas.

The Philippine Carabao Center and the National Dairy Authority are also contributing to increasing the livestock supply.





## ■ LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY PRODUCTION

Isabela's livestock and poultry industries are steadily growing, particularly in dairy processing, hog production, cattle breeding, and commercial poultry raising.

In 2022, backyard production accounted for more than 90% of the livestock and poultry population in Isabela. The province's livestock and poultry industry is primarily focused on the production of cattle, carabao, goats, swine, chickens, and ducks.

Isabela is recognized as a reliable source of cattle and carabao, whether for meat or draft purposes.

In 2023, the province recorded the highest sufficiency level in carabao production (carabeef) at 213.77%. The province also had high sufficiency levels in goat (chevon) production at 198.33%, cattle (beef) at 140.86%, and chicken at 132.27%, indicating that the province produces more than it consumes for these livestock.

Poultry, particularly chicken and duck, is widely produced in the province. Chicken and duck are the two most commonly raised animals in farm backyards, providing an easy source of meat for farm families.



## ■ MAJOR INVESTORS

Isabela has become a leading destination for significant investments across various sectors, driving its economic growth and sustainability.

These investments promote economic diversification and reinforce Isabela's role as a vital contributor to the Philippine economy, supporting sustainable development and improving the quality of life for its residents.



## SN/ABOITIZ POWER GROUP

It operates the 360-megawatt Magat Hydroelectric Power Plant, a cornerstone of Isabela's energy security and a significant contributor to the region's renewable energy capacity.





MAGAT DAM

## **GREEN FUTURE INNOVATIONS INC.**

With its cutting-edge facility producing 200,000 liters of anhydrous alcohol daily, the company supports local industries and export markets while promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

## **UNIVERSAL LEAF PHILIPPINES, INC.**

A global leader in the tobacco industry, Universal Leaf plays a vital role in Isabela's agricultural sector through tobacco cultivation, processing, and export activities, contributing substantially to the local economy.

## **ISABELA BIOMASS ENERGY CORPORATION (IBEC)**

A pioneer in renewable energy, IBEC generates electricity from biomass sources, reducing carbon emissions and advancing environmental sustainability in Isabela.

## **SAN MIGUEL FOODS, INC.**

With significant investments in Isabela, San Miguel Foods, Inc. boosts local agriculture and food production, creating employment opportunities and supporting rural development.

**Additionally, multinational oil companies such as Chevron, Petron, and Shell have established a strong presence in Isabela, contributing to the province's energy sector and infrastructure development.**

**Telecommunications giants Smart and Globe, along with beverage manufacturers Coca-Cola, RC Cola, and Pepsi, have enhanced Isabela's connectivity and consumer market, further solidifying its position as a dynamic economic hub in Northern Luzon.**



# Renewable Energy Investment Opportunities

## MARKET POTENTIAL

The renewable energy market in the Philippines is rapidly expanding, driven by favorable government policies and increasing demand for clean energy. Isabela's solar projects present a unique opportunity for investors to enter a growing market with strong long-term prospects. The country's strong intentions to raise the share of renewables in its energy mix provides a supportive regulatory environment and numerous incentives for green energy initiatives.

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Investing in Isabela's renewable energy sector offers direct economic benefits, including stable returns from energy production and sales. The province's projects are designed to generate substantial electricity output, ensuring a steady revenue stream. Additionally, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering energy costs strengthens the region's overall economic stability.

## SOCIAL IMPACT

Renewable energy investments in Isabela play an important role in social development by creating jobs, advancing local skills, and improving community welfare. Initiatives such as solar-powered irrigation systems directly benefit agricultural communities, boosting productivity and enhancing food security. This socio-economic upliftment fosters a stable and supportive environment for business operations.

## TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

Isabela is at the forefront of integrating cutting-edge technologies in renewable energy, including energy storage solutions and smart grid systems. These innovations enhance the efficiency and reliability of solar energy projects, giving investors the chance to be part of groundbreaking advancements in the energy sector.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Investing in Isabela's solar energy initiatives aligns with global sustainability goals and contributes to environmental preservation. By reducing carbon emissions and promoting clean energy, investors can strengthen their corporate social responsibility (CSR) profiles and appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and stakeholders.



**"The formal inauguration of the Cabaruan Solar-Powered Pump Irrigation Project is the next phase in the story of Isabela's progress."**

**FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**

*President of the Republic of the Philippines*

During the inauguration of the Cabaruan Solar-Powered Pump Irrigation Project in Quirino, Isabela on June 10, 2024.

## **CABARUAN SOLAR-POWERED PUMP IRRIGATION PROJECT**

Initiated by the National Irrigation Authority-Magat River Integrated Irrigation System (NIA-MARIIS), the Cabaruan Solar-Powered Pump Irrigation Project aims to maximize water resource utilization while offering sustainable and cost-efficient irrigation services to the Isabeleño farmers.

This project, worth P65.77 million, is the Philippine government's biggest solar pump irrigation to address the rising challenges of energy costs in diverting water supply to farmlands.



It aims to reduce production costs for 237 Isabeleño farmers who have long relied on gasoline or diesel-engine water pumps. The project, constructed from July 2023 to February 2024, comprises a pumping station equipped with 1,056 solar panels, generating a total output of 739,200 watts.

The station also includes two submersible pumps, each with a discharge capacity of 12,800 gallons per minute (GPM), providing irrigation water to 350 hectares of agricultural land.



# 440 MWp Isabela Ground Mounted Solar Power Project



## 440-MWP ISABELA GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR POWER PROJECT

With an investment of P18 billion, the 440-megawatt peak (MWp) Isabela Isabela Ground-Mounted Solar Power Project is poised to generate approximately 700,000 gigawatt-hours of clean energy annually using over 700,000 solar panels. This capacity is sufficient to power 500,000 households.

The project is located at a 392-hectare industrial land in Barangays Cabannungan

2nd, Arusip, Bagong Silang, and Pilar in the City of Ilagan, Isabela. The construction is set to begin in the fourth quarter of 2024 and is expected to be ready for commercial operations by the second quarter of 2026.

The project is also expected to generate socioeconomic development in Isabela by providing employment opportunities for over 4,000 Filipinos during its construction phase.

The solar project is a partnership between the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) and the San Ignacio Energy Resources Development Corporation (SIERDC).



## RATTAN PROCESSING CENTER FACILITY



### ■ RATTAN INDUSTRY

The Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI), in collaboration with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), has revitalized the local rattan industry through the Rattan Processing Shared Service Facility (SSF) in Cabisera 10, City of Ilagan. By establishing the facility in Cabisera 10, a central trade hub for rattan gatherers, PGI supports the sustainable practices of the Agtas and facilitates the growth of MSMEs, as well as rattan and bamboo processors.

Constructed with a P24.9 million budget from PGI in 2022, the SSF is equipped with advanced machinery provided by DTI, including rattan straightening machines, pole coring machines, and heavy-duty industrial sewing machines. To promote inclusivity, DTI has also trained female participants in machine operation, advancing gender empowerment within this traditionally male-dominated field. Training sessions cover the handling of various machinery, as well as the manipulation of rattan, bamboo, wood, and metalwork, enabling participants to produce distinctive designs for furniture and handicrafts.

CHAPTER V

**Excellence in Local  
Governance**



**"The thrust of our government  
is to invest in people."**

GOV. RODOLFO T. ALBANO III

# Isabela: A Gateway to Sustainable Growth

Being the top producer of corn and a leading surplus producer of rice in the country, Isabela is celebrated for its fertile agricultural lands, abundant natural resources, and a forward-thinking approach to governance.

Isabela's leaders continuously work to ensure that today's development is not at the expense of future generations, creating a business-friendly environment with policies that attract investment. Its strategic location offers access to key domestic and international markets, making it an ideal hub for trade.

The province's commitment to excellence is evident in the accolades and distinctions it has garnered. Since 2011, Isabela has been recognized as the Most Business-Friendly Province in Region II by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Governance in Isabela is marked by efficiency and innovation. It is the only Hall of Fame recipient in Region II for the implementation

of the Anti-Red Tape Act and has consistently earned the Department of the Interior and Local Government's (DILG) Seal of Financial Housekeeping and Seal of Good Local Governance since 2012. With a highly educated workforce, paired with strong provincial and municipal support, Isabela offers a safe and conducive environment for growth.

Isabela's strategic connectivity enhances its role as a gateway to major economies, with excellent road networks. As the second largest province in the country, Isabela is home to 45.7% of the regional population, presenting a significant demographic advantage for businesses and investors alike.

Proactively supporting investment, Isabela provides a comprehensive Provincial Incentive Code and other legislative measures designed to foster and sustain business growth.





**Being the top producer of corn and a leading surplus producer of rice in the country, Isabela is celebrated for its fertile agricultural lands, abundant natural resources, and a forward-thinking approach to governance.**

## BRO FOR EDUCATION

The Bojie-Rodito Opportunities for Education (BRO-Ed) ensures that every small farm family in the province has at least one college graduate.

Since 2012, BRO-Ed has been offering support even before the passage of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (Republic Act 10931) in 2017. Initially covering tuition fees, the program now provides a school allowance after the law took effect.

BRO-Ed embraces inclusivity, welcoming students from all academic backgrounds, whether with honors or not. Scholars receive financial assistance ranging from P3,000 to P5,000 per semester.

Additionally, each scholar is provided with 20 kilos of rice per semester, easing the financial burden on their families while supporting Isabela's rice farmers.

Its support extends beyond the undergraduate level. BRO-Ed offers an Expanded Program that covers licensure exam reviews, postgraduate degrees, and professional programs in fields such as law, medicine, and theology.

As of the 1st semester of 2022-2023, the province recorded a remarkable 33,347 scholars who have benefitted from the program.







## ISABELA E-LIBRARY

The Isabela e-Library is transforming the way educators and learners access knowledge, offering a hybrid model that combines free onsite and online services.

The e-Lib provides services to students who do not have their own computers or reliable internet access. Through the e-Lib computers, users can log in to the e-Lib website, which offers school reference materials such as daily lesson logs, learning activities, lesson plans, scripts, and weekly lessons aligned with the MATATAG curriculum across various learning areas.

Users can also access the provincial government's website to explore various PGI programs, projects, and activities. These websites are also accessible on mobile phones and other devices from the comfort of home.

**In partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd), the Isabela e-Library not only enhances learning by allowing teachers to deliver more effective lessons with updated materials but also supports students in learning at their own pace through a wealth of digital resources.**



## ISABELA RICE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Isabela Rice Assistance Program plays an important role in ensuring food security for vulnerable populations, including farmers, fisherfolk, persons with disabilities (PWDs), barangay frontline workers, vendors, and transport groups, by providing them with a monthly rice subsidy.

## PALAY PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

Beyond rice distribution, a key feature of the Isabela Rice Assistance Program is its support for local farmers through the purchase of palay (unmilled rice) at a premium price. The provincial government buys palay at least P2.00 above prevailing market rates, boosting farmers' incomes and prompting traders to raise their buying prices, which leads to higher palay prices across the province.





**By providing farmers with a reliable market and promoting fair trade, the Isabela Rice Assistance Program strengthens the local food system.**

## NAGKAISANG MAGSASAKA NG ISABELA AGRICULTURE COOPERATIVE (NMIAC)

Upon assuming office in July 2019, Governor Rodito T. Albano's first directive was to organize a "**super cooperative**" to support marginalized farmers in the province, addressing the challenges posed by the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL).

A large-scale cooperative membership orientation was conducted across 32 municipalities, leading to the establishment of the Nagkaisang Magsasaka ng Isabela Agriculture Cooperative (NMIAC).





**NMIAC was registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) in August 2019, and the Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI) provided a loan of P40 million to facilitate its operations.**

With over 8,500 members, NMIAC serves the dual purpose of building rice stocks for the public food grain distribution system and providing income support to farmers. Its objectives are to purchase farmers' produce at a premium price, establish a value chain for small farmers, minimize the risks and impacts of rice tariffication, and ensure a guaranteed market.

## HAULING TRUCKS

To enhance agricultural mobility at the barangay level, the PGI has deployed 953 hauling trucks to 94% of the province's 1,018 barangays by July 2024.

With a total investment of P1.3 billion, this program provides essential transportation support, reducing both time and costs for farmers transporting produce.



## These trucks also improve access to resources, aid in disaster response, and bolster local economic activities.

This program underscores PGI's dedication to grassroots development, promoting agricultural growth and economic stability across Isabela's remote areas.





## ISABELA RICE PROCESSING CENTER (IRPC) PALAY BUYING STATION

Located in Ipil, Echague, the IRPC supports the Isabela Rice Assistance Program by milling and processing palay bought from local farmers into premium rice for distribution to vulnerable community members.

Serving as a buying station for the palay procurement program, the IRPC ensures that farmers receive fair compensation, encourages production, and promotes sustainable practices. With multi-purpose hauling trucks provided free of charge by the PGI to barangays, this integrated approach supports local farmers, strengthens food security, and enhances agricultural stability.







## ISABELA'S BUSOG-LUSOG MILK FEEDING PROGRAM

The Busog-Lusog Milk Feeding Program, in partnership with local dairy cooperatives, SNAP-Magat, and Nickel Asia Corporation, provides nutritious milk to malnourished children, senior citizens, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. The donated milk powder is combined with locally produced milk to enhance its nutritional benefits. This collaborative effort addresses immediate dietary needs while supporting the long-term goal of reducing malnutrition rates across the province.

Dairy cooperatives are actively involved in the production process, ensuring that the program effectively meets the community's nutritional needs. This program exemplifies the power of public-private partnerships, improving nutrition among vulnerable sectors of the community, strengthening the local economy, and promoting sustainable development.





## GAWAD KALASAG HALL OF FAMER

Isabela's Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC) has earned national Hall of Fame status for its outstanding disaster preparedness and response. Through risk assessments, training, and effective early warning systems, the PDRRMC enhances the province's emergency management capabilities, creating a safer, more resilient community.

Isabela has made a significant impact on humanitarian efforts that extend far beyond its borders through its 24/7 rescue operations. From the aftermath of typhoons to the threats of volcanic eruptions, Isabela's Rescuers remain undeterred, extending a lifeline of support that knows no bounds.





## ISABELA DRRM COMPLEX

When most provinces settled for a basic PDRRMC office, Isabela built an expansive DRRM Complex to strengthen community resilience against emerging disasters.

Strategically located along the Maharlika Highway, the complex houses the PDRRMC Command Center, Bureau of Fire Protection Headquarters, Provincial Social Welfare Development Office, Public Safety Office, and facilities for first responders.

As a hub for training and inter-agency cooperation, this complex is a proof of Isabela's dedication to comprehensive disaster management, solidifying its status in the Gawad Kalasag Hall of Fame.



ISABELA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

## ONE MILLION TREES IN ONE DAY

The **"One Million Trees in One Day"** project, held on December 20, 2019, exemplified Isabela's strong commitment to environmental conservation and solidified its status as the **"Volunteer Capital of the Philippines."** Despite inclement weather, thousands of volunteers from various sectors—including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private enterprises, and youth—converged in Sitio Lagis in the City of Ilagan to participate in the reforestation project.

Each volunteer planted at least 20 seedlings, driven by a common desire to reforest critical areas along the Ilagan-Divilacan Road and vulnerable forest zones.

Spearheaded by Governor Rodito T. Albano through Executive Orders No. 15-2019 and 16-2019, the **"One Million Trees in One Day"** not only demonstrated Isabela's determination to protect the Sierra Madre but also harnessed the power of community action. Volunteers from all walks of life united to create a greener, more sustainable future for the province.



## ONE MILLION BAMBOOS IN ONE DAY

On December 20, 2022, Governor Rodito T. Albano led a monumental riparian project – the planting of one million bamboos in just a day, rallying the support of employees from provincial and local government units, along with volunteers from the private sector.

This proactive mission aimed to mitigate flooding in areas vulnerable to typhoons by strategically planting bamboo along the riverbanks of the Cagayan River and its tributaries, including Roxas, Cabagan, Sta. Maria, San Mariano, and San Pablo. The initiative focused on reducing the impacts of natural calamities by stabilizing riverbanks and protecting nearby communities.

Governor Rodito emphasized that this undertaking was not merely an environmental initiative; it was a communal collaboration. Thousands of volunteers came together, united by a shared purpose. He described the mission as a **“Christmas gift for nature,”** underscoring the long-term environmental and social benefits of this historic endeavor.





## PROVINCIAL, DISTRICT & COMMUNITY HOSPITALS

The provincial, district, and community hospitals in Isabela are united by a common goal: to provide accessible, affordable, and high-quality healthcare to Isabeleños. Each facility takes a comprehensive approach, addressing both curative and preventive health needs.

At the heart of this network is the Gov. Faustino N. Dy, Sr. Memorial Hospital in the City of Ilagan, a tertiary care center that works closely with patients, families, and communities to provide a comprehensive range of medical services. Through Republic Act 11882, the hospital's bed capacity has been expanded from 100 to 500. The newly constructed medical arts building at the hospital is now ready for occupancy.





CAUAYAN DISTRICT HOSPITAL



SAN MARIANO MEDICARE AND COMMUNITY HOSPITAL



MANUEL A. ROXAS DISTRICT HOSPITAL



ECHAGUE DISTRICT HOSPITAL



PALANAN STATION HOSPITAL

District hospitals, including Milagros Albano District Hospital (MADH), Echague District Hospital (EDH), Cauayan District Hospital (CDH), and Manuel A. Roxas District Hospital (MARDH), continue to improve standards of care to meet the growing healthcare demands of their respective districts. MADH has already undergone refurbishment, while upgrades at MARDH and EDH are currently in progress.

Even in Isabela's remote areas, hospitals like San Mariano Medicare and Community Hospital and Palanan Station Hospital ensure access to quality medical services, with ongoing facility upgrades.

## HEMODIALYSIS CENTERS

The recent expansion of hemodialysis centers in Isabela marks a significant advancement in the province's healthcare services.

Equipped with 10 dialysis machines each, the new hemodialysis centers at Cauayan District Hospital (CDH), Milagros Albano District Hospital (MADH), and Manuel A. Roxas District Hospital (MARDH) are essential in addressing the growing demand for dialysis services.

These centers, which boast dedicated teams and state-of-the-art equipment, supplement the existing center at Gov. Faustino N. Dy Sr. Memorial Hospital in the City of Ilagan, which houses 21 dialysis machines.

GFNDY SR. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



CAUAYAN DISTRICT HOSPITAL






MILAGROS ALBANO DISTRICT HOSPITAL



MANUEL A. ROXAS DISTRICT HOSPITAL



# **Charting the Future: Isabela's Path to Lasting Progress**



**Isabela stands at the forefront of a new era,  
where the richness of its heritage converges  
with a future driven by innovation and  
sustainable growth.**

We invite you to be part of Isabela's ongoing transformation. Here, opportunities are not just discovered, they are shaped through a shared ambition to uplift the province and its people.

Together, we are building a sustainable future that honors our past while propelling us forward.

Isabela is not simply a place—it is a living, breathing community of innovators and visionaries. By working together, we can unlock our collective potential, stimulate economic growth, and create a legacy that generations to come will be proud of.

As we chart a course toward a future of shared progress and lasting success, we welcome you to join us in shaping the next chapter of Isabela's remarkable journey—where heritage meets innovation and progress is shared by all.





# ISABELA...

A land where peace and love abide  
Where men of truth reside  
Endowed with rich and glorious past  
A heritage known and vast...

*Lyrics from Isabela Hymn*

