



PRDP subproject doubles Mindoro calamansi farmers' incomes



Calamansi Road. Motorists drive over the newly concreted Bagong Silang–Macatoc farm-to-market road (FMR) in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro. The 2.79-kilometer FMR addresses the problem on poor road conditions resulting to high transport costs, a burden to the town's calamansi farmers. Benefiting about 1,570 households, the P24.59 million-worth FMR was constructed under the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project in partnership with the Provincial Local Government of Oriental Mindoro.

A group of calamansi farmers in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro, has improved their incomes by as much as 115 percent, after they started selling their produce to a trading center established under the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP).

The P12.04-million Oriental Mindoro Calamansi Trading Center, an enterprise development subproject proposed by the Naujan Farmers Association (NaFa) to the PRDP, has eliminated the need for farmers to sell their harvest to

middlemen, hence earning more profits that could have otherwise accrued to traders.

In a recently conducted Rapid Appraisal of Emerging Benefits (RAEB) by the PRDP, a household survey of 30 randomly selected respondents showed positive outcome in the incomes of the subproject's farmer beneficiaries. This outcome has been realized within just the first year of the trading center's operation.

The initial study divided the farmers' incomes from three major sources, namely, on-farm, off-farm and nonfarm. On-farm income

refers to all the income the farmers derived from their farms including the selling of vegetables or livestock. Meanwhile, off-farm income refers to those derived from working in other farms, a common practice during the non-fruiting stage of the local citrus when farmers seek alternative livelihood sources. Nonfarm income on the other hand refers to revenues not related in any way to farming.

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PRDP pursues VCA for Central Luzon's commercial white rice

The PRDP will soon be completing the value chain analysis (VCA) for Nueva Ecija's commercially produced rice, including the identification of the value chain processes and actors, and their roles affecting the market.

The DA has identified Nueva Ecija as one of the priority provinces for rice production. And while the Department has a national roadmap for rice, having a VCA for the country's main staple food is relevant in identifying subprojects that may be implemented under the PRDP to further develop the commodity's priority value chain segment. Moreover, these complement existing or planned interventions under the government's regular programs.

The Project has earlier laid out similar VCA for aromatic or pigmented and upland rice, but these crops are more commonly produced as specialty export and in much smaller quantities due to specific production needs not applicable to the regularly grown and traded white rice.

In a recent training-workshop spearheaded by the Project's I-PLAN Component in Region 3, farmers, millers, retailers, cooperatives and other stakeholders exchanged ideas and proposals, identifying problems and solutions in production, including glut and sometimes shortage in the marketing aspect of the Filipinos' top carbohydrates source.

The activity also aimed to identify the costs entailed in the value chain processes and determine the social costs unique for each actor. The resource persons likewise tackled value adding for the commodity, an important element in interventions implemented under the PRDP considering the Project's goal of helping increase smallholders' incomes.

The PRDP aims to enhance the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan and its regional complement plans through the formulation of Provincial Commodity Investment Plans (PCIPs), which are based on VCAs. (*Dianne Lapuz, RPCO-3 InfoACE Unit*)



Multi-Commodity Road. Farm-to-market roads (FMRs) built under the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) service multiple commodities, including rice, a common crop in a country where it is the staple food. Shown here is the newly rehabilitated Purok Taurus–Central Balabago FMR in Norala, South Cotabato that extends across an expansive ricefield yet it also leads to production areas of cacao and other commodities. (*Photo by DA-PRDP RPCO 12 Infoace Unit*)

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The farmers reported that prior to the operation of the trading center, their average annual income was P10,984. For the entire 2016 however, when the center started operating, the farmers' income has increased up to P23,583.

According to Jourvin Barrera, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit head of the PRDP's National Project Coordination Office, while several factors could have resulted to the increase in income, the noted boost could also be solely attributed as a direct impact of the enterprise, considering that all the respondents maintain calamansi as main crop.

Barrera added that to further verify the farmers' claim, the RAEB team held a focus group discussion (FGD) with 30 calamansi farmers not related to the group of individuals asked in the survey. The FGD results verified the survey's findings, while simultaneous spot interviews provided anecdotal confirmation from several farmers. The study also used key informant interview with several local officials directly involved in the project.

Barrera also explained that the increase in income can be associated with the assured market for the farmers' produce, increase in farmgate price, and decrease in spoilage with the steady market being offered by the enterprise especially during peak season.

Farmers now prefer supplying calamansi fruits to the enterprise over bodega owners as NaFA offers more stable and competitive pricing.

According to Leila Custodio, a calamansi farmer and a new member of NaFA, the trading center has helped them manage the peak-season marketing of calamansi, a large percentage of which would usually go to waste because of overproduction.

"During the peak season—around July till November—I couldn't sell all my produce as my fellow calamansi farmers would also be harvesting plenty of fruits. The trading center helps us a great deal since they buy our harvests at prices that still yield us profits," she said. (*Alladin S. Diega, NPCO InfoACE Unit*) ■



Capacitating Farmer Groups for Organizational Development

"While the machines (under the PRDP subproject) have yet to be purchased, the Project has already helped us to a great extent. We've learned a lot from the training activities provided and we wish to share these to our fellow cooperative members for the development of our organizations. We can also use these in our daily lives and teach these to our children and even our grandchildren."

Luzviminda G. Valderama
Coffee Farmer
Nambucayan Agriculture Cooperative
Tabuk City, Kalinga

Name of Subproject: Kalinga Integrated Coffee Processing and Marketing

Cost: P14.8 million

LUZON A (North Luzon)

PRDP prioritizes CIS, PWS, other rural infra

To balance the PRDP's investment focus and ensure comprehensive development of prioritized value chains, the Project's coordinating office in the Ilocos Region has started prioritizing proposals for communal irrigation system (CIS), potable water system (PWS), and other infrastructures such as postharvest facilities including solar dryer, tramline, packaging center and warehouse.

Using the recently crafted prioritization scheme for infrastructure subprojects, proposals for FMRs and bridges will now be considered as second in importance to CIS, PWS and other rural infrastructures. Moreover, proponent LGUs with no approved proposals under the PRDP will be prioritized over those LGUs with approved proposals.

With the new prioritization scheme, the region is expecting an increase in the number of non-FMR subproject proposals. (*Dessa U. Estrada, RPCO-1 InfoACE Unit*)

LUZON B (South Luzon)

Geotagging boosts sense of ownership among farmer partners

Gloria España of Bulusan Sorsogon only uses cellular phone for communication purposes.

"I only use my cellphone to call or text," she said. But after attending the Coaching Session on Applied Geotagging Technology (AGT) for the approved enterprise development (I-REAP) subprojects in Sorsogon City, España, the president of their barangay's Rural Improvement Club (RIC), now wants to have her own smartphone and apply her knowledge in geotagging technology in other RIC projects.

"Ghost projects which used to be the trend before are now being exposed. Aside from PRDP, we can use it in other projects," she said.

At the coaching session, PRDP Geographic Information

System (GIS) Data Specialist Engr. Arnel Tenorio shared that through the AGT, the PRDP develops the target beneficiaries' sense of ownership while providing transparency mechanism on project implementation. (*Annielyn L. Balez, RPCO-5 InfoACE Unit*)

VISAYAS

Eastern Visayas needs fast-tracking of VCAs and PCIPs—DA regional chief

DA's Regional Executive Director (RED) for Eastern Visayas U-Nichols A. Manalo has called for the fast-tracking of completion of VCAs and PCIPs in a bid of bringing more agricultural investments to support disaster recovery.

"There are still areas in our region that have not yet fully recovered from calamities. Some displaced farmers still need badly our assistance for them to find better income opportunities," Manalo, said.

Manalo, who concurrently serves as the PRDP's regional project director added that the usual occurrence of typhoons regularly barraging Eastern Visayas calls for a more concerted effort for support. (*RPCO 8 InfoACE Unit*)

MINDANAO

Agencies unite efforts to implement Zamboanga del Norte's PCIP

Aiming at institutionalizing the implementation of the PCIP, the provincial government and Department of Agriculture led a 12-member interagency Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signing recently held in the province.

The MOA aligns the existing programs and projects of each agency and commits to utilize their resources in support of the PCIP.

The PCIP-inspired convergence likewise intends to boost the province's emerging cacao industry. (*Yvette Tabaquero-Avellaneda, RPCO-9 InfoACE Unit*)

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THIS MONTH



Institutional and Governance Reforms: PRDP's Accomplishments

- Strengthened DA-LGU partnerships through the formulation and implementation of PCIPs
- Increased non-DA investments for value chain strengthening of key commodities as LGUs engage other government institutions and the private sector using PCIPs as leverage
- Issued a PRDP approach-based harmonized manual on infrastructure development for the DA bureaucracy to follow
- Issued of guidelines requiring DA agencies and units to use PCIPs as bases for planning and budgeting, thus synchronizing efforts of the Department

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