

North Luzon

Tomato consolidation facility inaugurated

Following the issuance of a No Objection Letter (NOL), a groundbreaking ceremony was held on August 10, 2018 to mark the start of the construction of the tomato consolidation facility, the civil works component of the Salad Tomato Production and Marketing Enterprise by the Hundred Islands Farmpreneurs Association (HIFA) in Alaminos, Pangasinan.

With a total project cost of Php1.9 million, the consolidation facility is expected to increase the income of salad tomato growers by reducing postharvest losses and help stabilize the price of tomato in the market.

The consolidation facility can hold 175 crates or 3.5 MT of salad tomatoes with a floor area of 66 m². The facility will serve tomato growers during the harvest season of salad tomatoes from January to May. For the rest of the year, the consolidation facility will serve as flatbed dryer for rice farmers.

During the groundbreaking ceremony, 57 packs of tomato seeds and plastic crates were also distributed to the members of the HIFA. The tomato seeds are part of the production inputs provided for the salad tomato enterprise.

Including the consolidation facility, the Salad Tomato Production and Marketing Enterprise has a total project cost of Php6,406,519.50 with the proponent group equity. In the coming months, the HIFA will also receive a Php2.1-million delivery truck, Php418,740 trading capital, plastic mulch, seedling trays, potting medium, and nylon wires. (Dessa U. Estrada, RPCO 1 InfoACE)

South Luzon

RIC to gain more income from native chicken production

BARCELONA, SORSOGON – To become the biggest supplier of native chicken and native eggs in the province excites 26-year-old Joreslyn E. Armea to rise before dawn and feed her native chickens.

A member of the Rural Improvement Club (RIC) of Cagang, Armea along with 35 rural women in Barcelona, Sorsogon, engage in “Cagang RIC Native Chicken Production and Marketing”—a microenterprise subproject funded by the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP). The project aims to produce live native chicken at least 850 grams to 1.5 kilograms each. PRDP dispersed a total of 35 modules with 18 breeder stock each module to be reared by members of the RIC.

“Sisikapin namin na mapaunlad ito... Sobrang nai-inspire kami kasi nakakatulong na kami sa mga asawa namin sa simpleng pag-aalaga ng native chicken (We will work hard to grow this business... We are so inspired because we can now help our husbands by simply engaging in native chicken production),” she added.

Before, Armea barely earns P200 to P250 daily in handicraft making. Now, she gains an additional income worth P500 through native chicken production. Other interventions from PRDP include 175 pieces of transport cages or crates, 350 pieces of egg trays, 35 units of digital weighing scale and two units of artificial incubator.

The Cagang RIC Native Chicken Production and Marketing is one of the 10 microenterprise subprojects approved by PRDP for calamity-stricken areas in Sorsogon under its enterprise development (I-REAP) component. (Annielyn L. Baleza, DA-RAFIS V)

Visayas

Longest PRDP road in Visayas, a big win for residents

“Hanggud gid ang nabulig sa amon umpisa sang pagpakay-ad sang kalsada diri sa Passi.” (The start of the construction of the road here in Passi is a big help to us.) This is how Lorna Busil, resident of Brgy. Alimuno, Passi, expressed her gratitude to the construction of the newly-concreted road.

Began in June 2015, the rehabilitation of Imbang Grande-Tagubong-Gemumua Agahon-Agtabo farm-to-market road is nearing

completion at 71.83 percent as of August 2018.

Because of the road, travel time going to the town proper has been reduced.

“Kung mag travel ka sang una, mga isa, duwa ka oras kag maka-abot ka sa Passi proper. Subong, mga 10-15 minutes, tuya ka dun. Indi dun mabudlay sa mga tawo man nga magdala anda produkto sa syudad,” said Roberto Primalion. (Before, reaching the town proper would usually take one to two hours. Now, in a span of 15 minutes, you have already reached your destination.)

The shorter travel time resulted in the decrease of losses of goods and produce that are transported from the farms to the markets. Residents who sell their produce noted that the losses from damage to the goods caused by hauling have significantly decreased.

The new road also opened opportunities for the government’s basic services to the residents. Medical and dental checkups have been frequent in the barangay in recent months. Also, it is now easier for the teachers and students to travel to schools.

Because of the new road, most of the residents have bought motorcycles, which is the most common mode of transportation in the area.

Even if it’s raining, the jeepney that frequents the area can pass any time and has added another trip schedule, unlike before only one trip a day.

For the residents living in the stretch of Imbang Grande to Agtabo, the P257,800,000.01-worth farm-to-market road project initiated through the Department of Agriculture’s Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) is a dream come true. (September Noon Macahilo, PSO Visayas)

Mindanao

P20-M facilities soon to boost seaweeds industry

Tandubas, Tawi-tawi— Four postharvest facilities will soon rise here to boost the town’s seaweed production.

To answer the long clamor of better infrastructure support, three warehouses with solar driers are now being constructed in barangays Silantup, Ballak, and Tapan amounting to a total of P14.871 million benefiting 881 households. While a fish landing worth P5.996 million will also be constructed in Brgy. Tapan Sokah which will benefit 258 fisherfolk.

Tandubas town is known as main producers of seaweeds and other marine products in the province. Aside from fishing, locals also source their livelihood on farming coconut, cassava, and fruit trees.

Through these projects, the percentage of postharvest losses is expected to lower and the agricultural productivity of the fisherfolk will improve and eventually reduce the poverty in the area through increase in farmers’ income.

The multimillion infrastructure project is implemented under the Department of Agriculture – Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) in partnership with the Local Government Unit of Tandubas. (Joy M. Montecalvo, PSO Mindanao)

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Citizens Monitoring: people's tool in protecting community's projects



Members of the Barangay Inspectorate Team in Passi closely examine if the implemented farm-to-market road falls within the stated specifications.

"This is one important tool to measure the benefit of our farm-to-market road. In conducting Citizen's Monitoring Tool (CMT), even the smallest detail is scrutinized if it goes with the prescribed standards. It is important for the local government and the community to be vigilant, especially during the construction stage," Regional Project Coordination Office -6 Deputy Project Director Manuel O. Olanday said during the conduct of Citizen's Monitoring Tool Training in Iloilo, recently.

"If you see that something is wrong, report it. Who knows, it might lead to ordinances. If you want to prolong this road, each barangay must be made aware. You are the watchdog because you are the recipients. Should we fail to do our

part, in two to three years' time, you will once again be faced with the same problem. We don't want to go back to that picture," he added.

The CMT is one of the science-based tools and innovations developed by the DA's PRDP geared towards greater transparency and accountability in implementation as well as for effective and efficient Project operations.

The said tool serves as a platform in gathering and processing feedbacks on subproject implementation in two scopes i) quality and ii) social and environmental safeguards. It aims to ensure that projects implemented are in accordance with the prescribed design, standards, and timelines.

Also, by embedding a sense

of ownership to the community through monitoring and reporting, the findings are bases in providing professional connective measures to maintain integrity of subprojects.

Meanwhile, in a similar training in Barangay Punong Grande, Banga, South Cotabato, one of the participants expressed the knowledge he acquired from the activity, "I learned about our obligation as participants of this training. Monitoring has a big role here because it informs the community to look after the project. I will suggest to our barangay, through the Kagawad, that we will create ordinances that will help in implementing projects especially on infrastructure," said Clarito Silagan, president of farmers' association in Brgy. Punong Grande.

[Read more on p. 3](#)



Women charting course of Mindanao's coffee industry

Two women are leading the paradigm shift of the coffee industry in Mindanao, bringing them to five-star hotels, exclusive expat clubs, and even international online stores.

Reviving South Cotabato's Coffee

When Departments of Agriculture (DA) and Trade and Industry (DTI) organized the coffee growers and farmers in the town of Tupi, South Cotabato, Ava Marie Odal has just left her promising corporate career in Manila and went home to Tupi to take care of their family farm.

"From a managerial role in a corporate company, I suddenly found myself being one of the incorporators of Tupi Coffee Growers Association, Inc. (Tucogai)," Ava said.

In no time, Tucogai took the challenge of reviving the coffee industry in the province.

In the 1960s, Tupi was vastly planted with coffee and supplied tons of coffee beans to adjacent provinces and the Visayas. However, in the 1980s, the price of coffee in the market dropped, resulting in an abrupt decline in coffee production in the municipality. Farmers ceased to expand coffee plantations. Others went further by cutting fully mature and productive coffee trees to be replaced by other commodities with better financial opportunity.

In 2013, the Department of Agriculture's Mindanao Rural Development Project (DA-MRDP) approved Tucogai's request for a 5M assistance which was utilized to build a coffee processing plant complete with

equipment including a bean separator, an automated roasting machine, and the like.

Their brand has since changed from Kape Puro to Tucogai Coffee and now, to "Indie Coffee", as majority of their production comes from indigenous people in the province.

Recently, Tucogai has another P8.03-million assistance from DA-Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) to expand their dried, green coffee beans production, processing, and marketing.

"We feel blessed and excited with the fresh assistance from PRDP. Now, we can expand production to other areas of the province including Tampakan, Polomolok, Surallah, T'boli and Lake Sebu," Ava said, who is now the general manager of Tucogai.

The association is looking forwards to expanding their production area of close to 2,000 hectares. Known for its fine quality, Tucogai now delivers to specialty coffee stores around the province like Green Leaf Hotel in General Santos City and the Dole Philippines Kalsangi Clubhouse in Polomolok

"With this assistance, our farmers can be assured of our agreed buying price so they know they won't be shortchanged. Along with this financial assistance, we also get technical support from DA, other national agencies, and seasoned coffee farmers who are also cluster members," she added.

Finding Kape Maramag in the Amazon Store

The province of Bukidnon has been identified as the top 4 coffee producing

province in the country and all of its towns, Maramag has the largest production area in which the Rural Improvement Club (RIC) Federation of Kape Maramag started its coffee processing and marketing which changed the coffee industry including the lives of the town's farmers.

RIC started in 2012 as a community-based enterprise with support from the DA-High Value Crops Development Program (DA-HVCDP) in collaboration with the Kaanib Foundation. A coffee roasting facility was established in the municipality through the RIC Federation of Maramag. Their processing activity began with few equipment such as coffee roasting system, commercial grade coffee grinder, foot sealer, cutter, weighing scale, and foil for packaging.

"We started with 1,050 members from 20 barangays of Municipality of Maramag. As of now we already have a fast production of coffee and has reached the international market through the Amazon store (a popular online shopping store), although under a different brand name," said RIC President Imelda Mendoza.

The organization generated additional jobs for its members who are mostly mothers or farmers' wives. It currently employs 20 workers, eight are regulars and the rest are on an on-call basis. It processes 10,000 metric tons of coffee beans per year but hopes to have additional capital so they could accommodate all the farmers who sell their coffee to the association. (Sherwin B. Manual/Joy M. Montecalvo, PSO Mindanao) ■



Imelda Mendoza shows some of the freshly harvested coffee beans in one of their production area in Maramag. (Photo by Gian Enrique/PSO)



RIC Federation of Kape Maramag Inc., Vice president Lilibeth Galindez proudly shows their famous processed coffee Kape Maramag ready for distribution in their local market. (Photo by Gian Enrique/PSO)

Citizens Monitoring...(from page 1)

CMT aims to capacitate participants in their respective roles in rolling out the Citizen Monitoring activities. By involving the community members, they get a sense of accountability and also ownership over the infrastructure project.

"I saw it as very useful especially for us residents, here since I'm also a SK Chairman. I will share my knowledge to the 'kagawads' and Katipunan ng Kabataan since helping in the monitoring is not just for adult. If ever the project will be damaged or not

reach the expected result, it is us, the residents who will suffer, so we have to help as early as now," said SK Chairman Princess Blinne Segurada. *(Reports from Joy Montecalvo, PSO Mindanao and September Noon Macahilo, PSO Visayas)* ■

Tayabas corn association becomes self-sufficient with PRDP enterprise

Erwin Medallada shows the corns harvested from the seeds he loaned from their group. The corns will be sold to animal feed mills. (Photo by Lawrence Bariring, RPCO 4A)



TAYABAS CITY, QUEZON – Ever since Erwin Medallada started planting corn in his rented land, he depends on lenders for his capital. When he sells his harvest, majority of his profit goes to loan payment; what is left is just enough for the education of his five children. Other members of the Calumpang Corn Growers Association (CCGA) experience the same situation.

Their involvement in the Corn Production Plant Now, Pay Later of the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP), the first I-REAP subproject completed in the region, changed their usual story into a positive scenario.

"Noong mga panahong iyon, walang-wala akong maipuhunan sa darating na panahon ng pagtatanim. Nabanggit ko iyon minsan kay Kapitana at nabanggit niya na mayroon ngang pautang na binhi at materyales ang grupo para sa mga miyembro nito na walang interes. Dahil ito sa proyekto ng PRDP. Doon ako naengganyo kasi makakatulong ito sa amin (That time, I don't have capital for the planting season. I once told by our barangay captain about this and she told me that the association

has a Plant Now, Pay Later scheme for its members with zero interest through PRDP's subproject. I was encouraged to join because this is a big help for us)," he added.

Barangay Captain of Calumpang, Rosa Maria Quindoza, also a member of the CCGA, pushed the group to take on this project. She saw this as an opportunity that can directly improve the lives of the farmer-members and boost the corn industry in their area.

Medallada and Quindoza are just some of the CCGA members who already reaped their first bounty harvest from the subproject which started in November 2017. According to Medallada, he was able to earn P93,960 from his one-hectare land in April 2018. He attributed the higher income to the good quality seeds provided by the association.

Now that the CCGA will provide planting materials through the enterprise, the farmers will no longer worry about their capital for the next cropping seasons. The payment collected from the sold produce will serve as the association's fund for the next planting season.

For the CCGA President Abraham Raniel Sayas, the enterprise will complement their association's primary income from the drying facility provided by the corn banner program of the Department of Agriculture. The association which has 66 farmer-members can now afford to buy the members' harvest at a price higher than the commercial rates to ensure that their produce will have fair and readily accessible market. "Makakasigurado po ang aming mga kasama sa samahan na tama ang presyo na maibibigay sa kanila at di sila maagrabado.

This opportunity also attracted more farmers to engage in the industry resulting in higher volume of corn production.

Quindoza also observed that through the subproject, the members became more active and united. They now regularly meet to discuss concerns and share knowledge on planting techniques and prevailing market price so that no one gets left behind. *(Rio Christine Bustamante, PRDP PSO South Luzon and Lawrence Albert Bariring, PRDP CALABARZON RPCO)* ■