



DA-PRDP conducts National Year-end Assessment

The Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Project National Project Coordination Office (DA-PRDP NPCO NPCO) along with its four Project Support Offices (PSOs) ended the year with an assessment of the Project's 2022 accomplishments and highlights.

The PRDP NPCO and PSOs (North Luzon, South Luzon, and Mindanao) gathered in Quezon City on December 19-23, 2022 to present their respective office's target updates, with PSO Visayas joining virtually as they simultaneously hosted the DA's Organizational Management Group

Meeting in Iloilo City.

PRDP National Project Director and Assistant Secretary for Operations Engr. Arnel V. de Mesa opened the activity by looking back on what has transpired in 2022.

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“2022 was a year of big changes and even bigger opportunities for the PRDP. This year, we welcomed a new task team leader from the World Bank in the person of Ms. Mio Takada. We also openly welcomed the new administration and leadership in the Department. And I was given the honor of becoming the new National Project Director of the PRDP.”

“All these changes happened while the Project was also transitioning to a post-pandemic future. After almost two years of virtual meetings, it was great to finally have face-to-face events and meet our partners from the Bank, the LGUs, and most especially our Proponent Groups and beneficiaries,” Asec. de Mesa said.

Asec. de Mesa also emphasized that the mentioned changes also opened a big window of opportunity for the project. As President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos’s main priority as Agriculture Secretary is to rebuild the food value chain and prioritize farm-to-market roads (FMRs) to increase productivity and food security, the PRDP was able to showcase its already existing Value Chain Analyses (VCAs) and its extensive FMR Network. With this, the Project was able to contribute to the President’s vision for the agriculture sector.

He emphasized that while all of this was happening, the Project was continuously transforming rural areas and empowering communities through

its infrastructure and enterprise subprojects that have already benefited more than 600,000 households across the country.

Asec. de Mesa concluded his message with a hopeful vision for the following year.

“As the year comes to an end, we look back with an overflowing sense of fulfillment and gratitude for all the opportunities that came our way, as well as the privilege of serving our farmers and fishers.

2023 will also be a big year for the PRDP and we’re all excited about what new opportunities this coming year will bring,” he added.

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PRDP National Project Director and Assistant Secretary for Operations Engr. Arnel V. de Mesa opens the national year-end assessment of the DA-PRDP.



The PSOs North and South Luzon with the NPCO.



PRDP National Deputy Project Director Shandy M. Hubilla presents the nationwide PRDP updates, showcasing the highlights and accomplishments of the Project.



The PSOs share their respective office's target updates for the year 2022.

(left) PSO Mindanao with the NPCO. (right) The attending NPCO staff.



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National Deputy Project Director Shandy M. Hubilla congratulated the whole team as he further elaborated on the Project's updates in his presentation.

"The PRDP closes this year on a high note—hitting the majority of its project performance targets. As of November 30, 2022, the Project has completed a total of 413 rural infrastructure subprojects and 585 rural enterprise subprojects amounting to more than PhP24 billion (B). The Project still has 298 subprojects currently being

implemented worth PhP20-B."

The Project was also able to secure approval for 140 VCAs, covering 79 commodities and product forms. Of these, 72 were utilized to formulate or update the 81 Provincial Commodity Investment Plans used to identify infrastructure and enterprise subprojects.

"Behind all these figures are people whose lives are intertwined in the name of rural development. These are the beneficiaries of the subprojects who have dreamt of a better life and the men and women

of the PRDP who have made those dreams possible. They are the glue that held the PRDP together for the past 8 years," Director Hubilla said.

Hubilla stressed, "We enter our ninth year of service with a renewed sense of optimism and loyalty to our farmers and fisherfolk. And I'm excited about what this coming year brings to the Project—another year filled with milestones and challenges to conquer." (Jan Kyle Carrillo and Ana Victoria Margallo, NPCO InfoACE)





DA-PRDP, WB visit Eastern Samar, Guimaras MPAs

The Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) Global Environment Facility - Natural Resources Management Unit (GEF-NRM), together with World Bank and Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) Natural Resources Management Officer Jim Hancock and Project Support Offices (PSOs) South Luzon and Visayas, visited GEF project sites in Eastern Samar and Guimaras as part of the 15th World Bank Implementation Support Mission (WB-ISM).

On the first leg of the site visits, the team visited the Panaloytoyon Fish Sanctuary in Brgy. Sta. Margarita, Quinapondan,

Eastern Samar on November 28, 2022.

The PhP3.67 million subproject consists of a concrete guard house and a High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) pipe milkfish cage. The project, which was completed last October, has a start-up stock of 7000 fingerlings.

Quinapondan, Eastern Samar Mayor Atty. Rafael Asebias expressed his gratitude to the Bank and the PRDP-GEF. He assured that the subproject, which will benefit the fisherfolk of Quinapondan, will be sustained and extended to other members of their community.

During the visit, Hancock urged the beneficiaries to share their experiences in implementing

the subproject as the PRDP-GEF will be culminating in the next six months.

“Let us look at what has been achieved, was it useful, what are the lessons learned, what would you do differently,” Hancock said.

He added that in moving forward, the key lessons must be prioritized.

The Panaloytoyon Fish Sanctuary was established in 1994 and was awarded 3rd place for Good Governance and Policy Implementation at the PRDP-GEF Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Summit last October in Cebu City.

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On the second leg of the 15th WB-ISM to GEF sites, the DA-PRDP and WB team visited the Tumulintinan Point Marine Protected Area (MPA) in San Lorenzo, Guimaras on December 1, 2022.

The Tumulintinan Point MPA is located in barangays Suclayan and San Enrique and was established as an MPA in 1999. It has a total area of 450 hectares (ha) with 77.45 ha of seagrass, 90.4 ha of coral reef and 2.9 ha of mangrove area. With its vast seagrass meadows, it serves as a habitat for endangered sea cow or locally known as “dugong”.

At the GEF MPA Summit held last October 2022 in Cebu City, the Tumulintinan Point MPA won the grand prize for the Management

Effectiveness Assessment Tool (MEAT) and Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) category taking home PhP200,000 to be used for the maintenance of the MPA.

Kickstarting the site visit, the PRDP and WB team paid a courtesy call to San Lorenzo, Guimaras Mayor Ninfa G. Gajo to briefly discuss the status of the MPA, as well as the Municipality’s plan to establish it as an ecotourism spot.

The team then proceeded to the Tumulintinan Point MPA where they were met by the provincial local government unit (PLGU), municipal local government unit (MLGU), MPA Management Board and Proponent Groups (PGs). Led by Jim Hancock, they checked the condition of the

MPA and the concrete bridge and guard house funded by the PRDP GEF.

Hancock lauded the PLGU, MLGU, MPA Management Board and PGs for their excellent management of the MPA. He also expressed his admiration for the inspiring stories shared during his dialogue with the MPA Management Board.

“You have done a lot and you have achieved a lot not just in terms of infrastructure and livelihood, but also in management and in ordinances—the institutional and capacity side which in many ways are really what hold things into the future,” Hancock said. *(Kristine Victoria Bistoyong and Jan Kyle Carrillo, InfoACE NPCO)* ■



North Luzon

Nueva Vizcaya farmers to benefit from Php203.8-M FMR

The residents and farmers of the villages of Ammoweg and Camandang will soon benefit from the 10.06-kilometer (km) farm-to-market road (FMR) worth Php203.8 million (M) funded under the DA-PRDP.

The construction of the FMR commenced after its groundbreaking last December 7, 2022. Once completed, it will support the local coffee industry of Ambaguio.

According to Deputy Project Director Rose Mary G. Aquino, the quality infrastructure support will spring progress and development for the farmers.

"We hope with this project, we will not receive a report of agricultural produce wastage because of road transport problems. On the contrary, we hope this will pave the way for our farmers in Ambaguio to become rich, and after the road construction, all of you (farmers) will have your 4x4 car," Aquino said.

Luis Dulnuan, a farmer, said that the project will have a significant impact on the residents and farmers in Ambaguio.

"It will help the farmers and the youth who attend school and live far from it. As farmers face transportation woes, they bring the produce to the market. This will lessen transportation costs because the fare is expensive if the road here is not built. The fare is double when it is raining," Aquino shared. (Marky Gallibu, RPCO 2 InfoACE)

South Luzon

Awakening the Guinayangan coffee industry

In the mountainous and rural areas of Guinayangan, Quezon, coffee has long been thriving as a commodity cultivated, traded, and consumed by farmers and locals alike. However, while coffee is already providing a steady stream of income for farmers mainly through trading, locals envision a more productive coffee industry in their municipality.

This dream has been the impetus for the formation of the Guinayangan Coffee Growers Association and Farm Entrepreneurs, Inc. (G-CAFÉ), a small group of coffee farmers and locals in the municipality. To realize their dream, they chipped in to purchase coffee processing equipment and to set up a small shop in the Guinayangan Public Market to process and sell coffee. Eventually, their product has become a staple for locals frequenting the market, bus drivers, tricycle drivers, etc. Not long after, coffee enthusiasts also started to drop by their shop.

Along the way, members started to learn about coffee varieties, standards, and other information that may help them level up their products and business. This drove them to seek trainings and assistance from various institutions such as the DA-PRDP. In 2020, they successfully became the proponent group (PG) of the DA-PRDP's coffee processing enterprise subproject, which aims to increase the income of local coffee farmers and improve the coffee industry in Guinayangan.

From the subproject, the G-CAFÉ received a utility van and a coffee processing facility, a first in Guinayangan. The utility van helped the G-CAFÉ haul coffee beans from local farmers, sell and deliver their products to their customers. Meanwhile, the facility helped the group consolidate its operations by housing all its equipment. The facility also has a small shop where they can display their products and serve their freshly brewed coffee just like what they did in their small shop.

The subproject also provided hope for coffee farmers in Guinayangan. Now that G-CAFÉ has the capacity to process more coffee, farmers can sell more coffee and eventually, save a lot from hauling costs incurred from trading outside the municipality.

With the processing facility in place providing an ideal environment for their coffee processing, the G-CAFÉ became even more motivated to further their education in coffee production, processing, and food safety standards so that they can sell their products commercially and internationally. The DA-PRDP is also giving the group further guidance and assistance to help them manage their organization and business through enterprise assessment, coaching activities, and market linking. Recently, they were invited by the DA-PRDP to participate in the Philippine Coffee Expo where they received trainings and met with other coffee processors and business owners for potential partnerships. (Myrelle Joy Bejasa, RPCO 4A InfoACE)

Visayas

I-REAP beneficiaries undergo digital marketing training

With the continued aim to capacitate enterprises for an extensive market reach and competent digital marketing engagements, PGs under the enterprise development component (I-REAP) of the DA-PRDP Regional Project Coordination Office 6 underwent a two-day training on Direct and Digital Marketing at the Ephrathah Farms, Badianan, Iloilo on November 28-29, 2022.

Engr. Ed Roderick Cañuto of Ephrathah Farms talked about Market Management and encouraged the budding enterprises to explore opportunities on Digital Marketing as it is the emerging initiative through various social media platforms.

"Facebook, among others, tops the worldwide statistics of the most used social media platform with a 10-hour average usage among users. You can utilize these kinds of platforms to increase the publicity of your products. And with enough funding and knowledge on social media management, you can boost your reach across platforms," said Cañuto.

Maribeth Arcenio, Marketing Officer of Bugasong Multipurpose Cooperative, shared her learnings from the training.

"I learned the importance of marketing and how it is different from selling whereas, marketing is more about attraction and it does not need extensive sales talk which allows customers to personally patronize; how to attract them [customers]; and how to position your product in the market so as to hit your target [market]. As for digital marketing, it is relatively new and there is a lot more to learn such as the use of social media platforms," Arcenio said.

The said training was likewise participated by the Provincial Project Management and Implementation Units from the six provinces of Western Visayas. This activity delivers the project goal that seeks to attain modern systems of farming and marketing practices among PRDP enterprise subprojects. (EL Gregorio, RPCO 6 InfoACE)

Mindanao

MSU-TCTO farmers hopeful for bountiful harvest of lab-generated seaweeds

A bountiful harvest awaits the seaweed farmers of Brgy. Tondon, Panglima Sugala after the second harvesting of laboratory generated seedstock at their sea-based nursery.

The sea-based nursery is part of Phase 2 of the seaweed project of DA-PRDP with MSU Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography (MSU-TCTO) specifically on "Mass Production of Laboratory-Generated Seaweed Seedstocks Kappaphycus SPP and Eucheuma SP and the Establishment of Seaweed Nursery to Support Sustainable Seaweed Industry in Tawi-tawi" which is funded under the I-PLAN's sub-component 1.2 of DA-PRDP.

Phase 1 of the project on the propagation of laboratory generated seedstocks showed a promising growth rate compared to the existing stock of farmed seaweeds which were dependent on the application of fertilizers. Phase 2 of the project focused on providing a sustainable source of quality seaweed seedlings to farmers through the mass production of the laboratory generated seaweed seedstocks. It also aims to determine the impacts of fertilizer use in seaweed farming.

Aside from harvesting, the activity included distribution of seaweed planting materials such as seaweed seed stocks, soft tie, and nylon rope. A stakeholder's consultation also took place where important discussion on the impact and challenges they encountered during the project implementation were tackled. The support of MSU TCTO headed by Chancellor Mary Joyce Z. Guinto-Sali together with the research team led by Project Leader Dr. Richard N. Muallil and the full cooperation and participation of the seaweed farmers in Brgy. Tondon have been a great help in ensuring the proper and continuous conduct of the study with high hopes of distributing quality seed stocks to seaweed farmers in Tawi-tawi. Representatives from RPCO BARMM also joined the said activity led by I-PLAN Planning Officer Elsie Omandam.

After the harvesting, MSU-TCTO will collect data and conduct further analysis on the harvested seaweeds. (Joy M. Montecalvo, PSO Mindanao InfoACE)

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