



DA-PRDP holds year-end assessment, awards top performing clusters

Quezon City – To assess its overall project performance and implementation progress, the Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) conducted a Year-End Assessment on December 19-20, 2023 in Quezon City, Philippines.

DA-PRDP National Project Director Asec. Arnel V. De Mesa

thanked the project staff for all their hard work and for making the PRDP one of the best projects in the DA this year. He also shared that the project is steadily gaining recognition from other agri stakeholders, especially lawmakers.

“The PRDP is now a byword (project). Now, even the congress is on the lookout for PRDP,” Asec. De Mesa shared.

In his message, Project Support Office (PSO) South Luzon Project Director Milo Delos Reyes highlighted the Project’s resilience in prevailing over the challenges of the past year. “Maraming hurdles at challenges. But through the will of God we prevailed,” he said.

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Arvin San Juan, Alternate Unit Head of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Unit, presented the PRDP's overall progress and year-end assessment. In terms of the Project's progress towards achieving its project development objectives, it has already exceeded four (4) of its five (5) end-of-project (EOP) targets.

Most notably, 1,143,681 farmers had been reached with agricultural assets and services, nearly doubling its EOP target of 600,000 with 438,546 female farmers which is also above the target of 342,000. Furthermore, the results of the Rapid Appraisal of Emerging Benefits (RAEB) conducted this year showed a 51% increase in real household incomes of farmers involved in enterprise subprojects which is above the EOP target of 30%.

In terms of the progress of the Project's major components, the I-PLAN, I-BUILD, and I-REAP Components are on track to reach their EOP targets. For the I-PLAN Component, it has already achieved three (3) of its four (4) targets, having developed 81 Provincial Commodity Investment Plans (PCIPs). The I-BUILD Component is also on track to reach its target of 2,600 km of constructed roads at 1,975 km as of October 15, 2023. Lastly, the I-REAP

Component has already exceeded its EOP target of 100,000 proponent group members operating viable enterprises at 127,349.

The Year-End Assessment concluded with the awarding of top-performing clusters in subproject implementation. The following awards were given:

Highest Physical Progress under AF2 for I-BUILD:
South Luzon

Highest Financial Progress under AF2 for I-BUILD:
North Luzon

Highest Physical Progress under AF2 for I-REAP:
North Luzon

Highest Financial Progress under AF2 for I-REAP:
North Luzon

I-PLAN Overall Implementation:
South Luzon

Most RAEB Activities Conducted:
North Luzon

The North Luzon cluster was hailed as the top-performing cluster for CY 2023 with four (4) awards followed by South Luzon with two (2).
(Jan Kyle Carrillo, NPCO InfoACE) ■





DA-PRDP staff graduate from agro-enterprise clustering course

To attain the goals of an expanded Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP), 24 staff from the enterprise development component (-I-REAP) of the DA-PRDP underwent an introductory course on the Agro-Enterprise Clustering Approach (AECA) under the Jollibee Group Foundation (JGF).

Anna Monica Vista, NPCO I-REAP's Enterprise Development and Marketing Specialist, spoke on behalf of the 2023 graduates. In her message, she highlighted the value and relevance of the course in helping achieve the DA's clustering and consolidation strategy to empower smallholder farmers.

"The AECA course was a refreshing journey of learning. It reminded me of why I am on the career path toward improving the lives of our farmers. The course equipped us with the skills of agro-enterprise clustering, collective marketing, and approaching agriculture in an entrepreneurial mindset," she said.

"It is up to us [graduates] to inculcate to the farmers these integral

concepts to empower them, thus uplifting their livelihood," she added.

The AECA graduates from the DA-PRDP, recognized on November 29, 2023, were from the I-REAP Component of the DA-PRDP, of which three (3) are from the National Project Coordination Office, five (5) from the Project Support Offices, and 16 from the Regional Project Coordination Offices. They attended the Training of AECA Facilitators last September 19-22, 2023, in Tagaytay City and completed all the course requirements to become bonafide AECA facilitators.

The recognition ceremony was part of JGF's 2023 AECA Learning Session which also included a breakout session introducing the DA-PRDP Scale-Up to other AECA graduates and other participants.

DA-PRDP National Deputy Project Director Shandy M. Hubilla presented the project, highlighting its overall strategic directions and the venues for private sector engagement in the project, especially in enterprise investments. Dir. Hubilla also emphasized the mainstreaming of the AECA in the PRDP Scale-Up as one of

the project's strategic directions.

"PRDP Scale-Up would be the launchpad by which we will institutionalize or mainstream AECA in the DA and our partner institutions," he said.

Hubilla ended his presentation with a discussion on the synergy between the public and private sectors, "it is our vision that the PRDP Scale-Up would be the government's viable and effective platform for private sector and government collaboration towards a modernized, competitive, sustainable, and climate resilient agriculture and fisheries sector."

AECA serves as a guide to project implementers or support institutions in enabling farmers to earn more through proper management of their farms as a business, value addition, and collective group marketing.

This approach was introduced by JGF as part of its Farmer Entrepreneurship Program (FEP) to help smallholder farmers increase their income through fair supply arrangements with institutional markets like the Jollibee Group. (Jan Kyle R. Carrillo, NPCO InfoACE)

DA-PRDP holds business conference with CALABARZON poultry industry stakeholders



Nasugbu, Batangas - The Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) Scale-Up held a business conference (BizCon) to further strengthen its collaboration with various key local stakeholders in the poultry industry.

The activity aimed to orient key industry players such as farmers and fisherfolk cooperatives and associations (FCAs) and private agribusiness entities including financing institutions and technology innovators on the PRDP Scale-Up. It also targets to present industry challenges and competitiveness strategies based on VCA findings and identify potential subprojects for PRDP funding.

Representatives from the Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council – CALABARZON, LandBank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines – Lipa Lending Center, Quezon Poultry and Livestock Corporation, APT Health Inc., Agro-digital PH, Cavite Livestock and Poultry Raisers Association, Siniloan Livestock and Poultry Raisers Association, Batangas Egg Producers Multi-

Purpose Cooperative, Batangas Egg Producers Association Inc., and Rizal Poultry and Livestock Association graced the said event.

In her opening message, DA Undersecretary for Finance and NPCO I-PLAN Component Head Agnes Catherine T. Miranda underscored that the BizCon aims to foster and share knowledge and cooperation among all participants through interactive discussions and collaboration.

“Through concerted efforts with the business sector, we aim to achieve the longer-term outcomes of securing the country’s food availability and creating an agri-fishery development environment attractive to private sector investment and innovation,” Usec. Miranda said.

DA-PRDP National Deputy Director Shandy M. Hubilla also presented the PRDP Scale-Up and the potential opportunities for stakeholders to engage with the project.

Dir. Hubilla highlighted the project’s vision to enable a more effective private-public sector partnership. He hopes that key stakeholders would consider the

project as one of the viable and effective platforms for engagement with the government toward the desired common outcome to synergize and complement resource mechanisms and processes for more significant innovation, productivity, and income generation in the agri-fishery sector.

“In DA-PRDP, we are catalyzers. We bring in all the major players of this industry. We hope that through the PRDP Scale-Up, we will be able to unlock the potential of the chicken and egg industry here in your region,” Dir. Hubilla said.

The open forum tackled relevant information on appropriate business strategies, possible counterparts from the private sector, and financing, among others.

From the insights and responses from participants, inputs from the sessions were consolidated and assessed to see where all parties can provide and receive support from one another and possibly commence new partnerships through the project. *(Julie Ace Brandon R. Barao, NPCO InfoACE)* ■



DA-PRDP, World Bank spearhead Digital Transformation Workshop, targets to improve service delivery and citizens' engagement

Quezon City-The Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) Scale-Up, in collaboration with the World Bank (WB), organized a two-day workshop on the Digital Transformation Agenda as part of the 16th World Bank Implementation Support Mission (ISM).

The training served as a venue for the discussion of the key elements of the Digital Transformation Agenda Technical Assistance (TA) of the WB to the DA.

The TA aims to support the Department in establishing its foundational data systems and enabling digital mechanisms for accelerating key sectoral reforms.

The DA-PRDP Geo-mapping and Governance Unit (GGU), Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Unit, I-REAP Component, I-PLAN Component, DA Information and Communications Technology Service (ICTS), DA Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance (AMAS), DA Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), Policy Research Services (PRS), and WB experts were present during the workshop.

Building on the Bank's strong

engagement with the DA, WB Task Team Leader Mio Takada highlighted that the task team is preparing a two-year Programmatic Advisory Services Analytics (PASA) titled "Towards Green Transformation of the Agriculture and Food System in the Philippines."

The proposed PASA will support the government to respond to the current food security crisis, accelerate key reforms in the sector as envisaged in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028, and support the pathway towards green transformation of the agri-food system.

"The PRDP has innovated a lot of very interesting initiatives such as geotagging, remote sensing, etc. It is high time for us to be able to discuss this specific agenda. The project is the best platform for an innovation pilot on the Scale-Up. We've been promoting this agenda and cannot wait to share the global lesson with all of you," Takada said.

Key topics covered during the workshop included the DA's existing ICTS tools and plans, DA digital transformation roadmap strategy, Farmer Registry (Registry System for basic sectors in agriculture), private sector engagement on agri-

technologies, and food balance sheet, among others.

Parmesh Shah, World Bank's Global Lead for Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Jobs, also presented his international experiences in developing digital transformation strategies, geospatial analytics, and remote sensing/satellite imagery for farm identification and production system monitoring.

Some experts from the WB also discussed how the implementers can address the country's key critical food security issues, especially those that are emerging at the moment. They also presented opportunities and requirements for the innovation challenge with the private sector.

Dr. Honorio C. Flameño, DA-ICTS Director and GGU Head, underscored the importance of the digital transformation agenda to the DA workforce.

"Through the digital transformation exercise, it will help us assess our ongoing initiative relative to digital transformation and perhaps gain some knowledge towards improving our service delivery and, of course, our citizens' engagement," Dr. Flameño said. *(Julie Ace Brandon R. Barao, NPCO InfoACE)* ■



(Photos by DA-Agriculture and Fisheries Information Division)



11 DA-PRDP cacao enterprises join National Cacao Congress

Davao City – Eleven cacao-based enterprises of the Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP), together with over 85 participants from cacao industry stakeholders, joined the National Cacao Congress on November 16-17, 2023, at the SMX Convention Center, SM Lanang Premier.

Themed “Cacao 2.0: Sustainability Through Productivity and Quality”, the congress aimed to showcase innovations and best practices in cacao production and chocolate making.

The event was spearheaded by the Philippine Cacao Industry Association, Inc. (PCIA, Inc.) and the Philippine Cacao Industry Council (PCIC), in partnership with the Departments of Agriculture (DA), Trade and Industry (DTI), Interior and Local Government (DILG), Science and Technology (DOST), and Rural Agro-Enterprise Partnership for Inclusive Development and Growth (RAPID), Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), and other

contributors.

The activities of the congress included plenary sessions, panel discussions, and workshops covering various aspects of cacao production, quality enhancement, and sustainability.

DA-PRDP National Deputy Project Director Shandy M. Hubilla delivered a presentation on the PRDP Scale-Up, outlining potential opportunities for stakeholders to actively participate in the project.

He highlighted that the PRDP will invest in infrastructure in enterprise development and will use clustering and consolidation as its main strategy.

“To build on the current success and gains of the PRDP in the cacao industry, we seek to partner with you, and we invite all of our potential stakeholders to join us as we embark on a bigger and more impactful PRDP Scale-Up which will start next year and will continue to pursue until 2029,” Dir. Hubilla said.

He also emphasized the importance of partnering with all

of the key stakeholders who are proactive in helping the entire industry, particularly the smallholder cacao farmers.

The participation of DA-PRDP in the National Cacao Congress is also in collaboration with the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS). Six (6) beneficiaries from AMAS of Regions 3, 4B, 6, 7, and CARAGA also joined the said event.

The 11 participating cacao industry enterprises from PRDP concluded the congress with a booked and negotiated profit of Php3.9 million. *(Julie Ace Brandon R. Barao, NPCO InfoACE)*

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