



#### by: Remai Alejado | RPCO 9

he long drought caused by the El Niño has dried up the rain-fed riceland that used to produce food and provide income for and his family. Fortunately for him, just beside his farm stands the coco coir processing facility where he is employed by the Bulawan Coconut Farmers Association (BUCOFA) as a coco husk decorticating machine operator.

BUCOFA is a cluster member of Dinas Coconut Farmers Federation (DISCOFAF) who availed the PhP 19.2 million worth "Integrated Coco Coir Processing and Marketing Enterprise" subproject with PRDP. The subproject, which is funded under the World Bank's Second Additional Financing and European Union Co-Financing Grant (AF2-EU) is targeted at providing income for coconut farmers in the Zamboanga Peninsula to stop farming due to El Niño," Mr. Doraydo. through the production of coco coir products products of the coconut industry.

due to the continuous demand for coco coir month



TOP & MIDDLE: Gregorio Doraydo, Jr. work with his wife and daughter to turn coce coir into thread for making ropes

Apart from the income he gets from his such as ropes, hanks and geo-nets as well work at BUCOFA, Doraydo's wife is also earning as coco peat, all of which are considered by- by making coco ropes & hanks from coco coir. These rolls of coco hanks are delivered With farming and other agricultural to Amparitas integrated Farm and Coconut activities at a standstill during the dry season, Manufacturing in Hinatuan, Surigao del Norte the enterprise subproject is providing jobs for who has a monthly requirement of at least 200 farmers and their families during the El Niño rolls of CGN 400 and 60,000 coco hanks ever

Aside from this, the road projects of the "I am very thankful to BUCOFA for giving Department of Public Works and Highways me a job as a machine operator when I had (DPWH) across the region also need coco

geo-nets, coco logs, twines, and peat as the agency requires their usage as bioengineering materials for controlling soil erosion and slope stabilization in their road projects.

With the high demand for coco twines and geo-nets, this DA-PRDP subproject is providing job opportunities to farming communities in Lapuyan, Dinas, and neighboring municipalities in the 2nd Congressional District of Zamboanga del Sur whole year round regardless of the weather



## RPAB APPROVES CONSTRUCTION OF BUKIDNON FMR

## by: Isa Agawin | RPCO 10

he Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU) of Bukidnon, under the leadership of Governor Rogelio Neil O. Roque, were delighted with the approval of the Concreting of the Iba-Cabulohan-Paradise Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) in Cabanglasan during the project proposal deliberation on May 2, at the Northern Mindanao Agricultural Crops and Livestock Research Complex, in Dalwangan, Malabalay City, Bukidnon.

DA-PRDP 10 Project Director Carlene C. Collado expressed his appreciation to the PLGU Bukidnon for their efforts in the preparation for the approval of this subproject.

"The approval of this subproject is an indication that you are compliant with the



Bukidnon Governor Rogelio Neil G. Roque (Photo by RPCO 10)

requirements set by the World Bank," Collado said. "We are optimistic that work on the project will commence within this year."

For her part, Cabanglasan Mayor Lolita 0. Bullecer thanked the provincial government for entrusting the road project to the municipality and their assistance with the PRDP team in preparing the necessary documents for approval.

"We are so excited for this subproject because this road network will bring opportunities and economic development to the farmers and residents of this town," Bullecer said.



## by: Nichole Talatala | RPCO 13

RDP Caraga officially turned over the "Consolidation and Processing of Green Coffee Beans" subproject to the San Nicolas Development Cooperative (SANIDECO) and its cluster members on May 10, 2024, at Brgy, Doña Carmen, Tagbina, Surigao del Sur.

Totaling PhP9.6M, the subproject enables SANIDECO and its four cluster members in Tagbina to consolidate, process, and market quality green coffee beans through the provision of 30 units of all-weather solar dryers, a cargo truck and hauling truck, and additional buying capital, among other interventions.

Municipal Agriculturist Warlito D. Untua encouraged the coffee farmers to take ownership and care of the subproject in the hopes that future generations may be able to enjoy its benefits.

IREAP Component Head Lynn A. Pareñas meanwhile emphasized that SANIDECO will now be managing a full-fledged enterprise, underscoring the evolving role of farmer-members from producers to entrepreneurs.

In attendance at the turn-over ceremony were Surigao del Sur Asst. Provincial Administrator Engr. Juliet F. Perez, Department of Trade and Industry Provincial Director Romel M. Oribe, Municipal Agriculturist Warilto D. Unitua, IREAP Component Head Lynn A. Pareñas, Executive Assistant Arturo B. Espenilla, Jr., and Punong Barangay Cesario A. Quirequire.



## **BOOSTING CHAMPION COMMODITIES**

hree IREAP proponent groups (PGs) from Region 12 received their initial funding for their respective rubber and coffee enterprises.

In a simple turnover of checks at PRDP PSO Mindanao Office, the Kahugpungan sa Mag-uuma sa Singao (KAMASI) of Brgy. Singao and the Perez ARB Rubber Farmers Association (PARFA), both in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato, received the 1st tranche of their Rubber Cuplumps Consolidation and Marketing subprojects on May 23.

The said subprojects have a total amount of P6M and P5.8M, respectively.

Meanwhile the Limulan Sustainable Livelihood Association (LSLA) of Brgy. Limulan Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat also received its 1st tranche for their P2.6 Million Coffee Processing and Marketing subproject on May 24.

PRDP Mindanao Project Director Macario D. Gonzaga sends his message of support to the three PGs and looks forward to a more dynamic rubber and coffee industry in the region.

"Sultan Kudarat is the country's leading coffee producer while North Cotabato is also a major rubber-producing province. We hope that with the Project's support we can sustain the growth of both industries and make them more inclusive for our PGs to earn more out of these champion commodities," he said.

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## **BOOSTING THE BUTUAN RUBBER INDUSTRY**

#### by: Nichole Talatala | RPCO 13

ompleted in June 2020, the Integrated Rubber Production and Marketing subproject was implemented to address constraints in the production, input supply, and processing of rubber crumbs in Butuan City. The subproject, which totals P22,184,350.13, includes the turnover of a newly constructed warehouse for rubber cup lump consolidation, a seedling production facility building, a hauling truck, and various planting materials.

"The subproject was created to respond to the different problems of rubber farmers in Butuan City, especially low productivity, lack of organization, and insufficient access to infrastructure," says Ameroche Caba, PSO Mindanao Organizational Development Specialist. "This is in line with the primary goal of the IREAP component of PRDP which is to strengthen agri-fisheries enterprises by raising their incomes and generating more jobs."

Jesus Ojario, a member of KFPC's board of directors, illustrates the contrast in production before and after DA-PRDP's nterventions

"Before, our old clones were not as productive and only yielded about ¼ of a kilo every 15 days," Ojario said. "Today, with the new clones provided by DA-PRDP, we can produce 1 kilo per tree for every 15 days."

Apart from increased production, the cooperative has also seen a transformation in the quality of its rubber. "We used to gather our yield using only coconut shells. The problem was, we would place these directly on the ground and dirt would get mixed into our latex. Buyers would reduce the price from P25 to P20 per kilo because of the contamination," shares Jerico Ayuban, a rubber farmer and member of KFPC.

"DA-PRDP has trained us on Good Agricultural Practices in rubber production, and we've taught our members good practices in tapping management. Because of these interventions, the cooperative can now produce 15 tons every 15 days," adds Samuel Calawigan Jr., KFPC Chairman.

Interestingly, the cooperative attributes its success to the strategic intersection of DA-PRDP interventions. While livelihoods have



The PRDP RAEB Team interview a farmer member of the Km. 7 Farmers' Producers Cooperative (KFPC) to assess the impact of the subber enterprise subproject to their community. (Photo by RPCO I3)

been improved with the completed enterprise subproject, it was the DA-PRDP farm-tomarket road that facilitated the expansion of their markets.

The Lauan - Tud-ol FMR is a 9.82-kilometer farm-to-market road that traverses the barangays of Tungao and San Mateo. Completed in 2022, it aims to complement the enterprise subproject in connecting the



TOP. The PEDP RAEB Team conduct the Key Informant Interview using the mobile RAEB tool. BOTTOM: The mobile version of the RAEB tool makes it easier for the team to conduct interviews and assessments in the field. (Photos by RPCO 19.



enterprise to wider markets.

"In making our deliveries to Butuan before, vegetables that would weigh 20 kilos would be reduced to 8 kilos. Buyers refused to purchase damaged crops. Hauling our products used to take us three days to finish. Today we can finish it within a day," shares Jerico.

Thriving through the holistic support of DA-PRDP, today, the cooperative has begun venturing into diversified farming.

"We have expanded to different commodities through diversified farming. We intercop our rubber plantations with various crops – some cultivate pineapples, bananas, a variety of vegetables, coffee, and more," says Samuel.

Assessing the Impact of Rubber Enterprise SP with RAEB Tool

To gauge the subproject's impact on its beneficiaries, PRDP Caraga's Rapid Appraisal of the Emerging Benefits (RAEB) team, with assistance from the Project Support Office (PSO) Mindanao, conducted household

surveys, focus group discussions with farmerbeneficiaries and LGU partners, farm profiling and geotagging, and on-the-spot interviews from January 29 – February 2, 2024.

RAEB is a PRDP evaluation tool used to monitor completed infrastructure and enterprise subprojects under PRDP's I-BUILD and I-REAP components.

"In the conduct of the RAEB, we are focused on determining the success of individual subprojects and how these achievements align with or are relevant to the project development objectives of DA-PRDP", says M&E Unit Head Menchie A. Samorano.

The rapid appraisal of the rubber enterprise marks the first RAEB conducted by the Regional Project Coordination Office (RPCO) Caraga in 2024. In line with DA's directive to institutionalize the tools and processes of the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP), it also capacitated and actively involved technical staff from DA's regular programs and special projects.

Deputy Project Director Jodel A. Tabada cites the RAEB as one of PRDP's best practices, expressing her hope that it will be institutionalized into DA's regular programs as this will aid in the evaluation of its completed projects.

'PRDP has invested considerably into the crafting of the RAEB tool. It is a ready tool that can be adopted by DA's regular programs to improve post-project assessment and even improve its pre-implementation,' adds M&E unit head Menchie Samorano.

Technical staff from the DA-13 Planning and Monitoring Evaluation Division (PMED), Field Operations Division (FOD), Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD), and the newly launched Mindanao Inclusive Agriculture Development Project (MIADP) actively participated in the conduct of the RAEB.

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## **ENHANCING** CONFLICT SENSITIVITY AND PEACE **PROMOTION**

by: Joy Montecalvo | PSO Mindanao

ecause progress cannot be achieved without a just and lasting peace and vice versa, a good understanding of peace promotion and conflict sensitivity is needed to sustain development in rural communities.

This was highlighted during the Conflict Sensitivity and Peace Promotion (CSPP) Training conducted by the PRDP National Project Coordination Office (NPCO), through their Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES) Unit with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) on May 7-10 in Dayao City.

This would be the second CSPP training conducted by PRDP with OPAPRU and aimed to equip personnel from each component and unit of PRDP, including the National Project Coordination Office (NPCO) and Project Support Offices (PSOs) from South and North Luzon, Visavas, and the Mindanao Cluster, with the necessary knowledge and tools to effectively handle conflicts and peacebuilding efforts in the project's implementation.

World Bank Co-Task Team Leader Maria Theresa Quinones thanked the OPAPRU team for their constant support to the advocacy of PRDP which is not only job creation but also peace contribution.

"We would like to thank OPAPPRU for being our partner for this training because while we are focused on job creation, peace is inherent in all that we are doing," Quinones said. "We are looking if the proposed investment is Canda-Sakilan shared how her learnings as income generating but also if it supports resolving conflict in the field. peacebuilding and would not create conflict." said Ouinones.



Michael Frank Alar, WB's consultant in the Fragility, Conflict, and Violence team in the Philippines leads the workshops on how to integrate CSPP into PREP's project implementation activities

In his message, PSO Mindanao Deputy Project Director Noel T. Provido defined peace in the context of PRDP

"In PRDP we define PEACE as 'P' for peace education, where our beneficiaries would police their own subprojects adhering to the standards of PRDP and World Bank; 'E' for empowerment for our beneficiaries and stakeholder; 'A' for agricultural development, because our subprojects would not be sustainable if our beneficiaries do not have income: 'C' for communication where we want our community to know the art of negotiation through genuine and concerned communication; and, 'E' for environmental sustainability, which is the main concern for the SES."

RPCO BARMM SES Associate Jeniffer



actually helpful not only in livelihood and participant of the first batch helped her in

"By incorporating CSPP objectives and approaches, the project fostered better



relationship and trust among community members, project staff, local authorities, and other stakeholders leading to enhanced collaboration, dialogue, and conflict resolution mechanism within the project areas," said Sakilan. "By building skills in conflict transformation, communication, and collaboration, community members were better equipped to navigate challenges and build social

Quiñones stressed the importance of CSPP in the successful implementation of the PRDP and how equally crucial peace promotion is to creating economic opportunities for farmers

"We want our proposed investment efforts to generate income and livelihood for our beneficiaries, support peacebuilding, and avoid conflicts," Quiñones said. "Let's make the most of this opportunity with the OPAPRU team to learn about different tools and government policies that can help us enhance our implementation in



## PRDP MEL UNIT SPEARHEADS SIDLAN TRAINING FOR FINANCE, I-SUPPORT UNITS

#### by: Joseph John Palarca | PSO Mindanao

epresentatives from PRDP's I-SUPPORT component, in particular the finance, procurement and office of the deputy project director (ODPD) convened in Davao City for the "User's Training on Sidlan Work and Financial Plan Module" on May 7-10.

The training aims to equip the participants on the use of Sidlan and develop confidence in their ability to properly encode their respective work and financial plans (WFPs) into the system

The SIDLAN as the enhanced version of PRDP's MIS is designed to serve as a centralized platform that streamlines the collection, organization, analysis, monitoring, and evaluation of project-related data, providing valuable insights for better and effective project and data management.

In his message, PRDP PSO Mindanao Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Head Joseph Rico highlighted the significance



of the activity especially as the project is in the process of scaling up.

"As the upgraded version, the Sidlan aligns with the objectives of the PRDP Scale-Up as it addresses the issues and concerns we experienced in our previous MIS," Rico said. This new system caters to our growing need for real time data to allow for well-informed management decision making."

Rico added that the Sidlan is not just a

tool for the MEL unit but for PRDP as a whole emphasizing the importance of the learning

NPCO Alternate MEL Unit Head Arvin San Juan said that the Sidlan reflects the lessons learned in the course of the evolution of PRDP from the original loan, to the first and second additional financing, and now in the PRDP Scale-

"As one of the leading projects bringing in digital innovations, we hope that PRDP can contribute to positive changes as we integrate our learnings into the Department of Agriculture," San Juan said. "PRDP under scale up should be the catalyst for transformation not just in effective project implementation but also as a leader in digitalization."

Following the orientation and general introduction to the Sidlan system, the participants underwent simulation and role playing before taking part in the actual encoding process of their WFPs. (%)

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#### by: Joy Montecalvo | PSO Mindanao

A S DA-PRDP transitions into the PRDP Scale-Up, the Information, Advocacy, Communication, and Education (InfoACE) Unit continues to play a crucial role in showcasing the milestones and successes of the project and putting a human face to its accomplishments.

With the close of the Original Loan and the First Additional Financing in 2022, the upcoming end of the Second Additional Financing and European Union Co-Financing grant on December 2024, and the transition of the project into the PRDP Scale-Up, there is a need to continually update the communication tools and skill sets of the InfoACE teams. This will enable the team to explore various ways to develop creative ideas for crafting compelling narratives that will captivate a diverse audience.

The InfoACE Capacity Building Workshop provided an opportunity to reassess and enhance the unit's strengths and weaknesses, further developing skills in writing and content creation across digital, print, and online platforms.

PSO Mindanao Deputy Project Director Noel T. Provido emphasized the importance of reaching a variety of audiences and the role of social marketing in communication.

"We have been fully engaged in social media but let's not forget the social marketing. Let us not forget that it is in the advocacy



that we will be able to cultivate community engagement. Advocacy is the deliberate use of information to influence decision making."

of information to influence decision making," said DPD Provido. "In social media marketing, we really need to promote the project. Let us focus on our key messages such as inclusivity."

The workshop included a series of lectures on topics such as the "Standardization of Video Materials and Production," "Writing Tips for News Reporting," and "Standardization of PRDP Newsletters."

PSO Mindanao Information and Advocacy Specialist Joseph John Palarca, DVM, led a lecture on the standardization of video materials and production.

RPCO 13 and Regional Executive Director Arlan M. Mangelen expressed his



support and acknowledged the importance of communication officers in linking the Department of Agriculture's mandate to its

beneficiaries.

"We must continue strengthening our visibility to all farmers. Increasing the followers of our Department's Facebook Page is a vital platform for disseminating important information to farmers," said Director Mangelen. "We need to effectively communicate our agency's mandate and help our farmers and fisherfolk understand our programs."

Participants of the said activity are information officers from North Luzon, South Luzon, and Mindanao Clusters.

## PSO MINDANAO SIGNS MOU WITH ACDI/ VOCA, GIZ

by: Joy Montecalvo | PSO Mindanao

o ensure the sustainability of subprojects, the Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) has been collaborating with various stakeholders, including international development organizations.

On June 29, PSO Mindanao formalized a significant partnership with the Agricultural Cooperative International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) through the Cacao Plus Project.

PSO Mindanao Deputy Project Director Noel T. Provido said partnerships are the results of converegence initiatives of both parties leading to the signing of a memorandum of understanding.

"This partnership is an outcome of Mindanao Online C.A.F.E. and is an important undertaking for us because it aligns with the strategic direction of PRDP Scale-Up implementation, where connecting and collaborating with development partners is essential." said DPD Provido.

The partnership with GIZ will focus on integrating their knowledge products into DA-PRDP. They will provide their expertise through Training of Trainers programs, utilizing their existing Cacao Plus knowledge product.

GIZ Senior Adviser Amiel Tristan Gonzales presented the Agri Development Partnership Projects with the Private Sector (Agri-DPP).

"Under our Agri-DPP, we capacitate farmers and farmer groups. We also highlight the economic potential of farming through the application of Farming as Business (FBS) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)," Gonzales said. "Our cacao





2<sup>nd</sup> Mindanao Cluster

PRDP PSO Mindanao Project Director Macario Gonzaga

productivity enhancement programs (PEP) 1 & 2 have been invaluable resources for the Cooperative's Committee on Education, given that many cacao proponent groups lack training materials."

In the context of PRDP Scale-Up, ACDI/ VOCA, which is currently implementing the Cooperative Development Program (CDP), will assist DA-PRDP in identifying and endorsing potential Farmer Cooperatives and Associations (FCAs) for the Scale-Up. They will also facilitate the compliance of necessary documents by the identified FCAs to ensure smooth operations.

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ACDI/VOCA CDP Country Director Melissa Alado highlighted their focus on developing rural development hubs in her presentation.

"Our approach emphasizes sustainable agriculture, resilience, equity and inclusion, access to finance, and economic opportunity," Alado explained. "The Rural Development Hub platform will enable people and organizations to work collaboratively, enhancing services, systems, capacity, partnerships, and market linkages for supply chain optimization."

Representatives from DA-PRDP, ACDI/ VOCA CDP, and GIZ signed the memorandum of understanding, marking a milestone in fostering collaboration between special projects and other stakeholders.

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# RUBBER PROFILING PROJECT TO ANCHOR TARGETED INDUSTRY SUPPORT IN REGION 9

## by: Joseph John Palarca | PSO Mindanao

he I-PLAN component of the PRDP Regional Project Coordination Office 9 conducted a turnover ceremony for the "Zamboanga Sibugay Rubber Industry Profiling and Data Banking" subproject on May 8, 2024 in Pagadian City.

The PhP2.3 million project, which signified under the PRDP FPLAN Subcomponent 1.2 was launched in October 21, 2022 with the Philippine Rubber Research Institute (PRR), Mindnasotate University-Marawi College of Information and Computing Science (CICS) & the Department of Trade and Industry-Zamboanga Sibugay Provincial Office as convergence partners.

According to RPCO 9 I-PLAN head Engr. Brandon M. Mentolaroc, limited information

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for targeted agricultural sector development planning for agencies such as the Department of Agriculture was the rationale for the conceptualization of the profiling project. Zamboanga Sibugay was chosen because of its status as the country's leading rubber producing province.

"The plan was to expand the project to other rubber-producing provinces and regions to provide comprehensive data and information," said Mentolaroc. "We hope this will not just be a profiling activity but also have a working database that will provide evidence-based information for policy and decision-making."

PRDP PSO Mindanao Planning Specialist Crishyl Ann P. Bilbao, facilitated discussions on potential support from the I-PLAN convergence initiatives and possible collaborations with the provincial local government of Zamboanga Sibugay to align their rubber development strategies with various government agencies.

The convergence initiative is spearheaded by PRDP's I-PLAN subcomponent 1.2 which implements area-based technical service delivery such as training, research, and coordination to create synergistic partnerships with other agencies to provide improved support to different priority commodities.

With the transition of the project into PRDP Scale-Up and the shift into clustering and big ticket subprojects, the data provided by I-PLAN's convergence initiatives serve a critical role to anchor evidence based decision making and planning for investments for rubber and other champion commodities.



B ased on the Philippine Rubber Roadmap 2023-2028, Mindanao is home to 98% of the rubber plantations in the country.

Among the regions, Zamboanga recorded the largest area planted with rubber in 2021, with 99,088 hectares, representing 41% of the total area of 239,140.50 hectares, SOCOSKSARGEN follows with 64,908 hectares (27%), and BARMM with 39,095 hectares (16%). Other regions in Mindanao showing significant increases in areas planted with rubber include CARAGA with 13,186 hectares

(6%) and the Davao Region with 10,449.60 hectares (4%). The remaining regions have areas of less than 10,000 hectares, accounting for less than 4% of the total rubber-planted area in the Philippines.

To date, DA-PRDP has poured in a total of PHP 4.21 billion in investments distributed in 60 infrastructure and enterprise subprojects across the six regions in Mindanao Cluster.

As of June 2024, Region 9 has the largest portfolio with 18 subprojects amounting to PHP 1.69 billion, followed by Region 13 with 12 subprojects worth PHP 911.18 million. Region 10 has 16 subprojects worth PHP 446.24 million, while Region 11 has four

subprojects worth PHP 446.95 million. Region 11 has six subprojects worth PHP 369.88 million, and BARMM has four subprojects worth PHP 352.06 million.

These subprojects primarily focus on production, marketing, and trading, as well as construction of post-harvest facilities, and farm-to-market roads to improve access and ease of transportation of goods.





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