



National Convergence Initiative for
Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD)



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Lake Napalit, a part of the Muleta Watershed, is considered a source of water and life to 10 municipalities and 1 city in the southwestern Bukidnon and Northern Cotabato.
Photo credit: RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

INSIDE ISSUE:

Shaping the Carood Watershed into a Sustainable Regional Convergence Initiative | p2

DA-DAR-DENR-DILG Stakeholders in Northern Mindanao Converge for Muleta Watershed Protection and Sustainability | p3

Invest in our Planet | p4

DENR Activities in Carood Watershed Model Forest Convergence Area | p5

Road to Progress | p6

Nationwide Tree Growing Activity | p8

E-NGP: Touching Lives of the Upland Communities | p8

DA Bicol Continues to Provide Interventions to Pili Watershed Convergence Area in Sorsogon | p10

Additional Source of Income for Dancalan Fisherfolk | p10

"REINAssance" of Quezon | p11

Techno-Demo Helps Farmers in San Isidro | p12

SHAPING THE CAROOD WATERSHED INTO A SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL CONVERGENCE INITIATIVE

By: RCI TWG Central Visayas



Distribution of the P5,000 cash under the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance in Alicia, Bohol

The Carood Watershed has taken shape through the years primarily because of the people who managed it since 2003 and the regional convergence initiatives' efforts to develop the watershed areas.

The Carood Watershed Model Forest Management Council (CWMFMC) was established not for political reasons but to address the concerns of the seven municipalities in Bohol, namely, Alicia, Anda, Candijay, Guindulman, Mabini, Pilar, and Ubay.

Governor Erico Aumentado issued Executive Order No. 30 series of 2003, which created the CWMFC outlining the issues of deforestation in the headwaters, soil erosion, low productivity, inadequate supply of potable water, and solid waste management.

Since then the CWFMC has faithfully performed its task to protect the watershed. A solution seen was to reforest the denuded areas using the community-based strategy. A community-based approach mainly capacitates people at risk to play a central role in determining how others assist them in the risk they face.

Mayor Constantino Reyes, who is a three-termer chairman of the CWMFMC has worked closely with the Regional Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (RCI-SRD) Central Visayas since the RCI was launched in 2017.

In 2022, the DA registered the biggest allocated budget for the Carood Convergence Area with 5,718 farmers receiving P 5,000 each for rice subsidy which

totals more than P360M. Aside from that, the rice program has shelled out more than P32M for the establishment of the community hybrid rice demonstration farms and rice farm clusters in the municipalities of Alicia, Pilar, and Ubay. According to DA data, the yield of hybrid rice can reach 4.06 metric tons per hectare.

The Carood has to shape up to the demands of the time. For the agriculture sector, the DA has invested in the biggest climate-resilient monolithic rice seed storage in the country which is established in Ubay.



The P51M climate-resilient monolithic dome rice storage can accommodate 1M kilos of rice

The Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Central Visayas program of the DA intends to alleviate the poverty of the marginalized farmers specifically addressing the needs of corn farmers in Mabini, Bohol.



DA Central Visayas SAAD program distributes farm inputs to farmers in Carood

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' investment in the Carood reached P10M this year. Included in the agency's investment is the spring development project in Mabini. The infrastructure is known as the life of the farmers who depend on their livelihood in the watershed areas, without the spring development project the farmers will never succeed in their endeavors.

The DENR's focus on reforestation is highlighted in the annual activities which included the protection and maintenance of the established plantations in Carood.

The Department of Agrarian Reforms' financial contribution to Carood may be small, but the technical staff's presence in building the social infrastructure

cannot be understated. DAR's assistance in strengthening the agrarian reform beneficiaries has firmed up the societal fabric among the farmers in Carood.

The Department of Interior and Local Government Central Visayas contribution to the sustainable development of Carood consists of establishing a potable water supply for the residents. Potable water supply provides convenience to women who do most of the household chores and to children who are susceptible to water-borne diseases.

Indeed the Carood watershed convergence has taken shape to become one of the country's most sustainable regional watershed convergence. ###



DENR's spring development project in Mabini, Bohol.

DA-DAR-DENR-DILG Stakeholders in Northern Mindanao Converge for Muleta Watershed Protection and Sustainability

By: Mae Odimyrl Morales, RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

Covering a total area of 83,884 hectares, the Muleta watershed is located in the Upper River Basin of Bukidnon, specifically in the southwestern part of the province and extending to Carmen town in North Cotabato covering 79,029 hectares and 4,855 hectares, respectively.

The watershed traverses the municipalities of Pangantucan, Talakag, Maramag, Don Carlos, Dangcagan, Kitaotao, Kadingilan, Kibawe, Damulog and the city of Valencia in the Province of Bukidnon and Carmen in North Cotabato.

During the initial stakeholders meeting for Muleta protection and development planning, Pangantucan Mayor Miguel Silva shared in his message the influence and value of the Muleta Watershed with its headwaters emanating from Mt. Kalatungan flowing through Bukidnon to Carmen, North Cotabato. "Muleta has sustained life and livelihood to the communities here thru the years. I am glad that with the RCI-SRD, the time has come to organize and come up with a workable plan to continue preserving and protecting the Muleta watershed," Silva said. Among the 11 towns, Pangantucan has the largest political jurisdiction over the watershed with 18,906 hectares of the total 83,884 hectares.

“As we promote responsible livelihoods, agri-tourism, and sustained food production systems, we also look forward to having more trees, specifically Balete trees growing in strategic areas of Muleta..” Silva added.



The RCI-SRD, together with communities, the private sector, and other key stakeholders shall work on the Muleta Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) as a comprehensive framework for holistic and sustainable management of all resources within the Muleta watershed. The CADP shall also define the complementation of resources and functions from the four rural development government agencies – the DA, DAR, DENR, and DILG for plan implementation.

As the local chief executive of Pangantucan, Mayor Silva appreciated the RCI-SRD’s framework which goes mutual with the intents of the local government of Pangantucan in preserving and protecting the natural splendor of Muleta.

Leading the development discussion for the formulation and implementation of the Muleta CADP were Agriculture consultant Joel Rudinas, Pangantucan Municipal Mayor Miguel Silva together with the municipal planning, agriculture, tourism heads, the Bukidnon provincial agriculture office, and provincial operations center, and the members of the technical working groups from the DA, DAR, DENR, and the DILG. The Muleta watershed shall be the fourth RCI-assisted area in the Northern Mindanao region in addition to the Mt. Balatukan Cluster in the province of Misamis Oriental, Mt. Inayawan- Illana Cluster, and Royale Cluster both in Lanao del Norte. ###

INVEST IN OUR PLANET

By: RCI TWG Central Luzon



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) opened its Envi-Trade Fair, where organic products from all over Central Luzon are being sold by various partner people's organizations.

DENR Regional Executive Director Paquito Moreno, Jr. noted that the trade fair served as a channel to inspire social entrepreneurs to establish a profit-generating venture that likewise values a healthy and green planet.

“Our trade fair activity underscores how people from all parts of Central Luzon can come together for a common cause of showcasing products from their respective localities while giving us all a better appreciation of the bounties that we can gain if we just live in harmony with nature,” Moreno said.

The fair, which was held on April 22, 2022, is part of the annual celebration of the Month of the Planet Earth. This year’s theme “Invest in Our Planet” rallies for the courage to preserve and protect public health and communities’ livelihood by conserving nature. ###

DENR ACTIVITIES IN CAROOD WATERSHED MODEL FOREST CONVERGENCE AREA

by: RCI TWG Central Visayas



NGP Nursery at PO Vetfa, Pilar



NGP Nursery at BLGU Mahayag, Alicia



Forest Protection and Maintenance at BLGU Almaria, Anda

Since the implementation of the National Greening Program in 2011, Carood Watershed is the priority area in the comprehensive site development (CSD) and support facilities which include the small farm reservoir (SFR) with the aim of providing water for NGP established plantations and profiling of inland wetlands.

Activities include:

1. National Greening Program (NGP) - 7,257.20 M
 - a. Seedling production & maintenance - 3,082.20 M
 - b. Maintenance of Established Plantation (2021) - 4,175.00 M
2. Profiling of Priority Inland Wetlands - 150.00 M
3. Small Water Impounding Structures (SWIS) - 2,198.00 M

For the current year's target, a total of seventy-five (75) hectares will be established with Bamboo and 130 hectares of rattan in four (4) municipalities involving nine (9) barangays with thirty-two (32) family beneficiaries. On the maintenance and protection of established plantations (MPEP) for the 2021 plantations, a total of 785 hectares were planted with bamboo while 162 hectares for timber in six (6) municipalities involving seventeen (17) barangays with a total of 224 family beneficiaries.

Aside from the NGP, local residents will be benefited from other activities like profiling of priority inland wetland and the small water impounding structures as workers will be coming from the locality giving them additional income.###

ROAD TO PROGRESS

By: Eve Deligero, RCI TWG Davao



From an unproductive area to a lively agri-enterprise



From slippery and unpassable to a concrete FMR



The then muddy, slippery, and unpassable road to five sitios of Barangay Suawan, Marilog District has brought hardship, unproductivity, poverty, and hopelessness to the farming community in the area.

Tired of their helpless situation, the Farmers living in Sitio Agila, Upper Happy Valley, Lower Happy Valley, Cabagbahangan, Masicampo and Biaong made a loud clamor for the government’s interventions.

Upon hearing this problem, the Regional Convergence Initiative (RCI) in the Davao Region through the Department of Agriculture (DA) funded the concreting of the 3.08-kilometer road from Suawan Centro to Sitio Happy Valley amounting to P37.3 million under the Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) program. The first phase of the project (1 kilometer) was completed in 2021 with a total budget of P13 million, while the 2nd phase was completed in March 2022 amounting to P24.3 million.

Brgy. Suawan is one of the eight barangays within the Suawan-Kulafu Subwatershed. The FMR is part of the identified interventions reflected in the Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) of Suawan-Kulafu Subwatershed.

“With good road networks, come progress.”

Abel James I. Monteagudo
Regional Executive Director - XI



“Daku kaayo ug kabaghoan sa among panginabuhian isip mag-uuma sukad gipahimo sa gobyerno kining kalsada. Dili lang sa among pamuyo apan labi na gyud sa pagpagawas sa among mga produkto.”(This farm-to-market road project has brought changes in our lives as farmers. It is now easy for us to bring our product to the market). This was bared by Maricel Legaspina, the Chair of Agila Farmers Association.

Legaspina was born and grew up in Sitio Happy Valley to a farmer’s parents. She witnessed how difficult for the farmers in their community to bring their produce to the market.

Despite fertile land and productive crops, farmers’ income is still so limited due to a lack of market access.

Poor Access

“We used farm animals like carabao and horses to ferry our agricultural products to the ‘bagsakan’ near highway or market within the Centro since our production area is unpassable to any form of vehicle,” Legaspina said.

She reiterated that it takes 1-2 hours travel time with the pace of these animals which deteriorates the quality of their vegetable products, especially those leafy vegetables. “Upon reaching the local market, our vegetables are no longer fresh and our products are bought at a very low price,” she said.

She added that they have no other option but to sell their products at the price set by the market. They cannot insist on a higher price because the product is of low quality already. Their products include banana (lakatan), vegetables, coconut (whole nut and beaker nut) cacao, upland rice, and corn among others.

“With this access and concrete road, we can reach Suawan proper in just a few minutes with the presence of transport vehicles in our area”. She said.

She added that aside from easy market access, it is no longer difficult for them to buy their farm supplies and even construction materials for their houses.

Government’s Response

The DA in the Davao Region believes that Farm-to-Market Roads stimulate the economy and empower rural communities.

Agriculture Regional Executive Director Abel James I. Monteagudo said that farm-to-market roads play a very significant role in the improvement of agricultural production and household income. “With the good road networks, what comes next is progress,” Monteagudo said.

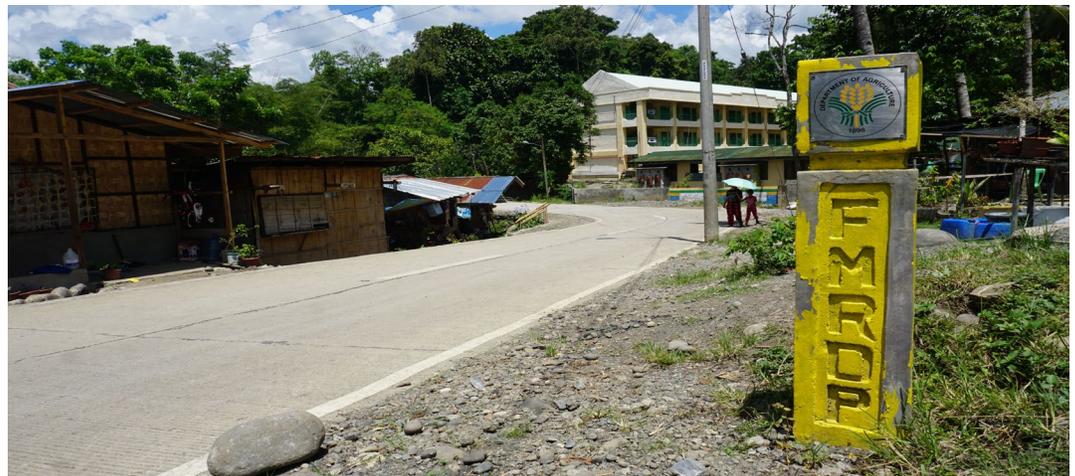


He added that a good rural road network hurries efficient delivery of agricultural farm input and creates an opportunity to supply products to market, thus DA is prioritizing the construction of FMR all over the region.

“With the completeness of the concreting of this road, more basic services from the government will surely follow such as health services, more infrastructure, education, livelihood programs, among others”, he said.

He added that other members of the RCI will surely implement their respective projects in this area in the coming days as the road network promotes peace and order in the community. He however urged the community to be vigilant enough and report any damage to the road and be cooperative to maintain this.

“Government is here to help our farmers with their agricultural needs especially FMR because this is where development, safety, and peace begin”, Monteagudo concluded. ###



Farm-to-market road that connects the agri-production area to the markets

NATIONWIDE TREE GROWING ACTIVITY

By: For. Christian Jebulan, RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

With the theme, “Aksyon para sa Natatanging Mundo,” the Department of Environment & Natural Resources spearheaded the simultaneous nationwide Tree Growing activity last June 8, 2022, in celebration of the Philippine Environment Month.

For Northern Mindanao, the Mangrove area in Brgy. Panggasihan, Gingoog City is one of the areas identified. It is part of the Mt. Balatukan Range Convergence Area and within the jurisdiction of DENR-CENRO Gingoog City which is headed by CENRO Roel G. Dahonog.

“Aksyon para sa Natatanging Mundo”

A total of 2000 nipa palm seedlings and 20 tree species (Baok-Baok and Talisay) seedlings were planted within the 1-hectare planting site. This activity was attended by various government organizations such as DENR-CENRO Gingoog, PNP, LGU Gingoog, BLGU Panggasihan, and private and non-government organizations with a total of 105 participants. ###



Rey Cristobal poses with his newly purchased motor diesel engine as a result of being member of the BCUF A

The Barangay Cuyapiao Upland Farmers Association (BCUF A) in the municipality of Patnongon, province of Antique is among the People’s Organization (POs) that benefited from the ENGP. The thirty (30) PO members (18 male and 12 female) led by their PO President Mr. Tranquilino Pillado, Jr., were grateful for the projects they received which eventually changed their way of life. Moreover, it became a venue that led them in taking action to protect the environment. Their sense of ownership as PO members drove them to focus on the implementation of ENGP in CY 2017, 2018, and 2021 with an area of 152 hectares planted with indigenous and bamboo species.



The Mangrove planting site in Brgy Panggasihan, Gingoog City

E-NGP: TOUCHING LIVES OF THE UPLAND COMMUNITIES

By: RCI TWG Western Visayas

Touching an individual’s life doesn’t only affect a person or two. It always has a chain reaction for the better.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 6, extended various services through its Enhanced National Greening Program (ENGP), Community Based Forest Management (CBFM), and issuance of Free Patents to the beneficiaries as part of the Central Antique Local Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development. Through this initiative, big lifts in the growth of the people in the five municipalities were notable since it was launched in the year 2010.



Through the ENGP Project, Melody Cristobal purchased a second-hand motor vehicle and farm inputs



The 50-hectares Bamboo Plantation of Brgy. Cuyapiao Upland Farmers Association located at Sitio Bongbongan, Cuyapiao, Patnongon, Antique

For CY 2021, the PO is a recipient of a 50-hectare Bamboo Plantation, with a project contract cost of One Million Two Hundred Eighty-Two Thousand Pesos (Php 1,282,000.00). The plantation project benefited a total of eighteen (18) families, with an average of two (2) members per family involve. These plantations are under maintenance and protection for FY 2022.

According to the PO members, having involved in a project like the ENGP is an opportunity for them to show that the government entrusted them to develop and take part in restoring and protecting the forest. They also benefited from the income of the Organization in all phases of the project, from nursery establishment, plantation establishment and maintenance, and protection activity

for three years of implementation. Noteworthy to mention, are the impacts of the project on the lives of PO members. They were able to send their children to school and during the COVID 19 pandemic, they were able to buy cell phones for their children to be used during their online classes. Others were able to buy appliances, farm inputs, and machinery, improved and/or built their houses, invested in motorcycles (habal-habal) as livelihood, and livestock raising as additional income. Other members were also happy to share that out of the income from the project, they were able to celebrate their birthdays and other special occasions.



Through the ENGP Project, Anny Jean Alagos member of the BCUFA purchased an electric fan, plastic mat, cellphone, and galvanized sheet

The technical support extended by the Forest Extension Officers (FEOs) is not only to monitor the project but also to train them on financial literacy and organizational stability. Continuous Information and Education Campaign (IEC) were conducted to the members and also to the community, to include Gender Sensitivity Training for them to recognize that both men and women have an important role to play in the household, organization, and even in the community level.

After 12 years of the Central Antique Convergence Initiative, the upland communities that benefitted from the programs and services of the government, through the DENR -ENGP have touched the lives of many individuals. The program taught them to work as a team and be responsible stewards to protect their project and source of income, by protecting their community as well.



Helen Gregorio is happy to have their power supply (Anteco) installed being one of the BCUFA member

###

DA BICOL CONTINUES TO PROVIDE INTERVENTIONS TO PILI WATERSHED CONVERGENCE AREA IN SORSOGON

By: Jayson Gonzales, RCI TWG Bicol

The Department of Agriculture Bicol continues to sustain the agricultural needs of the Convergence Area in Pili Watershed located in the municipality of Castilla, Sorsogon.

For the first semester of 2022, DA Bicol distributed 445 packs of assorted vegetable seeds and 829 bags of inbred palay seeds to farmers in barangays Poblacion, Maypangi, La Union, Milagrosa, Libtong, Bagalayag, San Isidro, Monte Carmelo, Canjela, Maracabac, Oras and Dancalan. Barangay San Isidro received two shallow tube wells and a cultivator.

Moreover, 1106 farmers from the said barangays are now registered in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) of which 263 rice farmers received their Php5,000-Rice Farmers Financial Assistance.

According to DA-5 Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations, Dr. Edgar Madrid, these interventions will be a big help to the community as sustenance and a source of livelihood as 2022 will be the last year of implementation of CADP for Pili Watershed in said town.

“The activities and assistance by the Regional Convergence Initiative (RCI) brought changes in the lives of the residents in the CADP areas,” – Castilla Mayor Isagani B. Mendoza

Since 2018, DA Bicol has provided capability-building activities, agricultural machinery, and farm inputs to the 13 communities in coordination with the LGU, Departments of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Interior and Local Government (DILG). ###

ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF INCOME FOR DANCALAN FISHERFOLK

By: Jayson Gonzales, RCI TWG Bicol

The Dancalan fisherfolk in Castilla, Sorsogon will now have an alternative source of livelihood from the abundance of sardines (*Sardinella lemuru*) locally known as “tamban” or “law-law” fish in their area through “tinapa-making”.

According to Barangay Dancalan Councilor for Finance, Delia L. Martinez, fishermen usually discard and throw away their excess catch and are not aware of some processing methods for additional income.

“Malaking tulong sa aming mga kabarangay na mga mangingisda yung seminar tungkol sa pagtintinapa dahil dagdag kita pa sa kanila yung pagtintinapa bukod sa kanilang sariwang dakip ng lawlaw” - Dangcalan Barangay Councilor for Agriculture, Edgar de la Torre



From left: Barangay Dancalan representatives Delia L. Martinez and Edgar de la Torre receive their Smoked Fish Starter Kit from Castilla Mayor Isagani B. Mendoza and Castilla Acting Municipal Agriculturist Manuel Marantal.

The training on tinapa-making was conducted by the provincial government of Sorsogon.

The participants from Dancalan also received a Smoked Fish starter kit which consisted of a Smoked Fish House, a fabricated stainless strainer, a cooking

pan, and 10 smoked wooden trays or “kaping” worth more than Php30,000.00 pesos from the government of Sorsogon also.

“Simula ng maging parte kami ng CADP, maraming blessings at opportunities ang dumating sa aming barangay tulad ng mga pangtanim na galing sa DA, mga pa-seminars at mga tulong na galing sa iba’t ibang grupo at ahensya,” De La Torre said.

Martinez underscored that since 2018, assistance from government agencies and local governments improved the lives of Dancalan residents.

Castilla Mayor Isagani B. Mendoza said that “this intervention will be a big help to the residents of Dancalan, especially since they are still recovering from the pandemic.” It is attributed to the strong partnership and linkage between the local government and government agencies. ###



Castilla Municipal Mayor Isagani B. Mendoza (in red shirt) discusses with Dancalan Barangay Councilor for Agriculture Edgar de la Torre (right), Castilla Acting Municipal Agriculturist Manuel Marantal (left) and Barangay Dancalan Councilor for Finance Delia L. Martinez (2nd to right) regarding the Smoked Fish Starter Kit from the Provincial Government of Sorsogon.

Bayanihan or collective action for a cause is a unique Filipino culture where every member of the community takes part in uplifting the lives of those who are in need. It is considered an instinct or call that moves the community and causes a change.

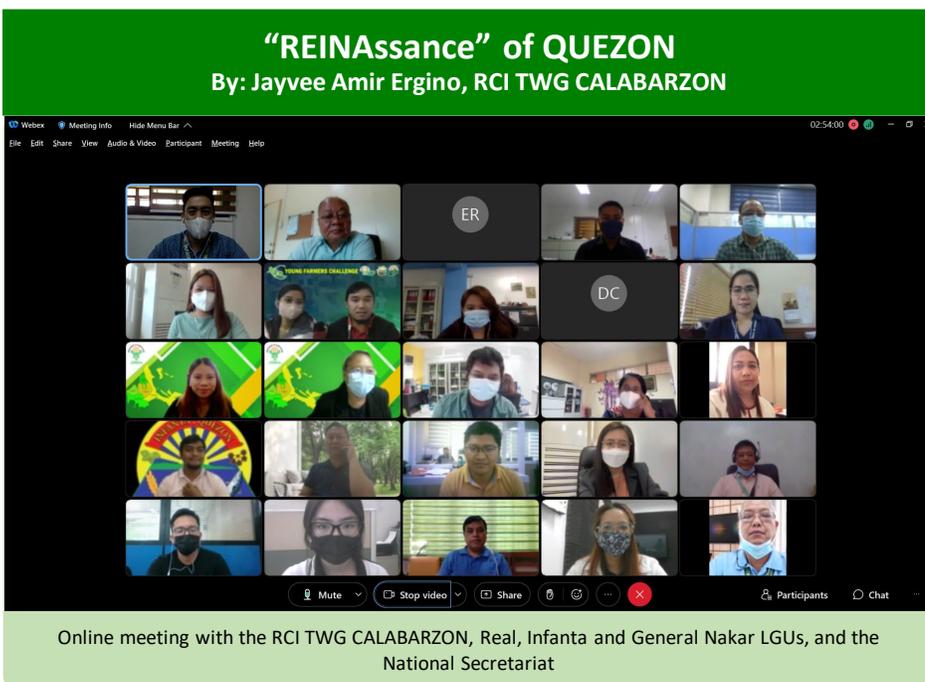
As the government continues to reach and uplift the lives of the Filipinos, the idea of *Bayanihan* is being embraced through the National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD).

In CALABARZON, the Real, Infanta, and General Nakar (REINA) Quezon rural area is being targeted by the Regional Convergence Initiative Technical Working Group (RCI TWG) as a subject for a formulation of a comprehensive sustainable plan and framework ingrained in the convergence of policy, program, and project resources of government institutions.

The REINA area is composed of coastal municipalities located on the eastern Pacific seaboard. Agriculture, fishery, and tourism industry are the three major economic drivers of the area.

The major agricultural and fishery commodities of the REINA area include rice, corn, coconut, fish, and seafood. Diving and leisure fishing activities, on the other hand, boost tourism and attract local and foreign tourists.

With these potentials and as the REINA municipalities are classified as first income class with big land sizes having a large share of the internal revenue



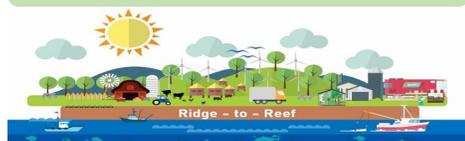
allotment, the REINA area is among the municipalities in the Quezon province with high poverty incidence.

The goal of the CALABARZON RCI TWG for the REINA area is to help the tourism, agriculture, and fishery sectors recover from the effects of COVID-19.

The Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) of the REINA area is being seen as one of the fuels accelerating its economic recovery. The CALABARZON RCI TWG believes that through the CADP, the REINA area has the potential to have a sustained agribusiness, skilled workforce, diversified source of income, protected environment, and developed infrastructures.

The CALABARZON RCI TWG has been making efforts to execute the CADP implementation for the REINA area. Last June 8, 2022, the Department of Agriculture Region IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) initiated the Consultation Meeting for the Creation of Provincial Convergence Initiative Technical Working Group that aims to re-orient the members of the CALABARZON RCI-SRD (DA, DAR, DENR, DILG, Quezon Provincial Government, and LGUs of REINA area) on the REINA Strategic Economic Framework Plan, concept, advantages, and guidelines of implementing the program.

It is expected that in the next coming months, the CALABARZON RCI TWG will conduct the Inter-Agency Provincial Orientation that will fast-track the developments of the plan toward the rebirth of the REINA Quezon area. ###



TECHNO-DEMO HELPS FARMERS IN SAN ISIDRO

By: Jayson Gonzales, RCI TWG Bicol

Two farmers in barangay San Isidro, Castilla, Sorsogon received 200 pieces of grafted and inarched pili for their technology-demonstration area from the Bicol University as part of their “Accelerated R&D Program for Capacity Building of Research and Development Institutions and Industrial Competitiveness: Niche Centers in the Regions for R&D (NICER) Program: Pili Research and Development (R&D) Center” and funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

Farmer Gerardo Macedonio, 54 of Barangay San Isidro and president of the Samahan ng mga Magsasaka sa San Isidro, he already planted the 50 grafted pili seedlings in his 1.2-ha farm.

Agriculturist Jeric Hagos of Hill-up Crops Farm in the same barangay already planted the grafted pili seedlings and is still waiting for the inarched seedlings from BU.

Castilla Acting Municipal Agriculturist, Manuel Marantal, urged the farmers to develop their pili trees. He assured them that his office will continue to provide technical assistance to improve their farming.

Hagos underscored that this intervention will prepare their farms to address the increasing demand for pili, especially in the world market.

Thus, assistance and support from the RCI TWG Bicol shall be given to the beneficiaries even after the completion of its CADP according to the RCI TWG Focal Person Edgar Madrid of DA.###



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The NCI-SRD Digest is a semi-annual newsletter of the NCI-SRD. It is an avenue to present the success stories and accomplishments of the different Regional Convergence Initiative Technical Working Group (RCI TWG) to the general public.



CONVERGENCE WORKS!