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# DIGEST

NATIONAL CONVERGENCE INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT (NCI-SRD)



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# DAVAO CACAO OF BABALI COOP

By: Feliz Amanda C. Lim, RCI TWG Davao



Members of the BABALI Farmers Marketing Cooperative in their bearing cacao farm in Barangay Salaysay, Marilog District, Davao City. | Photo by: RCI TWG Davao

The Philippine cacao industry continues to thrive and flourish in rural communities despite facing several challenges as exemplified by the BABALI Farmers Marketing Cooperative in Sitio Banus, Ballah, and Licosan, Barangay Salaysay, Marilog District, Davao City.

The cooperative is found within an existing convergence area in Davao which is the Suawan-Kulafu Subwatershed Convergence Area. It is also under the Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) Project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which promotes social justice and sustainability of resources.

The BABALI Farmers Marketing Cooperative currently oversees 1,600 hectares, with 665 hectares dedicated to agroforestry and 461 hectares for the cultivation of cacao, corn, coffee, rambutan, lanzones, and vegetables. The remaining land areas are reserved for pasture.

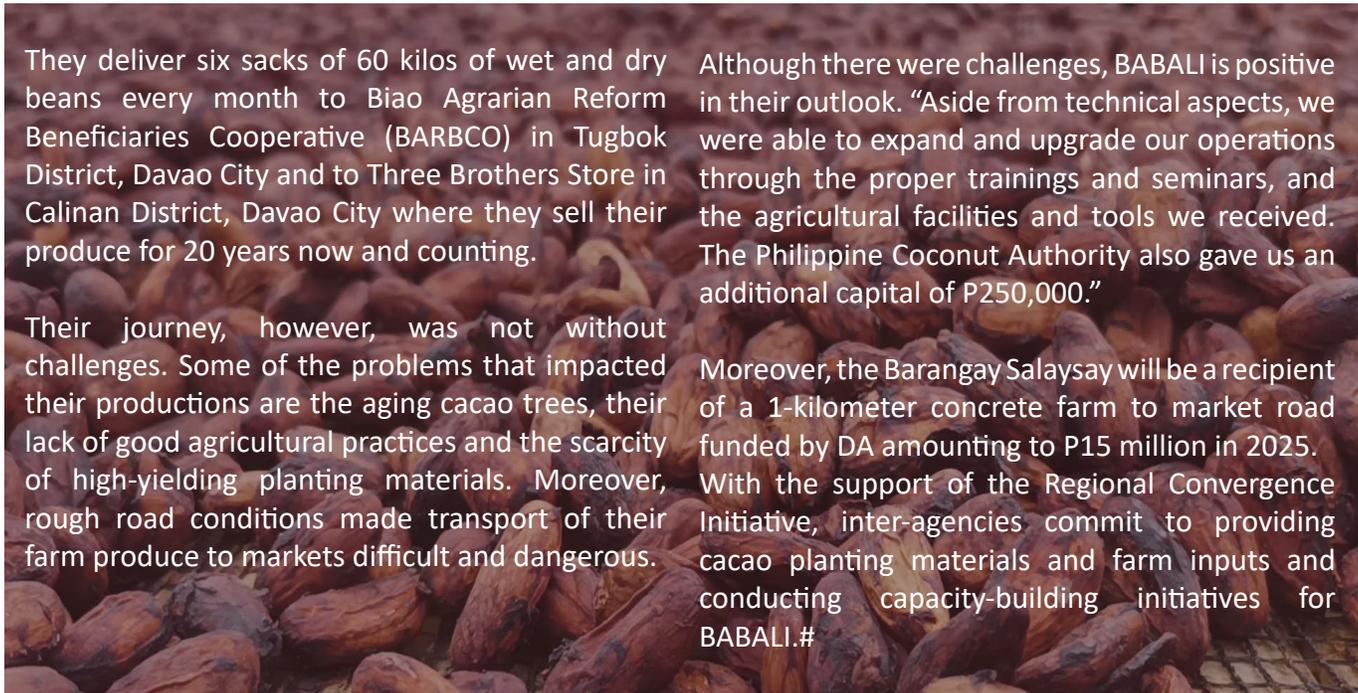
Conceptualized in 1998 and officially registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) in 2018, this cooperative is run by a total of 255 members with a starting capital of P11,000, growing their assets to P1.85 million in 2024.

BABALI Secretary Rutchell Suagan said that with the support of DENR, DA, and City Agriculturist's Office in Davao, the cooperative was able to transform their idle land into a productive one, opening opportunities for them to have a sustainable livelihood and income from their own farm products.

In terms of farming, Davao Region and Marilog District in particular have the best climate for cacao farming, making it a prime spot for cacao.

During peak season, BABALI harvests 14,400 tons of wet beans and 8,640 tons of dry beans annually. They sell it at P30 per kilo for wet beans and P80 per kilo for dry beans.

*CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE...*



They deliver six sacks of 60 kilos of wet and dry beans every month to Biao Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative (BARBCO) in Tugbok District, Davao City and to Three Brothers Store in Calinan District, Davao City where they sell their produce for 20 years now and counting.

Their journey, however, was not without challenges. Some of the problems that impacted their productions are the aging cacao trees, their lack of good agricultural practices and the scarcity of high-yielding planting materials. Moreover, rough road conditions made transport of their farm produce to markets difficult and dangerous.

Although there were challenges, BABALI is positive in their outlook. "Aside from technical aspects, we were able to expand and upgrade our operations through the proper trainings and seminars, and the agricultural facilities and tools we received. The Philippine Coconut Authority also gave us an additional capital of P250,000."

Moreover, the Barangay Salaysay will be a recipient of a 1-kilometer concrete farm to market road funded by DA amounting to P15 million in 2025. With the support of the Regional Convergence Initiative, inter-agencies commit to providing cacao planting materials and farm inputs and conducting capacity-building initiatives for BABALI.#

## FLOWING PROSPERITY: THE WATER LEGACY OF LALIFAMCO

By: Elinor Judyfind D. Abragan, RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

**“ Hinaut unta nga mahatagan og pagtagad ang among mga hangyo nga mahimong mas mulahutay pa ang among water project. ”**

*(Sana mabigyan ng pansin ang aming mga pakiusap na maging mas maipagpatuloy ang aming water project.)*

*Efren Villacrusis, Chairperson, LaLiFaMCo*

The La Libertad Farmers Cooperative (LaLiFaMCo) is an emerging catalyst for change striving to help improve the quality of life of its Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries belonging to LABAN-PTT Agrarian Reform Communities through increased income, savings, investments, productivity, and purchasing power.

LaLiFaMCo is an Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization (ARBO) registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) on September 28, 2006. Found in the picturesque landscapes of Barangay La Libertad, Municipality of Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte, it serves as a primary Agricultural Multi-Purpose Cooperative.



Mr. Efren Villacrusis tests the water flow in one of the tap stands. | Photo by: RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE...

After several years of serious dedication, and practice of accountability and transparency in management, the ARBOs' conservative management hurdled several challenges.

LaLiFaMCo has ventured into various enterprises, including the management of fish cages in the barangay's man-made lake, equipment rentals, lending services, operation of a vulcanizing shop, copra and charcoal trading, and a Feeding Program partnership with the National Nutrition Council (NNC).

The sound financial and management system capability makes it an accredited Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) partner, opening wider business opportunities for the ARBO as it can now bid on government transactions.

Chairperson Efren Villacrusis narrates the remarkable LaLiFaMCo journey of resilience and empowerment. Most notable is the dedication of the cooperative to water management.

Taking on the responsibility of managing the potable water system, LaLiFaMCo recognized the vital importance of this resource to their community's well-being. Overcoming challenges of equipment maintenance and collection, the cooperative transformed the water system from serving one barangay to expanding to neighboring areas.



Women of Barangay La Libertad enjoy the cool and refreshing drink on a hot day. | Photo by: RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

From the original seven tap stands of a Level II water system in one barangay in 2017, it now boasts 186 tap stands of a Semi Level III system, serving more clients presently in two barangays. Their commitment to social responsibility is evident in their provision of free water to essential community facilities and original families near the water source.

Chairperson Villacrusis is presently preparing a proposal to fund the water project under a Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP). The Municipality of Kapatagan is part of a strategic cluster Mt. Inayawan - Illana Bay Cluster, which also includes the municipalities of Sultan Naga Dimaporo, Sapad and Nunungan.

“Hinaut unta nga mahatagan og pagtagad ang among mga hangyo nga mahimong mas mulahutay pa ang among water project. (Sana mabigyan ng pansin ang among mga pakiusap na maging mas maipagpatuloy ang among water project.)” Chairperson Villacrusis said.

With CADP support, LaLiFaMCo will receive assistance in acquiring modern water management technologies and equipment to improve efficiency and reduce maintenance costs. This is a critical aspect for a cooperative managing a growing water network.

LaLiFaMCo has not only ensured access to clean water but also fostered a culture of sustainability and empowerment. As their story inspires hope and ignites change, LaLiFaMCo's water legacy continues to flow, enriching lives and shaping the future of Lanao del Norte. #



LaLiFaMCo BOD Members and plumbers pose at the vicinity of the Potable Water System they managed since 2017. | Photo by: RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

# NCI-SRD APPROVES 12 ILOCOS CONVERGENCE AREAS IN A CEREMONIAL SIGNING OF RESOLUTION

By: RCI TWG Ilocos



Ceremonial signing held last October 16, 2024 at BSWM Convention Hall | Photo by: DA AFID

The Department of Agriculture, through the National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD), and in partnership with its regional counterparts in the Ilocos Region, is one step closer to realizing its goals and objectives for convergence.

Proponents convened to witness the Ceremonial Signing at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management Convention Hall in Diliman, Quezon City on October 16, 2024, for the 12 proposed convergence areas. The resolution approved the identified cities and municipalities as convergence areas and will initiate the crafting of the Convergence Area Development Plans (CADP), a five-year plan incorporating joint interventions between and among partner agencies and the Local Government Units (LGU).

The signing was held with the presence of Local Chief Executives (LCE) and other representatives including partner agencies from DAR, DENR, and DILG. The ceremonial signing became an avenue to bolster the commitment of both the LGU and national agencies to work together in joint planning, budgeting, implementing, monitoring and

evaluating for the prospective CADP of the 12 convergence sites in the Ilocos Region.

NCI-SRD Permanent Alternate Head of the National Steering Committee (NSC) and the DA Undersecretary for Operations, Agri-Fisheries, Mechanization and Rural Credit, Engr. Roger Navarro delivered a message during the event and lauded the efforts of the Regional Convergence Initiative Technical Working Group (RCI TWG) together with the municipal and city proponents. Engr. Navarro highlighted the show of commitment and support, notably in the preparation of documentary requirements as pre-requisites in the approval of their respective CADP.

DA OIC-Regional Executive Director, Dr. John Pascual acknowledged in his message the relevance of commitments and collaborations among the partner agencies, especially partner municipalities and cities in the implementation of proposed convergence development programs and projects. Increased agri-fishery performance is cited as contributory to sustainable livelihood for farmers and fishers.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...*

# LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS UNITE TO REVITALIZE ABORLAN RIVER WATERSHED

By: RCI TWG MIMAROPA

Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, - A significant step towards sustainable rural development in the Aborlan River Watershed was achieved recently with the convening of the Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) Planning Workshop. The event brought together local stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and community members, to collaborate on the development of a comprehensive CADP.

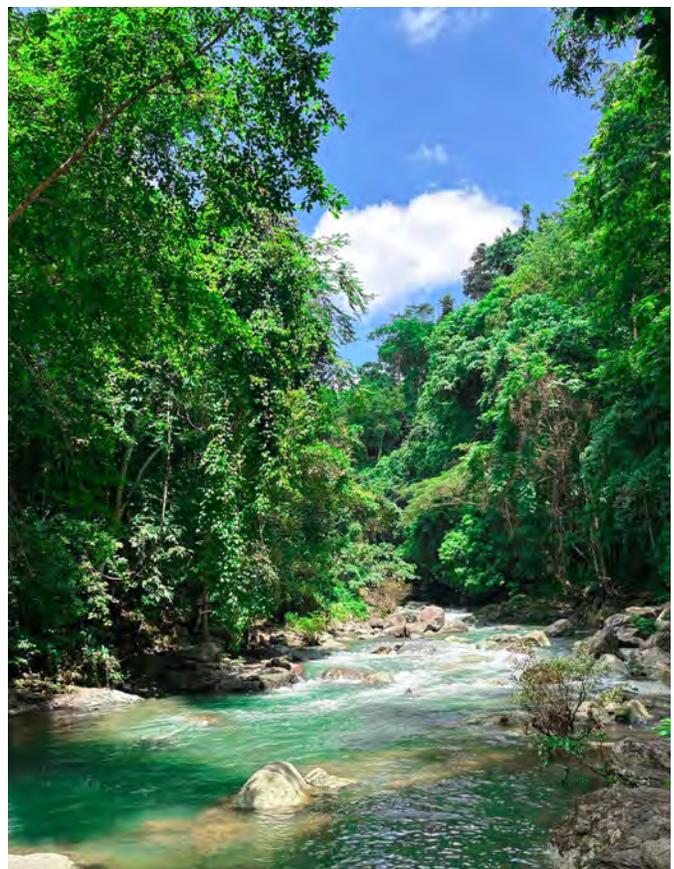
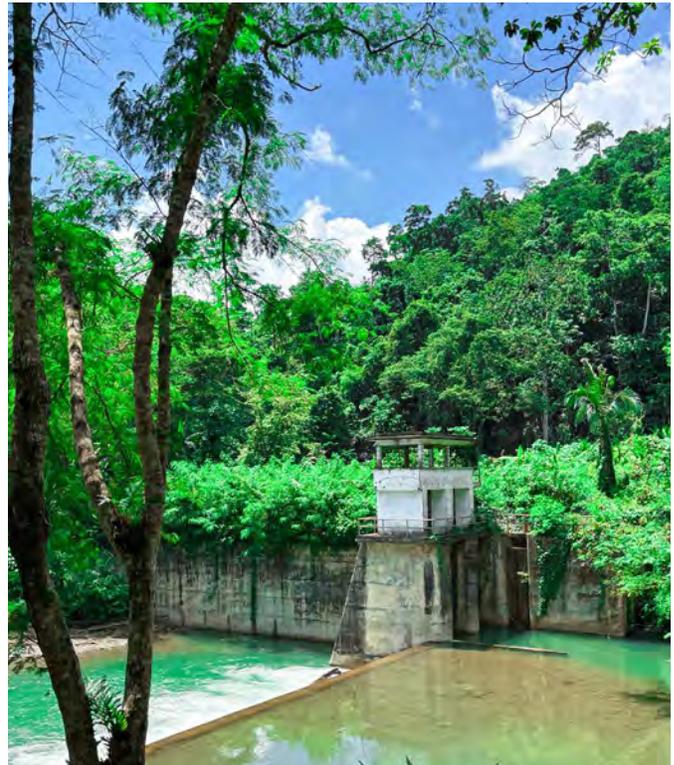
The workshop focused on the implementation of the National Convergence Initiative - Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD), a government strategy aimed at addressing the fragmented delivery of rural development services. By adopting a ridge-to-reef approach, the NCI-SRD seeks to promote holistic and sustainable management of resources within watershed and major river basin areas.

A key component of the workshop was the introduction of the CADP Manual of Operations (MOP), a comprehensive guide for developing and implementing CADPs. The MOP outlines a systematic approach to rural development, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder participation, data-driven decision-making, and effective implementation.

Participants engaged in various activities, including the development of the (1) Convergence Area Profile (CAP), which consolidates the area's demographics, socio-economic status, and environmental resources, (2) CAP Analysis, which analyzes the profile and identify key issues and opportunities for development, and (3) CADP Development Framework, which outlines the strategies, interventions, and action plans to achieve the identified goals.

To gain a deeper understanding of the local context, participants conducted a site visit to the Aborlan River. This firsthand experience allowed them to observe the river's ecosystem, interact with local communities, and assess the existing infrastructure.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 10...**



Aborlan River Watershed | Photos by: Marineh Ambrosio, National Secretariat

# NORMIN CONVERGENCE INITIATIVE BARES PLANS FOR RESOURCE CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE DEV'T IN PANGANTUCAN DURING MULETA CADP LAUNCH

By: Gabriel D. Andres & Bobby Jay C. Edpan,  
RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

PANGANTUCAN, BUKIDNON — Acting on a shared interest for advancing resource conservation and sustainable development, the Department of Agriculture in Northern Mindanao (DA-10) led the launch of the Muleta Watershed Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) on August 30, 2024 in Barangay Pigtauranan.

Spearheaded by the Regional Convergence Initiative - Technical Working Group (RCI TWG), comprising the DAR, DENR, DILG, and the DA as lead convenor, with the Local Government Unit of Pangantucan, the event bared the 2023 to 2027 development plan for the protection, rehabilitation, and development of the Muleta Watershed, which spans a total of 21,630 hectares and encompasses 11 barangays in Pangantucan town.

Director Karen Kristine A. Roscom, PhD, who leads the National Secretariat of the National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD), lauded the collaboration of the RCI member-agencies and the local government toward the shared aspiration for sustainable development in the area.

“By aligning the efforts and resources of various stakeholders, we are creating synergies that enhance our impact,” Roscom said.

The CADP, approved last March 13, 2024 by the NCI-SRD, outlines a range of strategies and actions that address critical environmental, social, and developmental concerns inherent to the Muleta Watershed, eyeing to ultimately benefit some 33,007 residents in the area.



DA10 RTD Carlota Madriaga delivered her message of support  
| Photo by: Wendy Arceo, National Secretariat

For areas classified under the watershed’s production zone, the CADP proposed interventions for agricultural and agri-industrial development includes the construction of farm-to-market roads, rehabilitation of irrigation systems, tourism development, and the expansion of the watershed’s commercial area.

Meanwhile, the CADP outlines actions to ensure the conservation and rehabilitation of the watershed’s protection zone, covering the establishment of forest buffers, advancing eco-tourism development, climate change mitigation, and ensuring the protection and proper utilization of said water source.

In a message of commitment for the convergence effort, DA-10 Regional Technical Director for Operations Carlota S. Madriaga assured that the DA remains steadfast in supporting local agricultural development.

Accordingly, DA-10 has committed a total budget of PhP86.47-million to the municipality of Pangantucan for farm machinery, infrastructure, livelihood projects, production support, and training services.

*CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE...*



Muleta CADP Launching held last August 30, 2024 at Barangay Pigtauranan | Photo by: Gabriel D. Andres, RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

“By working together, we can achieve far more than we could alone,” she said, encouraging a unified approach to ensure the success of the convergence efforts.

Meanwhile, representing Bukidnon Governor Rogelio Neil P. Roque, Acting Provincial Agriculturist Jacqueline Julia A. Lagamon expressed the provincial government’s support for the CADP, citing the passage of SP Resolution No. 2024-4032, adopting the Provincial Development Council’s support and approval for the said convergence effort.

Similarly, Pangantucan mayor Miguel A. Silva, Jr. highlighted the current thrusts of the local government for agricultural development and job generation, which he said directly benefits from the strategies and actions per the CADP.

The event concluded with a signing of the Memorandum of Agreement by member-agencies of the RCI in Northern Mindanao, followed by a signing of a Pledge of Support joined by various stakeholders present, reaffirming their commitment to the sustainable and inclusive development of the Muleta Watershed Convergence Area.#



Muleta CADP MOA signing of DA-DAR-DENR-DILG and LGU | Photo by: Gabriel D. Andres, RCI TWG Northern Mindanao

A manifesto of support was signed by the attendees as a show of support in the realization of convergence interventions in the convergence areas. The signing was led by DA Usec. Navarro, Atty. Jonas Leones represented by Ms. Llarena Mojica, DILG Marlo Iringan, and DA-BSWM Dir. Gina Nilo. The LCEs and representatives of several offices under the four agencies also joined in the signing of the manifesto.

The 12 convergence sites approved are: Dur-Asen Vintaren in Piddig and Dur-As Madongan in Ilocos Norte; the Sinait River, Bagnos Cabugao, Caoplasan and Abra River Basin in Sinait and Cabugao, Ilocos Sur, the Western Block of Mangatarem Cluster and Agro-Ecotourism of Mt. Balungao in Pangasinan, Saracat Watershed in San Juan, Baroro Watershed in Bacnotan and PaPCor in Santol, La Union.

This marks the Ilocos Region as the region with the most number of convergence sites proposed and approved from among the 15 regions in the country. Facilitation, management and coordination for the creation and approval of the 12 convergence sites was made possible by the RCI-TWG led by its Chairperson, OIC-RED John Pascual of DA Ilocos Region, the Focal Person, Regional Technical Director for Operations, Engr. Dennis Tactac, and the NCI-SRD Secretariat led by Dir. Karen Roscom.

Together with the regional partner agencies from DAR, DENR, and DILG, convergence works. #



DA Undersecretary Roger V. Navarro delivered his message of support.



Signing of the Manifesto of Support



Photos by: DA AFID

# DA BICOL CONVENES RCI-TWG BICOL TO COMPLEMENT INTERVENTIONS IN CONVERGENCE AREAS

By: Jayson M. Gonzales, RCI TWG Bicol

The Department of Agriculture (DA) of Bicol convened the member-agencies of the Regional Convergence Initiative Technical Working Group (RCI-TWG) on October 15, 2024 in San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur to strengthen the implementation of the existing convergence area in Castilla, Sorsogon and provide update on the application of the Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) for the Talisay Watershed in Talisay, Camarines Norte.

DA Bicol OIC-Regional Technical Director (RTD) for Research and Regulations Lorenzo Alvina urged the agencies to integrate their programs and interventions to the two convergence areas and should provide initiatives that had a strong impact on the watershed and the communities.

DA Bicol Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) for Albay and Sorsogon and RCI Focal Person Florentino Ubalde Jr. disclosed that the CADP-Pili Watershed in Castilla, Sorsogon was extended until 2028 and was recently renamed as Pili-Dulangan Watershed.

He added that the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) program are providing assistance to the Samahan ng mga Magsasaka ng



Maria Christina Campita on the discussion of the CADP Manual of Operations | Photo by: Annielyn Baleza, RCI TWG Bicol

Monte Carmelo in Brgy. Monte Carmelo; San Isidro Vegetable Farmers Association in Brgy. San Isidro in Castilla Sorsogon.

“Ang National Convergence Initiative po is not a program, it is just strategy. Lahat attributions ng mga government agencies,” he said.

DA Bicol Research Division Chief and Head Secretariat of the RCI-TWG Dr. Maria Christina Campita discussed the RCI-TWG on the Manual of Operations for the Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) for the Talisay Watershed in Talisay, Camarines Norte.

RCI-TWG is composed of four government agencies--- DA, Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). RCI uses the ridge-to-reef approach in watershed and major river basin management and rehabilitation.#



Representatives from RCI TWG Bicol | Photo by: Annielyn Baleza, RCI TWG Bicol



Field visit of the Aborlan River Watershed | Photo by: RCI TWG MIMAROPA

**Local stakeholders to revitalize Aborlan River Watershed...from PAGE 5**

By developing a comprehensive CADP, stakeholders aim to address the challenges facing the Aborlan River Watershed, such as deforestation, soil erosion, and water pollution. The plan will prioritize sustainable agriculture, fisheries, and forestry practices, while also promoting community-based initiatives and ecosystem restoration.

Through collaborative efforts and effective implementation of the CADP, it is hoped that the Aborlan River Watershed will become a model for sustainable rural development in the Philippines. #



**THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP**

serve as the **advisory and recommendatory body** of the National Steering Committee on matters related to the implementation of the NCI-SRD

composed of the Deputy National Focal Person and the Chairpersons of the **four (4) Component Working Groups**



Get to know the functions of the Component Working Groups on our next issue!

# LAUNCHING OF THE MAG-ASAWANG TUBIG WATERSHED CONVERGENCE AREA CADP 2024-2028

By: Denice Joelle Benosa, RCI TWG MIMAROPA



Signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the implementation of the CADP for 2024-2028. | Photo by: Jacqueline Madrigal RCI TWG MIMAROPA

The National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) has recently launched the Mag-Asawang Tubig Watershed Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) 2024-2028 for four (4) barangays in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro, namely, Barangay Alcate, Barangay Villa Cerveza, Barangay Bagong Buhay, and Barangay Loyal.

The CADP is one of the outputs of the NCI-SRD which intends to incorporate a list of interventions which shall be implemented by the four (4) agencies within an identified convergence area to achieve rural development. It specifies joint efforts to strengthen, enhance, or harness the capacity of farmers, fisherfolk, and indigenous people.

In a message by DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr., which was delivered by DA OIC-Regional Technical Director (RTD) for Research and Regulations Dr. Nanette Rosales, it was mentioned that there are ongoing projects for farmers which includes the distribution of farm machineries, planting materials, conduct of capacity building activities, strengthening of coordination between farmers and the local government units (LGU), assessment of farm areas, and technical assistance to marketing of agricultural products.

DA Secretary Laurel gave his word that the DA is capable of addressing the needs in the convergence area and providing the necessary farm materials and equipment.

“It is my hope that the CADP will become an inspiration to us to share our resources for the development and protection of our environment. Let us look at nature for its beauty and bounty, especially the Mag-Asawang Tubig River Basin, and find the motivation to maintain our obligation to protect the area.” expressed Secretary Laurel.

After the messages, the representatives signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and Manifesto of Support for the implementation of the Mag-Asawang Tubig Convergence Area. This is followed by a ceremonial awarding of initial interventions for the support of four (4) local farmer organizations in the convergence area. Four (4) hand tractors and four (4) pump and engine sets were distributed. Certificates of Land Ownership were also distributed by DAR as a form of support.

The event was attended by DA OIC-RTD Dr. Nanette Rosales, DAR Regional Director Atty. Marvin Bernal, DAR Special Assistant for SSO Randy Forgoza, DENR Assistant Secretary Policy, Planning and Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Dr. Noralene Uy, DILG Division Chief Zaldy Masangkay, Victoria Municipal Mayor Joselito Malabanan, Provincial Administrator Dr. Hubbert Dolor, and other representatives from the municipal government, local chief executives from the barangay, and members of farmers’ associations and indigenous groups. #

# LGU TALISAY, CAMARINES NORTE IMPLEMENTS FY 2023 SBDP AND FALGU PROJECTS WORTH PHP 31.6 MILLION

By: Kaiser Josh V. Loñosa, RCI TWG BICOL



*Concreting of farm-to-market road and provision of Renewable Energy-Based Electrification in Talisay, Camarines Norte |  
Photos by: RCI TWG Bicol*

The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Talisay, Camarines Norte, has made significant strides in advancing community development by implementing four key infrastructure projects under the Fiscal Year 2023 Support to Barangay Development Program (SBDP) and the Local Government Support Fund – Financial Assistance to Local Government Units (LGSF-FALGU).

These initiatives, which are collectively funded by a national allocation totaling Php 31,606,882.17, aim to enhance road connectivity and provide renewable energy solutions to the municipality's rural areas, significantly improving the lives of residents.

Notably, the completed projects include the Construction of Farm-to-Market Roads in Purok 2 and 3 in Barangay Caawigan, which span a total length of 494.50 linear meters, and the Provision of Renewable Energy-Based Electrification, which installed 36 units of power streetlights in the same barangay.

These initiatives were completed in the first quarter of 2024, providing the community with better infrastructure and enhanced energy access.

Additionally, the Construction of a 560-linear meter Farm-to-Market Road in Barangay San Jose is currently under progress, with 48% of the project's physical work already completed.

These projects are expected to directly benefit 7,859 individuals across Talisay, including residents of neighboring barangays, by providing them with safer, more accessible roads and reliable street lighting.

In 2025, the Municipality of Talisay eyes the development of their Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP). The CADP will contain identified interventions for rural development to be bolstered with the support of the NCI-SRD DA, DAR, DENR, and DILG. With the implementation of the CADP, long-term growth and prosperity can be achieved.

Overall, the completion of local development projects serves as significant milestones for the LGU of Talisay, as they pave the way for sustainable development, enhanced quality of life, and greater opportunities for the community. #



# CONVERGENCE WORKS!

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## CONVERGENCE STRATEGY

complementation of efforts between and among the DA, DAR, DENR, DILG and other NGAs, academe and organizations



## ABOUT THE COVER



Members of the BABALI Farmers Marketing Cooperative in their cacao bearing farm in Barangay Salaysay, Marilog District, Davao City | Photo by RCI TWG Davao

# PASS THE NATIONAL CONVERGENCE STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT (NCS-SRD) BILL



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The NCI-SRD Digest is the official newsletter of the NCI-SRD and is published semi-annually. It features the initiatives of the Regional Convergence Initiative Technical Working Group (RCI TWG) in their respective convergence areas.



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