



CACAOmustahan

Regular bulletin for the Sustainable Farming in Tropical Asian Landscapes in the Philippines

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💡 Cacaohibalo (Cacao knowledge)

Multi-sectoral involvement, necessary for sustainable cocoa industry in the Philippines

The Philippines still has a long way to go in terms of achieving its Cacao Challenge of producing two kilograms of cacao per tree per year by 2022. According to 2019 data from the Philippine Department of Agriculture, the average production in the country is still at one-half to one kilogram per tree per year.

In a policy and regulation review conducted by the Sustainable Farming in Tropical Asian Landscapes (SFITAL) Team in the Philippines, it was argued that multi-stakeholder involvement is necessary for smallholders to reach the target production level.

"For smallholders to reach production level at an aggregate for this niche market, it requires intensification of investments from all sides," says the report.

This policy review found that the different aspects of sustainable cacao production are still covered by different policies and agencies.

However, it was also noted in the review that there had been

ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation of different government agencies toward sustainable cacao production. These include the National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development which recently established a coordination mechanism across government agencies to develop high value crop industries, including cacao. Moreover, investment guides being implemented by the Department of Agriculture also integrates inter-agency cooperation in its high value crop program.

Locally, in Davao de Oro, the Provincial Governor recently signed the Executive Order creating the SFITAL Local Planning Team last March 2022. This includes representatives from planning, environment, and agricultural offices of the Provincial and Municipal Local Governments. This Team was organized to ensure a multi-stakeholder strategy in developing a roadmap for sustainable cacao production in the province. 🌿



The SFITAL Philippines Team met with representatives from the Provincial Government of Davao de Oro to orient them on the then proposed Executive Order for the creation of the Local Planning Team.

💬 Bag-ong sugilanon (New stories)



Eyes on the prize: making sustainable farming with cacao attractive to farmers in the Philippines

Technical knowledge and sufficient inputs are important to encourage farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices. But is it enough? Researchers say, not always.

This blog presents some of the main findings from the focus group discussion with cooperatives and farmers' organizations involved in cacao production and processing. This details ways to make sustainable cacao farming more attractive for them, despite the trade-offs.

Read more [here](#).



After the storm: sustaining cacao's development momentum in Davao de Oro, Philippines

Cacao farmers need more help if they are to meet targets in the face of natural disasters.

This blog tells the story of how cacao became a means for Davao de Oro to build back after the destruction of Typhoon Pablo, and how the development momentum of the industry needs to be strengthened. This summarizes some of the observations the Team had during their first field visit in the site last February 2022.

Read more [here](#).

👤 Atong mga higala (Our friends)



Maria Teresa L. Guzman
San Isidro, Nabunturan

A farmer-scientist on banana, Maria Teresa Lanaja or Tere, as her peers call her, tried to venture into cacao

growing after super typhoon Pablo cleared her land. She started with 500 hills of cacao and now have over a thousand, integrated with banana and coconut. She sells dry and fermented beans to middlemen and develop some of the harvest into tablea.



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Atong mga higala (cont.)

As the current breadwinner of her family, raising two kids and taking care of her husband who recently got sick, integrating cacao into her farm undeniably helped her,

"If I didn't practice integrated farming, we will not be able to survive," she said.

However, she admitted that it is not really just rainbows and butterflies. Recently, she has been discouraged because of the quality standards of beans that they cannot meet. Not

being able to meet these standards means lower prices, thus lower income. In fact, she was already in the verge of cutting down her cacao trees.

But when she was interviewed for a component of SFITAL, she had a glimpse of hope, that maybe, there is still a future for the Province's cacao industry. So she did not only decide to not cut her trees, she was even encouraged to buy around a thousand more hills of cacao to plant. 🌿



Gikan sa yuta (From the ground)

After over a year of virtual meetings, the SFITAL Team in the Philippines was finally able to visit Davao de Oro last 14-24 February 2022 to gather relevant information and further introduce the Project to partners on the ground.



The SFITAL Philippines Team met with partners from Kennemer Foods International, led by Project Manager Jonna Bickel.



They also visited the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Davao de Oro, led by OIC Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Rita Fe Gunn.



The team likewise met with instructors from the Davao de Oro State College - Agriculture Department in Maragusan, a potential partner from the academe.



The Team also met with DTI RAPID Team in DTI Davao de Oro, led by Provincial Director Atty. Lucky Siegfried Ballegue.

The SFITAL Team also paid courtesy visits to the Municipal Local Governments in Davao de Oro. They met with Mayors of several municipalities, as well as the agriculture, environment, and planning officers.



Nabunturan



Maco



New Bataan



Laak



Monkayo



Compostela



Pantukan



Maragusan

Likewise, they had the chance to converse with cacao farmers, farmers' organizations and cooperatives from Nabunturan, Maco, and New Bataan, and gather relevant information from them for some of the project deliverables.



Farmers of San Isidro, Nabunturan



Dumlan Association of Cacao Farmers



Comval Farmers' Multipurpose Cooperative



Furthermore, they were able to visit some of the cacao-based agroforestry farms in Nabunturan and Maco. This allowed the Team to see firsthand some of the issues mentioned by the farmers and technicians. 🌿