

RICE MILLS, VCO FACILITY, SOLAR DRYER PUT UP IN WAHIG INABANGA WATERSHED, BOHOL, UPLIFTING LIVELIHOOD OF POOREST UPLAND DWELLERS

Posted by [Raffy Rico](#) | Aug 31, 2021 |

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At least two rice mills, a virgin coconut oil facility, and a multi-commodity solar dryer have been put up in the Wahig Inabanga River Basin in Bohol, uplifting the livelihood among Philippines' poorest upland communities.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has put up the rice mills as part of a project protecting the watershed around Wahig Inabanga River.

Water Inabanga is the largest and most important river in Region 7 (Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental, Siquijor). It is recognized as a watershed reservation under Proclamation No. 468.

It has a huge potential source of water for agricultural, commercial, industrial, and household uses. The National Irrigation Administration has constructed a dam to provide irrigation to about 5,000 hectares of agricultural land in four valley towns here (Sierra Bullones, Pilar, Dagohoy, and San Miguel).

The dam also supplies the domestic water needs of 637,097 households.

The rice mills are now managed by the people's organization (PO) of DAFA and MVEGEGRO (Matinao Vegetable Growers Association).

A separate all-weather dryer facility has been put up for the KUFFARD (Kauswagan United Farmers for Forest and Agro-Forest Resources Development) and the multi-commodity solar tunnel dryer for COMASFARMA (Confraternity of Mayana Small Farmers).

Since these facilities have been constructed, around 2,700 beneficiaries have enjoyed their production of nearly 450,000 kilos of palay, corn, cassava, and assorted fish.

The DENR project — Integrated Natural Resource and Environmental Management Program (INREMP) — has also put up a virgin coconut oil facility to enhance the livelihood source of the communities. For the fishing residents, a fish pen coral in the area has been constructed.

INREMP has allocated P17.7 million for these livelihood projects totaling to 66 units. These have a total of 52 people's organization beneficiaries.

For their water supply, a concrete water reservoir and a water system transformer have been constructed.

While the upland communities are helping the government in natural resource management (NRM) as they protect the forests and mountains, INREMP provided them with the farm-to-market road (FMR).

These FMRs are desperately needed by the upland communities in order to transport their agricultural goods to the market from the mountains.

Such roads, among around 15 rural infrastructure projects, have been constructed with the help of local government units (LGU) in the towns of Danao, Inabanga, Trinidad, San Miguel, and Talibon, among others.

INREMP is funded by the Asian Development Bank with a counterpart fund from the Philippine government.

As the project nears completion, a total of 4,316.67 hectares of forestland has been properly put under NRM.

This consists of the following:

- 758 hectares of reforestation with a contract cost of P19.169 million, benefitting 24 POs
- 1,439 hectares of agroforestry area, with a contract cost of P43.684 million, benefitting 47 POs; and
- 1,644 hectares of Assisted Natural Regeneration area with a contract cost of P46.625 million, benefitting 30 POs.
- There is also a conservation farming area of 331 hectares with a contract cost of P19.8 million and 30 PO beneficiaries.
- A total of 134 hectares of commercial tree planting area has been put up, benefitting five POs. (*MELODY AGUIBA*)

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