

BUSINESS

JICA extends P83 million support for agroforestry

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MANILA, Philippines — The Japanese government has provided P83 million worth of infrastructure to support the country's agro-forestry nationwide.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan's bilateral aid agency, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recently turned over some P83 million worth of agroforestry support facilities, such as access roads and irrigation systems to Nueva Vizcaya.

The infrastructure support forms part of the 10-year ongoing Forestland Management Project (FMP) that seeks to help the Philippines conserve its forest resources, while ensuring sustainable livelihood and forest management in upland communities.

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Apart from Nueva Vizcaya, the project aims to conserve major watersheds in Iloilo, Ifugao, Nueva Ecija and Quirino.

As an official development assistance, FMP has been helping rehabilitate more than 71,300 hectares of forest resources in the country's watershed areas.

This is done through forest and agroforestry plantation establishment, protection and maintenance activities, infrastructure support, as well as capacity building of people's organizations and farmers.

It also covers comprehensive site development, strengthening of watershed management bodies and people's organizations through enhancing their capacities in agroforestry and enterprise development, and construction of agroforestry support facilities, among others.

JICA chief representative Takema Sakamoto said the project develops the capacity of people dependent on forest resources to explore the improvement of their livelihood.

FMP is helping bridge the gap in forest conservation efforts to also contribute to the sustainable management of watersheds, a critical water source for the country's population. In Nueva Vizcaya, the projects will benefit some 5,300 households.