

## **Pharma, industrial prospects of bamboo explored**

From Malaya Business Insight

The Philippines is exploring bamboo varieties that grow in rivers and volcanic areas of Cagayan Valley that may have huge economic potential for pharmaceutical-industrial products given a phytochemical screening under a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) project.

In a partnership with Cagayan State University (CSU)-Gonzaga, DENR is carrying out a phytochemical screening and DNA barcoding of economically important bamboo species in Cagayan Valley, a first of such study.

It will be carried out as part of aims to conserve and propagate the species in typhoon-affected Cagayan Valley as earlier mandated by DENR.

The Bamboo Characterization Project of CSU-Gonzaga through its project leader Jeff Opeña was presented at DENR Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) in Sta. Ana.

“Cagayan is rich natural systems, not only agro-ecosystems but grasslands, and others like water falls and volcanic areas where sulfur-rich soil is found. For example, we will study if the Bayog bamboo species carries different morphological and phytochemical characteristics when they are grown in sulfur-rich volcanic areas,” said Opeña

Target for the study are bamboo species that grow in two of Cagayan Valley’s volcanoes– the Smith Volcano, also called Mount Babuyan, which is politically located in Calayan Island and Mount Cagua in Gonzaga.

“Bamboo has numerous industrial, pharmaceutical, phytochemical, medical, nutritional, and food advantages. Characterization of bamboo germplasm is an important connection between conservation of diversity and utilization of germplasms (seeds or living tissues that carry genetic resources useful in plant breeding and conservation),” said Alvin Jose . Reyes and Eddie B. Abugan Jr of the Project Management Division (PMD).

PMD is one of the units of the DENR’s Foreign Assisted and Special Projects.

The bamboo project costs P1.601 million consisting of P1.261 million from DENR and P340,000 from CSU. Aside from involving DENR’s local offices in Cagayan, implementor includes Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Offices of Cagayan, and the Central Analytical Laboratory of CSU.