

Land management of diverse rubber-based systems in southern Philippines



Key details

Location

Philippines

Duration

Start Jan 2019

End Sep 2024

Budget

AUD 2,000,000

Commissioned organisation

Griffith University

Partners

Bureau of Soil and Water Management, Philippines; Caraga State University, Philippines ; Provincial Government of Agusan del Sur, Philippines; University of Southern Mindanao, Philippines

Project Leader

Professor Chengrong Chen

ACIAR Research Program Manager

Dr James Quilty

Program

Soil and Land Management

Project code

SLAM/2017/040



Overview

This project aims to boost household incomes for indigenous smallholder farmers in the uplands of southern Philippines through the introduction of profitable rubber intercropping systems, sustainable management regimes and capacity-building.

Agusan del Sur, Southern Philippines is considered the poorest province in the Caraga region as well as one of the poorest in the country. Rubber is the fourth largest crop in the province, but only 50% of the total rubber area planted is productive or tappable.

Major constraints on rubber production include lack of land suitability information, lack of cost-effective rubber-based cropping systems, inadequate soil and nutrient management, lack of high yield clones of rubber, poor harvesting techniques and lack of technical training and support.

The project will focus on developing a rubber-based cropping system that sustainably increases smallholder farmers' income via crop diversification and improved nutrient management.

Expected project outcomes

- Developing an effective market-oriented rubber-based cropping system for the uplands of Agusan del Sur.
 - Characterising the key soil constraints and identify the most suitable lands for rubber-based cropping systems in Agusan del Sur.
 - Developing nutrient diagnostic tools and fertiliser regimes for rubber and companion crops.
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Summary of achievements to date

2021–22

The mid-term Review of this ACIAR project took place on 28 Jan 2022 by Dr Stephen Harper. Overall comments are highly positive, indicating some very good achievements made in the past 2.5 years. The excellent working relations with the local government agency (PGAS) in the regions is a great conduit for extension of results and training. This relationship between the project partners is a real model for engagement between research science or development and individual landholders in the Philippines.

- Around 75% of analysis of >3000 soil and plant samples collected from various field and greenhouse experiments in Philippines have been completed and the remaining analyses expected to be completed in September 2022.

- **Around 75% of the samples were analysed for elements of interests.** A total of 3,000 soil and leaf samples from RBCS, farmers' field trial and land suitability assessment were sent to Griffith Uni lab for elemental analyses expected to be completed in September 2022.
- **Completion of the Midterm Review.** The SLAM-2017-040 mid-term review was successfully carried out on 28 January 2022. All milestones achieved during the 2.5 years of the project were presented including the significant milestones which were not expected such as, the collaboration with local academic institution (ASSCAT), Municipal Government of Trento and the Philippine Rubber Research Institute suggesting high acceptance of the project/technology by the key stakeholders in Southern Philippines.
- **Capacity building for local rubber stakeholders in Agusan del Sur.** A total of 28 trainings or workshop seminars on rubber production, rubber tapping, and pest/diseases identification and control were conducted in Agusan del Sur. This translated to a total of 827 participants who gained the critical skills for rubber latex yield improvement.
- **The John Allwright Fellow, Mr Oscar Jurado successfully started his PhD study** at Griffith University (Feb 2022) and has been progressing well.



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