

Mindanao coffee project sets to roll out in support of Robusta growers

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Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) and Nestle Philippines inked a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to jointly establish and implement the DA x Nestle Mindanao Robusta Coffee Project, which will allow farmers to gain access to various farm inputs, training, and marketing opportunities.

The project will directly benefit Mindanao coffee growers who produce coffee as a single crop or intercrop it with coconut and other suitable high-value commodities.

Through the collaboration of DA and Nestle, an improvement in coffee farm management and farmer's entrepreneurial methods is expected.

Initiatives towards the advancement of regenerative agricultural approaches will also be undertaken to ultimately enhance the production and yield of green beans, and increase farmers' income.

Under the MOA, DA through its High-Value Crops Development Program will provide support to ensure the productivity and income of the Robusta coffee growers of Mindanao. These include the provision of various farm inputs such as fertilizer, equipment for tree rehabilitation, postharvest facilities, capacity-building initiatives and training.

Under the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service, DA will provide market support, hauling and transport, and will facilitate business development services.

The Department will also establish an Integrated Coffee Centre in Sultan Kudarat to serve as a venue for upskilling. Equipped with processing and value-adding facilities, the Centre will serve as a hub for quality excellence and ensure the sustainable implementation of the project.

For its part, Nestle will pool a group of agronomists and technicians who will serve as resource persons in the series of capacity-building training sessions for agricultural extension workers. This will ensure that the farmers will meet and comply with the applicable quality standards for coffee products.

The project is composed of four parts namely: Integrated Coffee Nutrient Management Research for Development; Coffee Productivity (fertiliser support); Capacity-building; and Establishment of Integrated Coffee Centre.