

From ‘Banana Republic’ to Thriving Barangay

TVIRD and BOAST conduct livelihood forum on banana planting and backyard piggery



Top banana producer. *A great majority of the country’s bananas is planted and grown in Mindanao, among which Region IX, the Zamboanga Peninsula, is one of the six (6) major producers. TVIRD and BOAST’s livelihood forum aims to help communities leverage on the region’s conducive agro-climatic condition that can potentially yield high-value crops.*

Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur / May 2014 – Following the introduction of its functional literacy program to promote countryside development, TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. (TVIRD) and Pagadian-based non-government organization, Business Opportunities Against Starvation Inc. (BOAST) conduct its first livelihood forum on Banana Planting and Backyard Piggery in Barangay Pulangbato in the town of Bayog last April 26, 2014. Conceived by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Banana Industry Forum is a first-of-its-kind training module conducted by the agency last year in Pagadian City –

capital of Zamboanga del Sur where Bayog is located. The town is also the first recipient of the training since the maiden event.

Bananas in the Philippines are the source of livelihood of some 6 million farm households, according to sources. The non-seasonal crop has 200 indigenous varieties and is likewise the number one fruit grown and the leading export income earner for farmers, ranking the country among the world's top four banana producers.

In respect to the industry that grows this high-value crop, the Banana Industry Forum tackles critical facts and figures — which are very relevant topics for participants in Sitio Maglatin, Barangay Pulangbato of the same town. Proponents discussed challenges and the corresponding strategic interventions for mitigating major diseases and physiological disorders. They also presented proper methods for the post-harvest handling of fruits.

The training forum is complemented by a module on Backyard Piggery – one of the most common form of livelihood in the countryside. But rather than typical backyard growing, the module concentrates on the odorless method of raising swine.

Livelihood for Bayog

TVIRD, which hosted the livelihood training in its exploration site, holds a Mineral Processing Sharing Agreement (MPSA) for over 4,000 hectares in Sitio Balabag and the surrounding barangays of Bayog. Program partner, BOAST, is a non-profit group focused on the areas of formal literacy for out-of-school youth, livelihood opportunities, and medical and dental outreach.

Pulangbato Barangay Officials, TVIRD-paid teachers and citizen security personnel participated in the training forum. The event marks the first livelihood-focused training by the NGO, which provides much-needed training among indigent families in the area.

While Mindanao produces a great majority of the country's bananas, the Zamboanga Peninsula is one the region's six (6) major producers. TVIRD and BOAST's training forum aims to harness this potential and help local communities leverage on the region's agro-climatic condition that is conducive for yielding high-value crops.

Viable techniques and proper ways of planting are also available through the training modules that enable farmers to detect early stages of diseases. Access to financing was also discussed, in addition to marketing, packing and shipping goods.

“People say mining and agriculture cannot go together. Let us prove them wrong. Our livelihood training on banana planting and backyard piggery is a good start to demonstrate that mining and agriculture can complement each other,” said TVIRD Balabag Project Officer-in-Charge Col. Valentino Edang.

Banana as a springboard for progress

According to the Department of Agriculture, the prospect of Philippine bananas – fresh and processed – in both domestic and foreign markets is very promising. National production has expanded to a total production area of over 450,000 hectares while volume has exceeded 9 million metric tons per year due to expansion areas in Mindanao. This accounts for roughly 9 percent of worldwide banana production.

These statistics provide vast opportunities for Bayog farmers, especially as Philippine bananas have a growing exposure to international markets. While two-thirds of production directly account for domestic consumption, a good one-third are exported to countries the United States, Canada, Japan, China, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia and European countries.

Aside from human consumption, byproducts like banana peel are fashioned into cloth or processed either for animal feeds or as a material for biogas production. Certain varieties are also used for manufacturing *abaca*, which is raw material for mats and ropes.

TVIRD is the Philippine affiliate of Canada’s TVI Pacific Inc. It has earned various environmental and safety recognitions since it started its mining operations in Canatuan, the homeland of the Subanon tribe. The company endeavors to bring the same successful Canatuan business model to Balabag where it is primed to develop its gold-silver project.

Press photos:



- 1 Coexistence of agriculture and mining.** *Farmer-beneficiaries of TVIRD in Canatuan attest that the land in the Zamboanga Peninsula is very fertile, notwithstanding the company’s large-scale mining operations nearby – proof that agricultural livelihood and mineral development can coexist and thrive.*



- 2 Agro farming.** Consisting mostly of agricultural towns, the Zamboanga Peninsula flourishes with rolling terrain and fertile land that are conducive for high-value crops. With help from TVIRD, more local farmers are able to imbibe on a lucrative livelihood.

About TVI Philippines

TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. ("TVIRD"), is the local affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration, development and production of precious and base metals from district-scale, large-system, high-margin projects located in the Philippines. Concurrent ownership of ventures is shared with partner company, Philippine Resource Holdings Inc.

TVIRD is committed to exploration and mining practices that promote transparency, responsible stewardship of the environment, and the inalienable rights to life, dignity, and sustainable development of its host communities.

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