



# CACAOmustahan

Regular bulletin for the Sustainable Farming in Tropical Asian Landscapes in the Philippines

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## 💡 Cacaohibalo (Cacao knowledge)

### Perfect spot: Most of Davao de Oro is suitable for cacao growing



The Davao Region is the 'cacao capital' of the Philippines as it produces majority of the country's cacao yield. However, there are still areas in the region that are not maximized; one of which is the province of Davao de Oro (formerly Compostela Valley). This is despite the resources being devoted by the national and local government, as well as international funding institutions, in strengthening the cacao industry in the province, as well as the continuous expansion of areas planted with cacao; some of which used to be forests.

In such cases, one important factor to examine is the

suitability of the crop to the land, to ensure that all resources devoted to growing the crop—both institutional and environmental—are not wasted. This was what urged a team of researchers from World Agroforestry (ICRAF) in the Philippines to do a cacao suitability analysis for the Sustainable Farming in Tropical Asian Landscapes (SFITAL) Project in the Philippines.

In doing so, they considered several factors, including slope, elevation, aspect, rainfall, temperature, relative humidity, soil, land cover, and road access, which were selected based on

the results of an intensive review of cacao-related literature. They then conducted a series of Analytical Hierarchy Process with stakeholders, including cacao growers, and staff from local government units. They likewise conducted purposive interviews with experts.

After this process, it was found that over 58% of Davao de Oro's land is moderately suitable for cacao growing, while 15% is highly

suitable. Only 10% of the area is considered to have 'very low' and 'low' suitability. The analysis also confirmed that the land that are currently being used for agroforestry is also suitable for cacao.

The results of this analysis informed the development of a cacao suitability map for Davao de Oro. This will inform the development of a roadmap for sustainable cacao value chains in the province, which is expected to boost cacao production in the area, while also ensuring that the produce meets sustainability standards. 🌱

## 💬 Bag-ong sugilanon (New stories)

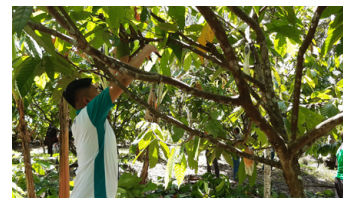


### It's a match: Maximizing Davao de Oro's potential for growing cacao

**Researchers have confirmed that Davao de Oro is moderately suitable for cacao. What does that mean for local growers and policymakers?**

This blog showcases the findings of the cacao suitability analysis conducted for Davao de Oro. In this analysis, most of the province was found to be moderately suitable for cacao growing. Findings of these analysis were also used to develop cacao suitability maps.

Read more [here](#).



### Better together: institutionalizing a multi-stakeholder partnership for Davao de Oro's cacao industry

**As cliché as it may sound, synergy between stakeholders from a range of sectors is necessary for any industry to thrive - including the cacao industry of Davao de Oro in the Philippines.**

This blog features the formation of a local planning team for the cacao industry of Davao de Oro. Facilitated by the SFITAL Philippines team, this was formalized through an executive order from the Provincial Government.

Read more [here](#).

## 👤 Atong mga higala (Our friends)



**Liberato "Jun" Villahermosa, Jr.**  
Maco, Nabunturan

Recently, the SFITAL Philippines team got the chance to converse with some of our cacao growers in Davao de Oro. This

section of Cacaomustahan intends to amplify the voices and showcase stories of our partners on the ground. For this issue of Cacaomustahan, we are sharing some highlights of our conversation with Liberato Villahermosa Jr or Jun, a farmer from the Municipality of Maco, Davao de Oro.

Since 2016, Jun has been integrating cacao with coconut and banana in his farm in Maco.

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worldagroforestry.org/projects/sfital

## Atong mga higala (cont.)

Being a farmer for decades, he is already equipped with basic skills and knowledge on managing his farm. Even in terms of cacao growing, in which he just recently ventured in, he was able to acquire technical assistance from Kenner Foods International, particularly in maintenance.

However, despite the sufficient technical support he is receiving, Jun still raises some concerns in terms of growing cacao. One of the challenges they are encountering is high prices of fertilizers. According to him, they had to stop using synthetic fertilizers because they cannot afford it anymore. This, as he noticed, has a negative effect on his cacao yield.

He likewise shared that in terms of technical knowledge, it might also be helpful to know more about pest and disease management especially for cacao.

Jun also expressed his appreciation for programs and projects from the government and the private sector that intend to assist farmers like him. However, he also wishes that responses and follow-ups from these institutions be more efficient.

His case is just a bird's eye view of some of the issues that the SFITAL Project is trying to deal with, under its five components on environmental and social management systems, sustainable farming practices, roadmap development, and communication and knowledge management. Activities under these components are made possible through the cooperation of SFITAL's partners on the ground Kenner Foods International, the Provincial Agriculturist's Office of Davao de Oro, and the DTI-Rural Agro-Industrial Partnership for Inclusive Development (RAPID) Growth Project. 🌱



## Gikan sa yuta (From the ground)

# ICRAF Philippines, DTI-RAPID hold ToT on cacao management

In line with SFITAL Philippines' goal to promote sustainable cacao farming practices, ICRAF, in cooperation with the DTI-RAPID Growth Project in Davao de Oro, conducted a capacity building activity to improve cacao-based agroforestry systems in the province last 27-28 July 2022 in Nabunturan, Davao de Oro.



Dr Agustin Mercado Jr, SFITAL Philippines' agroforestry and conservation farming specialist, served as the main resource speaker for the training session. Photos: World Agroforestry/Erwin Albios

Using the training of trainers approach, the capacity building activity involved field extensionists and technical staff from Kenner Foods International Inc., Provincial Agriculture Office of Davao de Oro, and Municipal Agriculture Offices of Nabunturan, Maco, New Bataan, Maragusan, and Laak. Farmer leaders from organizations like Sustainable Cacao Association of Resourceful Farmers, Dumlan Association of Cacao Planters, Comval Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Maragusan Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Laak Multi-Purpose Cooperative, and Brgy. Baylo Cocopal Farmers Association also joined the training. Individual cacao growers from Nabunturan, as well as representatives from the Davao de Oro Provincial Cacao Council and the Davao de Oro State College also took part in the activity.



The participants were given the opportunity to practice the concepts they learned from the lecture through a quick field visit on the second day of the training. Photos: DTI-RAPID

The said capacity building activity covered various topics on management of cacao-based agroforestry systems, such as basic agroforestry concepts, principles, and protocols, multi-strata agroforestry systems, shade management for cacao, soil fertility management, and integrated pest and disease management. Lectures on these topics were delivered by discussions and hands-on demonstrations. 🌱

## SFITAL PH conducts household survey on land-use profitability

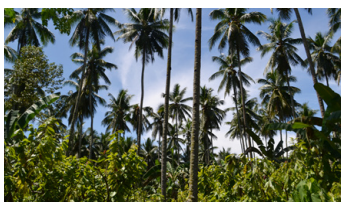
The SFITAL team recently conducted a series of household surveys to collect information on the profitability of certain farming systems such as cacao-based agroforestry, coconut-based agroforestry, corn, rice, oil palm, and fruit trees, among others.

Data from this survey will inform the profitability analysis that will be conducted for the project. 🌱



The team visited several parts of Nabunturan and New Bataan last 1-5 August 2022 to converse with farmers regarding their respective farming systems.

## Bag-ong sugilanon (cont.)



**Getting the right mix: Agroforestry as an effective strategy to boost Davao de Oro's cacao industry**

**ICRAF researchers recently found that Davao de Oro is moderately suitable for cacao production, showing the province's huge potential. But there is room for improvement in current cacao management practices. In terms of strategy, specialists suggest going back to basics—agroforestry.**

Read more [here](#).