



## Barriers to expanding Banana production among CLAGIBAPLA farmers

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### Abstract

Surigao del Norte is a province in the Philippines situated in the Caraga region, occupying the north-eastern section of Mindanao's capital City of Surigao. The constituents of the CLAGIBAPLA ARC are the four municipalities of Surigao del Norte: Claver, Gigaquit, Bacuag, and Placer. The total land area of the CLAGIBAPLA ARC is 60,423 hectares, wherein 48% of this area is considered agricultural land. Some areas still need to be more utilized and idle, with the potential to be converted into productive farmlands. Although coconut is the primary commodity and concedes as the biggest agri-products planted in the CLAGIBAPLA ARC, bananas ranked second, followed by vegetables. Banana is the leading fruit grown in the Philippines and a consistent top-dollar earner. The prospect of Philippines bananas in the domestic and foreign markets is still promising. The value chain mapping of bananas within the locality was conducted and participated by the stakeholders currently producing bananas, processing, and trading. Furthermore, data gathering and Focus Group Discussion were employed to finalize the feasibility study. Survey questionnaires were used for the following groups: farmers, people's organizations, traders, processors, and stakeholders. CLAGIBAPLA banana farmers planned to expand their area allocated for banana production by at least 10 to 50%; however, barriers like low prices, less market information, facilities, equipment, additional services and financing should be addressed to maximize their produce and profit.

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## Introduction

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has designed the Convergence on Value Chain Enhancement for Rural Growth and Empowerment (ConVERGE) Project to enhance the participation of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) and other smallholder farmers in the value chain by facilitating their engagement in agribusiness partnerships with the private sector. The project's ultimate goal is to increase the farmers' productivity, the income of beneficiary households, and employment and livelihood opportunities in the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs).

Surigao del Norte is a province in the Philippines situated in the Caraga region, occupying the northeastern section of Mindanao's capital City of Surigao. The province has a land area of 1,972.93 square kilometers. Its population, as determined by the 2015 census, was 485,088.

This represented 18.68% of the total population of the Caraga region, 2.01% of the overall population of the Mindanao island group, or 0.48% of the entire population of the Philippines. The province is made up of twenty-seven (27) municipalities, one (1) city, and four hundred thirty-four (434) barangays. It is divided into two Congressional Districts. District I comprise the islands of Dinagat, Siargao and Bucas Grande with sixteen (16) municipalities, namely: Basilisa, Burgos, Cagdianao, Dapa, Del Carmen, Dinagat, General Luna, Libjo, Loreto, Pilar, San Benito, San Isidro, Santa Monica, San Jose, Socorro, and Tubajon. District II includes eleven municipalities and one city, namely: Alegria, Bacuag, Claver, Gigaquit, Mainit, Malimono, Placer, San Francisco, Sison, Tagana-an, and Tubod, with Surigao City as its provincial capital.

The constituents of the CLAGIBAPLA ARC are the four municipalities of Surigao del Norte, namely: Claver, Gigaquit, Bacuag, and Placer, and 54 barangays, wherein ARCs cover 29 barangays. The total land area of the CLAGIBAPLA ARC is 60,423 hectares, wherein 48% of this area is considered agricultural land. There are still areas that are

underutilized and idle with the potential to be converted into productive farmlands. Although coconut is the primary commodity and concedes as the biggest agri-products planted in the CLAGIBAPLA ARC, bananas ranked second, followed by vegetables.

Banana is the leading fruit grown in the Philippines and a consistent top-dollar earner. The prospect of Philippines bananas in the domestic and foreign markets is still promising. Banana or *Musa* sp. is the most common and widely grown fruit crop in the Philippines and a favorite dessert by Filipinos. Aside from that, it is also one of the country's primary dollar earners and has consistently ranked next to coconut oil and prawns in value earnings during the last five years. Among the banana varieties, Cardava, which is also known as the "saba" banana in the Philippines, has been traditionally grown for the local market.

It is the world's fourth most important staple food, next to rice, corn, and wheat (DA BAR, 2009), because of its nutritional value and versatile use. Cardava is the specific banana variety that is processed for banana chips. The result of this study will contribute to the mandate and goals of the project ConVERGE. Hence the study was done.

## Materials and methods

The study started with the identification of the different commodities, prioritization, and selection using other criteria. The various stakeholders participated in it: the Local Government Unit, the Municipal Agriculture Officer, Cooperatives, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), municipal and regional offices, and the farmers.

The secondary crop which was chosen is the banana. The value chain mapping within the locality was conducted and participated by the stakeholders currently involved in producing bananas, processing, and trading. Furthermore, data gathering and Focus Group Discussion were employed to finalize the feasibility study. Survey questionnaires were used for the following groups: farmers, people's organizations, traders, processors, and stakeholders. A total of 109 banana farmers were the study's respondents (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Number of respondents.

Respondents Per Municipality	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Brgy. Mabini, Placer	19	17.43
Brgy. Urbiztondo, Claver	17	15.60
Brgy. Dugsangon, Bacuag	14	12.84
Brgy. Cambuayon, Bacuag	25	22.94
Brgy. Kinabutan, Gigaguit	14	12.84
Brgy. Villaflor, Gigaguit	20	18.35
Total	109	100

**Result and discussion**

*Problems in the production*

Most respondents (80 or 73.39%) considered low prices the primary problem in banana production. At the same time, the other respondents (29 or 26.61%) cited less market information as a problem (Table 2). Most of the banana farmers in CLAGIBAPLA sell their produce for Php 20.00-30.00 per kilogram, and the buyer will set the price of the products, not the producer.

**Table 2.** Problems related to the production.

Problems in the production	Respondents	Percentage
Low Price	80	73.39
Less Market Information	29	26.61
Total	109	100

Postharvest facilities are also a problem for the CLAGIBAPLA banana farmers. Although there are few (27 or 24.77%) who have access to postharvest facilities, the majority (82 or 75.23%) do not (Table 3). Most of the farmer's harvest in volume ranged from 10 kg to 100 kg. Their means of transporting their products in the market is by motorcycle, and most of them sell their produce directly to their regular customer, a peddler.

**Table 3.** Ownership of the postharvest facility.

Availability of postharvest Facilities	No	Percentage
Have available harvest facility	27	24.77
No available harvest facility	82	75.23
Total	109	100

Problems with additional services needed by the farmers were categorized into 3, namely: farm inputs (fertilizers, suckers, vegetable seeds), financial assistance, and facilities and equipment (weighing scale, stock room, delivery truck) (Table 4). Fertilizers are the topmost (35 or 32.11%) needed by the farmers, followed by vegetable seeds (21 or 19.27%) and then

the provision of suckers (20 or 18.35%). Ten (9.17%) of the respondents needed financial assistance and the condition of a weighing scale, 8 (7.34%) required a delivery truck, and 5 (4.59%) suggested a stock room for their harvested banana produce. Farmers cannot acquire those needed services because there is no provider; they rely solely on the services extended by the association of which they are members.

**Table 4.** Additional services needed.

Additional Services Needed	The number of respondents	Percentage
Farm inputs		
Fertilizers	35	32.11
Suckers	20	18.35
Vegetable Seeds	21	19.27
Financial assistance		
Financial Assistance	10	9.17
Facilities and equipment		
Weighing Scale	10	9.17
Stock room (For Banana Harvest)	5	4.59
Delivery Truck	8	7.34
Total	109	100

**Conclusion**

CLAGIBAPLA banana farmers planned to expand their area allocated for banana production by at least 10 to 50%; however, barriers like low prices, less market information, facilities, equipment, additional services, and financing should be addressed to maximize their produce and profit.

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