

Financing orientation workshops strengthen support for sustainable farming in southern Palawan



Farmer-participants at the orientation workshops for ECLOF financing services held in USAID-supported communities in Bataraza, Palawan. (Photo Credit: USAID Protect Wildlife)

To establish and strengthen financing support for sustainable agricultural production in target communities within the Mount Mantalingahan Protected Landscape in southern Palawan, USAID and ECLOF Philippines held a series of orientation workshops for local farmers from five purple yam or *ube* plantation sites supported by USAID's Protect Wildlife project.

At the orientation sessions, ECLOF discussed their services for farmers, including agricultural microfinancing for crop production, livestock and marine products through loans that can be easily applied for and fairly amortized.

"I got a loan from ECLOF in the past to support inputs for my vegetable farm. It was a big help for me and my family to tide us over during hard times," said Virgie Sablot, a farmer from Bulalacao village in Bataraza, Palawan.

ECLOF International, a non-profit foundation based in Switzerland, is a network of socially driven microfinance institutions that provide financial and non-financial services to micro-entrepreneurs and smallholder farmers throughout the world.

The Protect Wildlife project partnered with ECLOF, along with local governments and the private sector, to help communities get started on farming high-value crops such as *ube* and connecting them with buyers who can guarantee sustainable purchase of their crops, while redirecting farmers' activities away from forests to help conserve natural resources and protect biodiversity.



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