

BatStateU BARAKO Project Revolutionizes Kapeng Barako Farming with Smart Agriculture



Batangas, Philippines – Coffee growers in Batangas have reason to celebrate as a groundbreaking initiative is set to transform the *kapeng barako* industry through innovative agricultural methods. Spearheaded by Batangas State University in collaboration with multiple agencies, the "BARAKO Project" introduces an optimized propagation method that promises to increase *kapeng barako* yields, ensuring the province's rich coffee heritage thrives.

The innovative approach leverages a blend of advanced technologies, including remote sensing and smart farming, to monitor environmental conditions, automate precision agriculture, and enhance the capabilities of local coffee farmers. This comprehensive strategy aims to bolster the entire *kapeng barako* ecosystem.

One of the primary objectives of the project is to significantly boost *kapeng barako* productivity in Batangas. The ambitious target is to produce a remarkable 80,000 *kapeng barako* seedlings. Additionally, the project envisions the establishment of a dedicated nursery and demonstration farm that will serve as a hub for capacity-building and technology transfer to empower Batangas' coffee industry.

The need for such transformative measures became evident in 2020 when the region's coffee crops suffered a severe setback. Over 4,000 hectares of coffee farmland in Batangas and neighboring Cavite were blanketed with volcanic ash. Among the impacted coffee varieties, the beloved local favorite, *Liberica*, also known as *kapeng barako*, took a substantial hit. The BARAKO Project steps in to mitigate such challenges and boost the productivity and economic prospects of *kapeng barako* through the application of smart farming technologies.

As of the writing of this report, the project has made remarkable accomplishments. A sprawling 5,000 square meter nursery has been established in Rosario, Batangas, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. Within this nursery, key components include dedicated potting and mixing areas, germination beds, water pipelines for irrigation, and a specialized seeding floor. To complement these facilities, comprehensive training programs have been implemented, covering essential aspects like propagation techniques, plantation management, and post-harvest processing of *kapeng barako*.



The BARAKO Project is scheduled to run until 2023, and its far-reaching benefits extend to coffee growers and farmers across the province. Beyond elevating the productivity and sustainability of *kapeng barako*, the project promises to invigorate the market, ensuring the continued presence of this cherished coffee variety.

This initiative serves as a testament to the power of collaborative efforts and technological innovation, breathing new life into Batangas' coffee heritage and propelling its future onto a path of growth and prosperity.