



**Microfinance Council  
of the Philippines, Inc.**

*From margin to mainstream*

## 1st Agri-Microfinance Roundtable

The Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Inc. conducted a roundtable discussion (RTD) on the Agri-Microfinance Research Project last March 8, 2007 at the Discovery Suites, Pasig City. The discussion was facilitated by Prof. Ronald Chua of the Asian Institute of Management. The objectives of the RTD were to identify possible institutions and households that can be subjects of the case studies and to discuss the highlights of the research agenda.

Prof. Chua gave an overview of the research process. The objectives of the Agri-Microfinance research project are: 1) to determine access to financial services of households engaged in agricultural production; 2) to determine spending and savings pattern of households engaged in agricultural production; and 3) to document successful and innovative financing schemes/practices in agriculture.

The expected outputs of the research are 1) a literature review on agricultural microfinance in the Philippines, 2) four institutional case studies where critical elements in establishing agricultural microfinance operations, as well as factors contributory to continuing operations will be highlighted; documentation pitfalls experienced by MFIs and how these challenges were overcome and 3) a profile of 6 families engaged in selected agricultural activities. The cases will document a range of topics in terms of topographical area (upland, lowland, coastal) and products (e.g., rice, corn, coconut, sugarcane, vegetable, banana, high-value crops, livestock, and fisheries).

The RTD was attended by representatives of the following institutions: Agricultural Credit Policy Council, Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR), Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation, PinoyME, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Punla sa Tao Foundation, Development Bank of the Philippines, Land Bank of the Philippines,, National Confederation of Cooperatives and RBAP-Microenterprise Access to Banking Services.

After Prof. Chua's presentation on the research objectives and expected outputs, the participants gave suggestions on how to improve the research design. The suggestions included having an agri-microfinance landscape of the case studies, a historical timeline of agri-households' access to credit and the risks the households encounter, and lastly, to consider the definition of household creditors and their functions in the whole loaning process.

The roundtable discussion ended with an agreement to hold future meetings for further coordination in the research activities.