



“Now I will be able to plant all year round for food security and income for my family thanks to the new irrigation system”, says a Honduran producer among the 550 who are being supported by CABEI

The Sulaco Valley has had uninterrupted irrigation service for 1,863 manzanas of productive land for the past five months thanks to the CABEI-financed Low Irrigation Agricultural Development Program (PDABR).

Rubenia Banegas and her two children, ages 12 and 17, live in the Sulaco Valley, located in the extreme south of the department of Yoro in Honduras, an area known as *“the home of the quail”*, home to indigenous and mestizo communities that are mostly dedicated to agriculture and that, unfortunately, did not reach their maximum productive potential due to the total dependence on the rainy season to be able to harvest crops on their plots of land.

The main problem was the lack of a large-scale irrigation system, which affected some **550 producers** who, for the past five months, have had a definitive solution with the installation of an irrigation system at the **Tascalapa dam** in **Sulaco**, which provides the community with the vital liquid permanently and at a low operation cost, thus enabling them to produce year-round on their plots.

“Now I will be able to produce all year round on my plot for food security and income for my family, thanks to the new irrigation system. Before, we used to sow at the mercy of heaven, waiting for the winter for fear of losing the harvest because we had no water”, says Rubenia, who has a property of three acres planted with corn, thanks to the new irrigation system installed on her plot as part of the **Low Irrigation Agricultural Development Program (PDABR)**, financed by the **Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI)** with an investment in Sulaco of **339.2 million lempiras** (approximately US\$14.3 million).

Access to water for irrigation on a permanent basis currently benefits the producers of the municipality of Sulaco, Yoro; and allows the irrigation of **1,863 acres** of productive land through three (3) irrigation subprojects, the Maralito subproject, Tascalapa subproject, and Siguapa subproject, named after the water source that supplies them. **“Almost 400 acres are already being cultivated and day by day more producers are joining this mega irrigation project”,** commented Rubenia, representing the excitement of the local people.

The program, in addition to promoting the installation of independent gravity drip irrigation systems that irrigate Rubenia's plots and the other project beneficiaries in common, has provided them with technical assistance and continuous training in water management practices at the plot level, with the objective of achieving high irrigation efficiency and optimal productivity, as well as diversification of their crops.

“When we were told about the program, we were thrilled, and even when it was paused due to hurricanes Eta and Iota, we didn't stop believing. We always trusted the Bank” concludes the happy and grateful producer, Rubenia Banegas.

The program provides support to improve producers' family income, as well as guidance in the production and marketing of crops in irrigated areas, which will be complemented with support in the preparation and implementation of annual production plans and access to credit from financial institutions.



In this way, the new irrigation system will improve the production and marketing of corn, beans, bananas, sweet potatoes, onions, and other produce for the country's agrifood chains, in addition to providing greater diversity in the diet of producer families, generating new jobs and having an impact on reducing poverty rates in the area, since Rubenia's income, like that of other producers, will improve every day.

Produce to move forward

Thanks to the new irrigation system in Sulaco, the production that Rubenia's family will achieve in August will give them access to food, surpluses for marketing, and seeds for their next planting.

In addition, this irrigation system aims to improve the way agricultural products are produced and marketed, establishing a partnership between producers in the supply chain to meet the demands of the domestic market, producing food of higher quality and value.

In order to make farmers more efficient in the appropriation of this model, Rubenia, like her neighbors, seeks to move from *“producing to survive”* to *“producing to advance”*, and to this end families receive multifocal training, which includes production, productivity, marketing, competitiveness, health and technological advances applied to production.



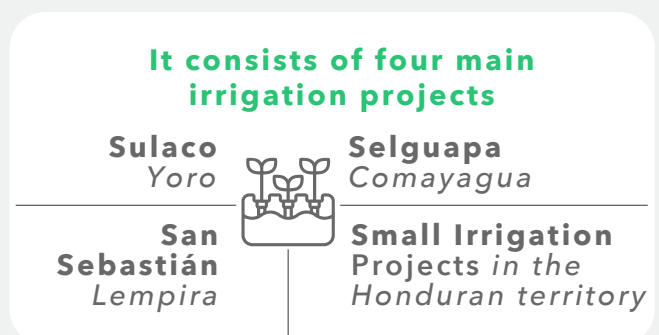
A strategic ally

Since the installation of the irrigation system in Sulaco, the **National Bank for Agricultural Development (BANADESA)** has financed to date more than 60 producers with loans in the amount of **10 million lempiras**, approximately more than US\$400,000 dollars, which have boosted the production of beans, corn, bananas, avocado and intra-farm irrigation systems, which contribute to better crop yields and avoid losses due to drought.

To date, another 36 producers in Sulaco are expected to benefit from BANADESA's support, for an amount of **10.9 million lempiras**, approximately US\$443,000, which is in addition to the various investments to strengthen food security, promote job creation, and achieve inclusive growth in this territory.

About the PDABR

The Low Irrigation Agricultural Development Program (PDABR) aims to increase the irrigated area in the country through a sustainable water resources management plan. It consists of four main irrigation projects: Sulaco, Yoro; Selguapa, Comayagua; San Sebastian, Lempira; and Small Irrigation Projects in the Honduran territory.



The PDABR also promotes the modernization of infrastructure through the installation of localized and pressurized drip irrigation systems, the promotion of environmentally friendly agricultural practices such as integrated pest management, the use of organic products, and the proper use and management of waste.

By switching from gravity irrigation to pressurized systems, money can be saved in nutrient application and weed control, in addition to efficient water use.

Its scope goes beyond the construction of irrigation infrastructure, as it is an integrated program that includes actions to increase rural competitiveness, income generation and employment, highlighting that to date it has generated **7,811 jobs**.

The implementation of this operation promotes agricultural development and the generation of permanent income in the area, guaranteeing food and nutritional security, within the framework of **CABEI's 2020-2024 Institutional Strategy** and the **2022-2026 Honduras Country Strategy**.