

IRRI appoints Dr. Junel B. Soriano as new Deputy Director General - Philippines Representative

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The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) is delighted to welcome Dr Junel B Soriano as its new Deputy Director General - Philippines Representative. A recognized leader in the country's agriculture sector, Dr. Soriano brings over two decades of experience in advancing science-based solutions for sustainable and resilient agri-food systems



The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) is delighted to welcome Dr Junel B Soriano as its new Deputy Director General - Philippines Representative. A recognized leader in the country's agriculture sector, Dr. Soriano brings over two decades of experience in advancing science-based solutions for sustainable and resilient agri-food systems

Before this appointment, Dr. Soriano served as Director IV of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR), where he led initiatives to strengthen the Philippine agri-fishery research for development (R4D) agenda and programs. His leadership helped shape national commodity R4D programs towards inclusive and sustainable technology development, utilization, and commercialization. He concurrently held roles as Assistant Director and OIC Director of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), and as Technical Adviser to the Department Senior Undersecretary, contributing to Research and Development (R&D) management policy reforms, and convergence initiatives under the Masagana Rice Industry Development Program.

Dr. Soriano began his career in 1999 as an engineering assistant at the National Irrigation Administration, later transitioning to academia and research as a faculty member and eventually Vice President for Research, Extension, and Training at Bulacan Agricultural State College (BASC). Over the years, he also served as a professor and official at Isabela State University and was a Fulbright Agriculture Scholar at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in the United States.

He also served as a visiting scientist at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), another CGIAR center, where he led capacity-building efforts, supported the development of region-specific work plans, and contributed to research on direct dry-seeded rice systems to boost productivity and water-use efficiency in the semi-arid environments. While working at ICRISAT, Dr. Soriano also helped adapt the Bhoochetana approach, which focused on soil health and integrated farming, for the Yamang Lupa Program (YLP) in the Philippines. His work reflected a deep commitment to sustainable agriculture and natural resource management, blending local leadership with global insight.

Dr. Soriano's academic journey shows a strong grounding in agricultural sciences. He holds a PhD in Agricultural Engineering from Central Luzon State University (CLSU), a degree he pursued with support from IRRI and BASC while managing major research collaborations. He earned his Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Agricultural Engineering from Tarlac Agricultural University (TAU) and completed his secondary education at Ilagan National High School in Isabela.

Throughout his career, Dr. Soriano has authored and published 25 scientific papers in reputable journals. He is also a Civil Service Commission Pagasa Awardee and a Presidential Lingkod Bayan Awardee, reflecting his outstanding contributions to public service and agricultural development. A recognized ASEAN Agricultural Engineer and a former president of the Philippine Society of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, he remains a prominent figure in his field.

Dr. Soriano will join IRRI's Leadership Team to steer the Institute's partnerships, focusing on deepening collaborations with government agencies, academic institutions, development partners, and local communities in IRRI's host country, the Philippines. He will also provide strategic governance support, regulatory affairs, and host country relations, and serve upon appointment as Corporate Secretary to the IRRI Board of Trustees.

Known for his integrity, people-centered leadership, and strong commitment to agricultural transformation, Dr. Soriano is poised to lead IRRI's strategic partnerships in the Philippines into a new era—strengthening the link between research and impact across Asia and beyond. He has assumed his role on May 19, 2025.