



No more gravel farm-to-market roads—DA

The Bagong Silang-Macatoc Farm-to-Market Road in Oriental Mindoro is one of the FMR projects of the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP), being constructed to support the calamansi farmers in the province. The P20.6 million concrete road measures 2.79 kilometers.

The government, under the Aquino administration, no longer builds “all-weather” gravel farm-to-market roads (FMRs) as it resolved as early as July 2010 to build only concrete FMRs in the country, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA). Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala said that the primary problem with these gravel roads is that they are not resistant to the effects of changing climate.

“Many of these roads are damaged—some even disappear—after a flood or typhoon. The DA would then receive new requests to rebuild the same roads. The result—huge amounts spent on roads that are repaired or rebuilt over and over,” Alcala said

Costs vs. benefits

Alcala recalled that at first, partner financing agencies objected the idea of “concrete FMRs only” citing the high cost of its construction.

“We explained that the P10-million standard cost of a kilometer of six-inch-thick, five-meter-wide concrete FMRs, following DPWH [Department of Public Works and Highways] standards would be cheaper than constructing and reconstructing gravel roads, particularly with worsening floods,” Alcala said.

The DA has mainstreamed climate change adaptation in all its projects and

this entails building climate-resilient infrastructure such as FMRs and bridges.

“We believe that the benefits of building concrete FMRs instead of repairing gravel roads every now and then outweigh its costs in the longrun, particularly in the context of climate change adaptation,” Alcala said.

2,440 kilometers worth P24.7-billion FMRs soon

As the DA pushes for climate-resilient agricultural infrastructure, it has teamed up with 49 provincial and local government units (LGUs) to build a total of 2,440 kilometers of concrete, climate-resilient FMRs worth P24.7 billion under the World Bank-assisted Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP).

Under the PRDP, LGUs as project proponents will have to share at least 10% equity. The World Bank will finance 80% of the project and the remaining expenses will be covered by the DA.

Municipal Mayor Diosdado Pallasigue of Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, one of the LGU partners of a PRDP sub-project said that the P36.7 million-worth FMRs they have availed of under the PRDP will spur agricultural growth in their province.

“The roads, once finished, will serve about 2,000 hectares of farmlands and 1,000 households,” he said.

The PRDP FMR projects are expected to connect about one million farmers and their farms, and enter-

prises to highways and markets—decreasing production costs, increasing yields and improving farmers’ incomes. All these projects were approved based on careful and extensive feasibility studies, including value chain analyses.

Transparency and accountability in FMR projects

“Not only do we ensure that FMRs really link farmers to the market and connect agricultural value chains. We also guarantee that these projects meet prescribed standards of the World Bank and the DPWH and conditions set with the contractors,” Alcala said.

He stressed that gone were the days when FMRs are built for political patronage, when roads are built based on who the proponents are.

To avoid duplications and ensure that FMRs serve their intended purposes, the DA uses an innovative Google Earth-based geotagging tool. This allows computer-based checking of road proposals, as well as monitoring from construction until completion.

“Dahil sa tuwid na daan, magkakaroon na tayo ng mas matibay na mga daan,” Secretary Alcala said.

“Tuwid na daan” (straight path) is the Aquino administration’s catchphrase for its good governance agenda. ■



DA Asst Secretary Leandro Gazmin and I-REAP Component Head enjoins I-REAP personnel to provide additional assistance to LGU partners to help them come up with refined business plans and hasten review process of documents during the I-REAP Coordination Meeting in Oriental Mindoro on July 2, 2015.

PRDP to fund at least P53-M worth of enterprise sub-projects

The Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) has initially allotted over P53.34-million (M) worth of enterprise support sub-projects this year to help small farmers and producers in the rural communities.

The funds sourced from the Enterprise Development (I-REAP) Component include P34.82-M for the Cassava Production and Marketing Project in South Cotabato, P9.73-M for the Calamansi Trading and Consolidation Project in Oriental Mindoro, P5.80-M for the Coco Geonets Manufacturing Project in Albay, and P2.98-M Small Livelihood Projects (SLPs) in Yolanda and 2013-earthquake stricken areas in Visayas.

The four SLPs, which include fish coral rehabilitation and fish trading, blue swimming crab production and marketing, cattle fattening, and goat production, will be implemented in Negros Occidental.

"These SLPs are implemented in areas that were damaged by Typhoon Yolanda and the 2013 earthquake," explained PRDP Deputy Director Arnel De Mesa during the I-REAP Component Coordination Meeting on June 30, 2015 in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro.

He added that these sub-projects were initially exempted from the Provincial Commodity Investment Plan (PCIP) and Value Chain Analysis (VCA) requirements of the PRDP prior

to project approval.

The VCA is the basis in identifying public and private investment opportunities, while a PCIP is a three-year strategic plan specifying the interventions needed to support the production and marketing of commodities in the area.

Oriental Mindoro Governor Alfonso Umali, Jr. who also graced the activity noted that the DA played a vital role in the recent developments in the province.

The province is the recipient of sub-projects aimed at reviving the calamansi industry in the province. These include a farm to market road, which is currently undergoing implementation.

While the enterprise sub-project has not yet commenced, the DA has already provided initial assistance to calamansi farmers in the province through market matching of their produce with buyers in Manila.

DA Agribusiness and Marketing Assistant Secretary and I-REAP Component Head Leandro Gazmin has enjoined I-REAP personnel to provide additional assistance to LGU partners to help them come up with refined business plans and hasten review process of documents.

Under the I-REAP Component, the PRDP will provide the 80% counterpart of the total project cost, while the LGU will share 20%. The proponent group (PG) will pitch in an additional equity amounting to 20% of the total project cost.

PGs are farmers' groups, associations, or cooperatives that are ready to partner with PRDP for the production, processing or marketing of priority commodities of a particular province engaged in the Project.

At present, at least P1.47-M worth of sub-projects including LGU and PG equities have been in the pipeline for PRDP. ■

DA-PRDP strengthens document tracking through technology

The Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) has recently launched an online document tracking system (DTS) to enhance the management and tracking of pertinent documents within its offices, thus improving efficiency of the project implementation.

The web-based DTS was developed by the PRDP's National Project Coordination Office (NPCO) to facilitate updating of documents' status online. The system will record the status of processing of various documents routed within the PRDP from the regional to cluster and national offices.

PRDP National Deputy Project Director Arnel V. De Mesa said that this system will help the management and concerned offices to trace documents easily.

Read more on p.3 

DA-PRDP strengthens... (from page 2)

“Considering a vast project scope along with a wide range of implementers, the operation of the Project involves voluminous critical documents that need to be processed promptly in order not to hamper the delivery of interventions, thus this system will help us achieve PRDP’s objectives efficiently,” added De Mesa.

Known for promoting technology in government project management—such as the geotagging and expanded vulnerability and suitability assessment tools—both used in determining feasibility of proposed sub-projects under the PRDP, the DTS is another milestone in the PRDP implementation.

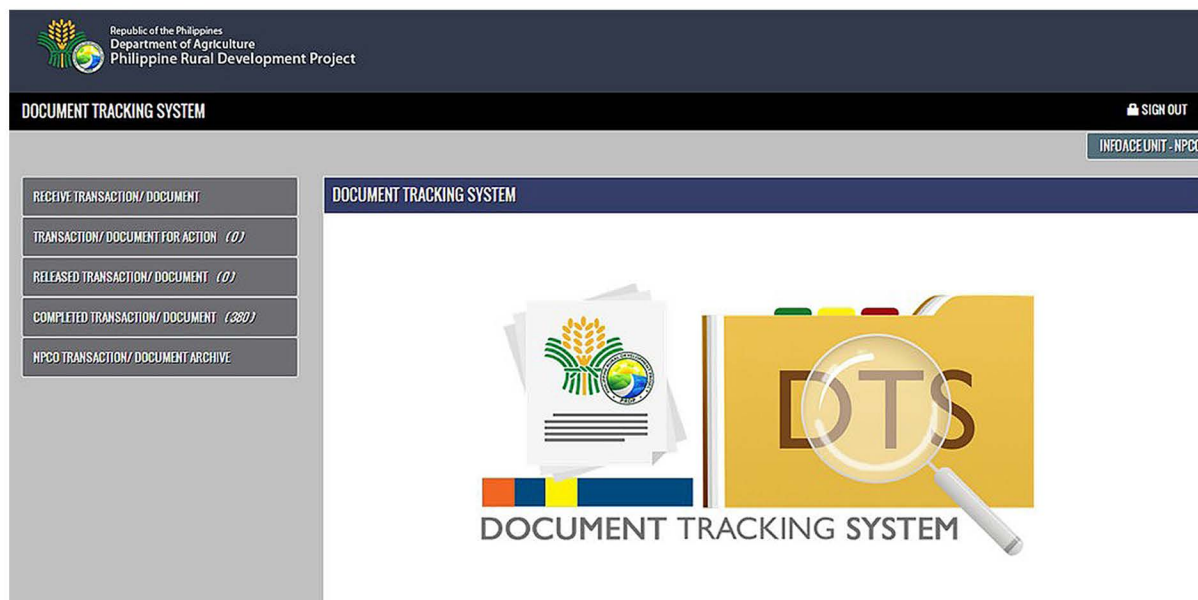
Prior to this, the Project has developed a web-based management information system (MIS) for the concerned offices and agencies within the DA family. The system, which records and maintains infor-

mation on the updates of various DA projects, commenced last year to further capacitate PRDP personnel on the use of the DTS. The NPCO has conducted trainings to cluster offices mainly involving Project Development Associates who will handle the encoding of information in the system.

De Mesa added that the DTS will provide access to the real time status of processing of the document or responding with the action required from it.

“It will also provide feedback on the magnitude of documents still in circulation that are already exceeding timelines as well as those that are nearing the prescribed processing or service timeline standard, helping us identify specific bottlenecks in processing various documents.

“Most importantly, the DTS will provide the management a more transparent basis in drawing out decisions to improve, over time, the handling of Project documents,” added De Mesa. ■



DTS, another milestone for PRDP, will enhance the management and tracking of documents, resulting to a more efficient project implementation.



Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala (left) discusses with World Bank's (WB) Task Team Leader for Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) Samik Sundar Das (middle) and PRDP National Deputy Project Director Arnel De Mesa plans for the upcoming WB Implementation Support Mission set on August 24 to September 18, 2015. During the mission, the WB will monitor and assess some of the projects implemented under the DA-PRDP.

NEWS BRIEFS

LUZON A

Four Infra Projects in Region 1 set for RPAB review

The PRDP in Region 1 will soon submit four sub-projects worth approximately P392.017-million (M) for the Regional Project Advisory Board (RPAB) approval targeted to be included in 2016 funding.

These projects include: Rehabilitation of the Paraspas Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) in Rosario, La Union worth P42-M; Rehabilitation of the Vila Bridge in Rosario, La Union worth P51.92-M; Rehabilitation of the Gonzales-Fulgoso FMR in Umingan, Pangasinan worth P108-M; and Rehabilitation of the Billoca-San Juan FMR with Bridges in Sarrat and Batac City, Ilocos Norte worth P190.097-M.

LUZON B

PRDP-Bicol, PSO South Luzon assist LGU partners to hasten business plan preparation

The PRDP Regional Project Coordination Office (RPCO) V and Project Support Office South Luzon Enterprise Development (I-REAP) team conducted a Regional Technical Review of four Bicol provinces' business plans on July 6-10, 2015 at Villa Caceres Hotel in Naga City.

During the said review, the group looked into proposed Abaca Fiber Processing and Marketing Enterprises of Catanduanes and Camarines Norte's Queen Pineapple Juice Manufacturing. Likewise, the group assisted the proponent groups in packaging the business plans for the Coco Geonet Production and Coco Peat Processing Project of Camarines Norte and Coconut Sap Sugar Processing of Camarines Sur.

VISAYAS

RPCO-6 I-REAP conducts business planning writeshop in Guimaras

PRDP-RPCO VI conducted a three-day business planning writeshop for the four small livelihood projects (SLP) proposed

under the PRDP-Global Environmental Facility (GEF) in Guimaras.

RPCO VI I-REAP component head Mary Ann Grajo explained that their office has to intensify and fast track our business plans for these GEF projects with total funding of P18.5-M. She added that the three proponent groups engaged in the project will concentrate on seaweeds production while the other one will focus on marketing and trading of seaweed products.

MINDANAO

DA's P1.02-B agri-infra in Mindanao to boost rural productivity

A total of 27 farm-to-market road (FMR) sub-projects are in their various stages of implementation covering a total of 102.19 kilometers with a total cost of P1.02-billion in Mindanao, based on PRDP mid-July report.

In addition, the Potable Water System project in the town of Tampakan, South Cotabato amounting to P4.3-million has already been completed, while FMR projects in Buug and RT Lim are above 50% accomplishment.

inFOCUS
THIS MONTH



PRDP at the Director's Cue

Atty. Emerson U. Palad, is the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) National Director, who is concurrently the Department of Agriculture's (DA) Undersecretary for Operations, Agribusiness and Marketing.

Usec Palad is among the busiest and youngest officials in the DA, who is also the agency's spokesperson.

Despite his busy schedule, Palad is also a family man who raises three young kids with his lawyer wife.

He was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 2006 and entered the DA in 2010 as the Chief of Staff of Secretary Alcala. He also became the Officer-in-charge of the Information Service of the agency, before he was tasked to oversee the Field Operations Service.

One of the significant messages he often gives when he talks about the PRDP, is the benefits rural farmers can get from PRDP through creation of value-adding opportunities under the Project.

ENABLING COMMUNITIES EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief: Cheryl C. Suarez

Associate Editor: Adora D. Rodriguez

Writers: Adora D. Rodriguez, Catherine N. Nanta, Jan P. Dacumos, PSOs and RPCOs InfoACE

Photographer: Kathrino V. Resurreccion

Lay-out Artist: Ana Victoria C. Margallo

Adviser: Arnel V. De Mesa

Circulation: Dave Christian M. Delos Santos, Joseph Caldino, Maricel De Mesa, NPCO Administrative Unit

PRDPinFOCUS is a monthly publication of the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rural Development Project National Project Coordination Office. We encourage reproduction of articles and photos with proper acknowledgment.

For queries, comments or suggestions email us at:

prdpnpcinfo@gmail.com or visit us at the PRDP Office, Department of Agriculture Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

Philippine Rural Development Project

DA_PRDP

www.daprdp.net