



New road opens doors and windows for OrMin villagers

(Left) Pupils of the Dulangan I Elementary School have to walk along the uneven dirt road when going to and from school. The road is muddy during the rainy season and dusty during the dry season. *(Right)* A portion of the ongoing construction of the Rehabilitation/Upgrading of Dulangan I-Dulangan II Farm-to-Market-Road (FMR) in Baco, Oriental Mindoro. The FMR worth P55.17 million will serve over 10,000 residents of the two villages. It will also support commodities produced in the area such as rice, calamansi, banana and rambutan. (Photos by Kathrino Resurreccion, NPCO InfoACE Unit)

For years, many houses in Barangay Dulangan I, in Baco, Oriental Mindoro have to shut doors and windows—because of dust coming from the dirt road.

But soon, residents in this village will no longer worry about road dust getting inside their houses.

Barangay Dulangan I is one of the beneficiaries, along with adjacent Barangay Dulangan II, of the upgrading and rehabilitation of the 5.3-kilometer farm-to-market road (FMR) that cuts across the two villages.

“Kung matapos ito[ng kalsada] siguro, ang mga bahay rito palaging bukas. Labasan na ng magagandang kurtina rito,” Dennis Garcia, barangay captain of Dulangan I said. (If the road construction is done, the houses here will be always open. Beautiful curtains will be visible then.)

The FMR sub-project, implemented under the DA-PRDP is worth over P55 million, funded with loan proceeds from a World Bank loan, and equities

from the national government and provincial government.

While the road rehabilitation has just started, the residents of the two villages are already anticipating the developments and positive changes that will happen in their area.

Graciano dela Chica, a farmer from Dulangan II shared that he has been farming since he was young, and he has since experienced the difficulty of transporting agricultural products from the farm to the market.

Dela Chica, who plants palay, calamansi and rambutan said that the road construction will provide great relief to many farmers like him.

“Kung dati, hindi ma-encourage magtanim ang mga magsasaka dahil di madala sa pamilihan ang mga produkto, magtatanim na nang maramihan ang mga taga rito sa amin [ngayon] gawa ng kalsada,” he added. (Before, farmers were hesitant to plant since they could not deliver their produce to the market; now,

they will be encouraged to plant more because of the road construction.)

Generoso Eborra, who plants rice, banana and calamansi could not agree more.

“Mas lalo naming pag-iigihan ang aming pagsasaka, dahil alam namin na mas malaki na ang aming kita. Sigurado na ang kalidad ay nasa tama at siguradong sariwa na madadala sa palengke ang aming produkto,” he said. (We will strive to become better in farming because we know that our income will increase. We can now assure good quality of our products, that these are fresh when we bring them to the market.)

Even non-farming residents are enthusiastic with the new road construction in the village.

Read more on p.2





Road for Coco

A coconut farmer in San Juan, Sogod, Southern Leyte hauls his harvest for delivery to a local copra processing center. The Department of Agriculture (DA), through the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP), supports coconut farmers and other agricultural producers in this part of Eastern Visayas with the concreting and rehabilitation of the 4.23-kilometer farm-to-market road connecting four barangays in this town, including San Juan. The P30.38-million PRDP sub-project will serve about 650 hectares of coconut plantations and more than 400 hectares of land planted to abaca, rice and high-value crops. (Photo by NPCO InfoACE Unit)

New road opens doors... (from page 1)

Shiela May Lalong-isip, a student living in Dulangan II shared that during rainy days their shoes and clothes get muddy before they reach their school.

With the new road, Lalong-isip is optimistic that it will help her as a student.

“Para sa aming mga estudyante mas madali na po yung transportation at mas madali na makarating ng school,” she added. (Transportation will be better for students, and we can reach school faster.)

Currently, the two barangays have at least 10,000 residents, the majority of which rely on farming as livelihood.

The barangay captains of Dulangan

I and II assured that they always monitor the ongoing construction to see to it that the sub-project is properly implemented.

Garcia said that they make sure the contractor uses the right materials and measurements in construction.

“Gusto namin ay yung long-term mapakikinabangan. Sayang yung inutang natin kung gagawin lang yan basta-basta,” he added. (We want a long-term benefit from the project. Our loan will be wasted if this is poorly done.)

The barangay captain also encourages the residents to be vigilant, adding that this will not be difficult since Dulangan villagers have been waiting

for the project for the longest time.

“Nung nabalitaan pa lang na iko-kongkreto [ang daan] may ngiti na eh. Ngayong nagsimula na, abot-tenga na ang ngiti ng mga tao rito,” he said smiling. (When they heard about the news of the road concreting, people were all smiles already. Now that the construction has started, their smiles are now ear to ear).

Indeed, not only will the new paved road bring smiles to the residents of the two villages. Doors and windows of opportunities will certainly open for them and improve their living conditions as they open the doors and windows of their houses. ■



Blue Crabs, Blue Economy

Virgilio Geronimo of Tortosa village in Manapla, Negros Occidental prepares freshly caught blue swimming crabs for weighing as a staff from the local agriculture office looks on. The Tortosa Pumpboat Association is the proponent group of the first blue swimming crab production and marketing sub-project under the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP). The sub-project supports the government's efforts to advance "blue economy," which refers to a development approach anchored on sustainable development and utilization of marine resources and ecosystems. (Photo by Joseph Caldino, NPCO InfoACE Unit)

DA-PRDP to allow small livelihood projects in Lando-affected areas

To help farmers and fishers in North Luzon regions recover from the damage brought by Typhoon Lando, the DA-PRDP will now accept proposals for small livelihood projects (SLPs) in these regions.

The SLPs, proposed by local government units (LGUs), aim to help farmers and fishers recover lost or damaged livelihoods in areas affected by calamities such as typhoons and earthquakes. These livelihood projects will be implemented under the Enterprise Development (I-REAP) Component of the PRDP.

PRDP National Deputy Project Director Arnel de Mesa explained that unlike other sub-projects proposed under the I-REAP component, SLPs require less stringent measures for approval.

"For instance, newly established agri-based cooperatives and associations are allowed to be proponent groups for SLPs that cost up to a maximum of P1 million," de Mesa said.

He clarified though that just like the other enterprise development sub-

projects proposed under the PRDP, 20% equity of the provincial or municipal government is required.

"These SLPs are short-gestating projects so affected farmers and fishers can easily bounce back from their losses," de Mesa added.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Chief Proceso Alcala said that it would be ideal for these PGs to propose for assistance on the production and marketing of high-value crops widely grown in the areas of Luzon.

"As we have established trading centers in some of areas in North Luzon including Benguet and Isabela, farmers will have a market where they can deliver their produce," Alcala said.

The DA has been constructing trading centers in strategic places across the country to serve as hubs for producers and buyers, reducing layers of middlemen.

De Mesa said that proposed SLPs do not require PRDP tools such as the Value Chain Analysis (VCA) and Provincial Commodity Investment Plan (PCIP) to be

approved, since the goal of SLPs is to help farmers and fishers quickly recover from losses due to calamities.

The VCA is a tool used to assess the status, and the linkages and interplay of different value chain players of a particular industry. The results of the assessment will then be used to identify appropriate upgrading strategies and interventions that will contribute to the development and strengthening of the subject industry's competitive advantage.

From the VCA, Provincial Local Government Units will then craft a PCIP, which is a strategic three-year rolling plan containing possible interventions to be undertaken by a province for priority commodities in support of the national Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan (AFMP) and the localized regional AFMP.

Four SLPs amounting to almost P3 million have been approved in Visayas under the PRDP.

De Mesa said that for municipalities in Visayas affected by Typhoon Yolanda and the 7.3-magnitude earthquake in 2013, proposals for SLP are extended until 2016.

Aside from calamity-stricken areas, SLPs are also accessible in conflict-stricken areas in Mindanao. ■

NEWS BRIEFS

LUZON A RPCO-CAR capacitates Kalinga partners thru geotag training

The Regional Project Coordination Office-Cordillera Administrative Region (RPCO-CAR) has conducted a two-day training on geotagging in Tabuk City, Kalinga to capacitate at least 40 personnel from Kalinga LGUs in using one of the Project's good governance tools.

RPCO-CAR Deputy Project Director Danilo P. Daguio said that geotagging is an important skill needed in the implementation of the PRDP. He added that expertise on geotagging is seen to facilitate the preparation of feasibility studies and other documentary requirements needed in proposing sub-projects.

The participants were able to familiarize themselves with the use of geotagging tools such as the PRDP Geo Camera, My Tracks, and the GPS Status. *(Elvy S. Taquio, RPCO-CAR InfoACE Unit)*

LUZON B PRDP-Bicol cited as model region in PCIP mainstreaming

Shandy M. Hubilla, Director of the Project Support Office (PSO)-South Luzon has lauded the initiative of the PRDP-Bicol in engaging the heads of partner agencies in conducting the technical review of PCIPs for the second priority commodities of the Bicol provinces.

Among the PCIPs reviewed are the abaca and mud crablet of Catanduanes; coco geonets and pineapple of Camarines Norte; coco sap sugar and cassava of Camarines Sur; coco geonets and sweet potato of Albay; pili and seaweeds of Sorsogon; and live goat and coconut shell charcoal of Masbate. *(Annielyn L. Baleza, RPCO 5 InfoACE Unit)*

VISAYAS PSO Visayas encourages various infra to be proposed under PRDP

Cirilo Namoc, Deputy Project Director of the PSO-Visayas has encouraged the Infrastructure Development (I-BUILD) Component to venture into other infrastructure sub-projects other than farm-to-market roads (FMRs), noting that most of the

pipelined infra sub-projects mostly consist of FMRs.

Namoc added that the cluster should promote other infrastructure sub-projects to LGUs such as potable water systems and communal irrigation systems, as these can further help foster rural development. *(September Noon A. Macahilo, PSO Visayas InfoACE Unit)*

MINDANAO PRDP taps "scientific tools" to identify champion commodities

Raising the bar in promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development, the DA has employed scientific tools in implementing its projects and interventions under the PRDP.

Through tools such as the VCA, geotagging, and Vulnerability and Suitability Assessment (VSA) and its expanded model (e-VSA), Mindanao has identified rubber (sheets and crumb), coconut (virgin coconut oil and fiber), cacao (beans), cassava (chips and granules), banana (Cavendish and Cardava), abaca, oil palm, coffee, mango and seaweeds as the cluster's priority commodities. *(Sherwin B. Manual, PSO Mindanao InfoACE Unit)*

inFOCUS
THIS MONTH



**Transparency through
Geotagging**

The PRDP utilizes geotagging as one of its innovative tools in validating, reviewing and monitoring sub-projects proposed and implemented under the Project. It is a Google Earth-based tool that easily and accurately locates infrastructure, livelihood and agro-fishery facilities on a map, enabling virtual monitoring and supervision of sub-project implementation.

Geotagging was pioneered under the Mindanao Rural Development Program in 2011, and has been recognized by the World Bank as an effective tool in promoting transparency and combating corruption. It won the global Procurement for Complex Situation Challenge in 2014.

Currently, the PRDP is further streamlining the use of the tool by training other government agencies, namely, the Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Department of Agrarian Reform, among others.

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