



PRDPinFocus

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PRDP syncs with new admin priorities



Consultative Agri Governance. Department of Agriculture Secretary Manny Piñol conducts a forum with abaca industry stakeholders in Catbalogan Samar as part of his Biyaheng Bukid countryside visits. The Secretary has identified abaca as one of the priorities "under-the-coconut" crops in the DA's Coconut Productivity and Rehabilitation Agenda (COPRA), which aims to cover 600,000 hectares over the next six years. Abaca is one of the priority commodities identified for funding under the PRDP. (Photo by Alan Jay B. Jacalan, DA-AFID)

Ongoing and pipelined sub-projects under the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) sync well with the priorities of the current DA leadership.

According to Engr. Arnel de Mesa, the national deputy project director of the PRDP, the Project complements the "back-to-basics" goals of Agriculture Secretary Manny Piñol in developing the country's agriculture sector—to produce food and address poverty.

"Although the PRDP is not an anti-poverty project per se, among its objectives are to increase the incomes of its beneficiaries and the volume and value of marketable

surplus; hence, it somehow contributes to ensuring food security and poverty alleviation," de Mesa explained.

In a recently held convocation with employees and newly appointed officials, Secretary Piñol discussed the agency's top priorities, stressing that farmers and fisherfolk must produce enough and affordable food for the 105 million Filipinos.

"The cost of production must be brought down while the income earning capacity of the people must be raised," Piñol said.

In his State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Rodrigo Duterte likewise said that road development projects shall complement the government's

thrust to provide modern agriculture infrastructure by expanding and improving the construction and rehabilitation of roads and irrigation, and establishing modern harvest and post-harvest facilities to minimize losses.

These intentions jibe well with the intended and emerging benefits of the PRDP's interventions, as the Project's infrastructure development interventions, particularly concrete farm-to-market roads (FMRs), help reduce production costs, according to de Mesa.

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“Budlay” no more: Isulan farmers cite PRDP road benefits

Teng Andal grew up in the village of Bual in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat seeing a plywood vandal that said “place of no return.” Now 51 and a barangay kagawad, he said he has witnessed the transformation of their once perilous place into a “zone of peace.”

Andal said living in the village before was a risky venture, but not because of frequent armed encounters.

“Residents, especially farmers, refuse to live along this area because the road is unreliable. It was pockmarked and muddy that at one time, an engineer surveying the road got stuck waist-deep in the quicksand-like earth.”

When it can be used, only carabaos with makeshift carriages locally known as “karo” can pass through, he said.

“Budlay” (Ilonggo for difficult) is what Andal and other residents, mostly Ilonggos and Maguindanaons, are quick to say when asked of the situation before.

“I have been a farmer here since 1976 but we had our farm in the other area (of the barangay) because it was difficult to transport our rice produce,” resident farmer Punsay Angeles said.

He said that farmers here would spend around P30 for hauling fee just to deliver their produce to the market.

For some, like Unsay Masla who is also a rice farmer and lives in the next barangay of Lagandang but passes

through the same road, the cost is higher at P50.

“Before when there was no road there yet, we have to go around another route to take us to the junction where our produce can be transported to the market,” he said.

He added that travel time has been reduced from 30 minutes to 15 minutes coming from the Bual FMR-provincial road junction to the town center, which is about 12 kilometers.

But with the concreting of a 1.4-kilometer road section of the Bual-Talitay farm-to-market road (FMR) under the Department of Agriculture’s Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP), residents said their burden has been abated, with some farmers relocating nearer to their farms along the road. The FMR project costs P16 million.

“It has become convenient for us now. The hauling fee has been reduced to P10 to none at all, especially if delivery trucks would come to collect the produce themselves,” Angeles said.

Because of the concreted road, some farmers have also expanded production areas. “We have expanded our rice area from 3 to 4 hectares,” said Evangeline Cruz, whose rice farm is located just near the concreted road section.

She added that residents and students have also enjoyed the benefits of the new road. “This has also helped our

students here who would just walk to school before but now motorcycles can fetch them,” she said.

Electricity in their area also came with the road project, according to Andal. Once the concreting of the road started, barangay officials lobbied for the electrification of that portion of the barangay.

“Now, we hope that other projects and development can enter this place,” he said.

The Bual-Talitay, along with two other FMR projects in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat – the 1.2-kilometer Tayugo-Paladong FMR and 1.8-kilometer Purok 2-San Martin FMR in two other barangays – are the first infrastructure projects that have been completed under PRDP and have been operational for a year.

“The FMR projects from PRDP really help a lot of farmers in our town with better income as transportation has been easier, faster and cheaper,” former Isulan Mayor Diosdado Pallasigue said.

He added that the PRDP FMR projects opened up additional 1,000 hectares of productive rice field. (Jay M. Rosas, PSO Mindanao InfoACE Unit) ■

(A version of this article was published on Sunday, July 24, 2016 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.)



Smooth Ride. Now with ease, Teng Andal traverses this once muddy and pockmarked farm-to-market road (FMR) in Bual, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat. The 1.4-kilometer FMR was concreted under the PRDP at P16-million cost, paving the way for cheaper hauling costs and faster, more convenient transport to and from the town center. (Photo by Gian Enrique, PSO Mindanao InfoACE Unit)

PRDP syncs...(from page 1)

Among other benefits, economic and financial analysis data from the PRDP show that its FMR sub-projects reduce output hauling cost by 43% or from P53 to P30. Transport losses—spillage or spoilage that otherwise be used for food or sold for profit—are likewise reduced by at least 1% to 5%.

At least 425 hectares of existing and new agricultural areas will also be served by the PRDP after the completion of all its FMR sub-projects with the current financing, not to include projections with additional financing being requested from the World Bank.

Complementing enterprise development sub-projects meanwhile provide opportunities for farmer and fisherfolk associations to increase their incomes through product value adding.

Harmonizing agri interventions for food and income security

Under the PRDP, infrastructure development is purposefully complemented with enterprise development within the framework of integrating commodity value chains and through evidence-based targeting and prioritization.

“With harmonized approach, we resource to bring about the maximum results for our farmers and fisherfolk, and these include more food and better incomes,” de Mesa said, highlighting that many of the high-value crops identified by Secretary Piñol as priorities under his leadership are also the same priority commodities identified for further development under the PRDP.

De Mesa is optimistic that as the PRDP strives for, the current DA leadership would also continue push for the mainstreaming of approaches used by the Project in advancing modern agricultural development in the country.

“We are positive that we could further harmonize DA’s regular programming to that of the PRDP on the nexus of improving food and income security,” de Mesa said.

Promoting transparency and accountability

The Secretary has also strongly pronounced that corruption will no longer be tolerated in the Department.

Current efforts in the PRDP to streamline and mainstream in DA

regular programming its transparency and accountability mechanisms manifest the Project’s support to the goal of the agriculture chief to eradicate corruption in the agency.

Tools used and continuously enhanced by the PRDP such as vulnerability and suitability assessment, geotagging, citizens’ monitoring and grievance redress mechanism, among others, ensure that political patronage and corruption are prevented, as public disclosure and transparency are observed in the whole sub-project life cycle from identification to implementation.

De Mesa said that the PRDP’s approach is to create demand for transparency and accountability vis-à-vis enhanced multi-stakeholder participation to ensure that its efforts are replicable and sustainable post-project implementation.

“We make sure that stakeholders are actively involved in our transparency and accountability mechanisms as it creates ownership and fosters a culture of cooperation among agri-fisheries stakeholders—that is in the spirit of promoting good governance,” de Mesa said. *(Alladin S. Diega and Jan P. Dacumos, NPCO InfoACE Unit)* ■



“We used to dig for our water source. While it is not that far from our homes [400 meters], there are a lot of households sharing, causing delays to some. Now there is steady, sufficient supply of water with up to five households can avail.”

Lucio Masamloc, Barangay Kagawad
Lampitak, Tampakan, South Cotabato
Sub-project Name: Construction of Lampitak
Potable Water System
Stage: Completed
Number of Beneficiaries (Households): 253

NEWS BRIEFS

LUZON A (North Luzon) PRDP approves CAR's purple yam VCA

Provinces in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) can now develop their respective commodity investment plans for purple yam, as the value chain analysis for the upland crop, widely known as ube, has recently received a no objection letter from the PRDP's National Project Coordination Office.

Purple yam has been identified as one of the top five priority commodities for value chain analysis that will be funded by PRDP. It may be considered as a minor commodity in the Cordilleras; however, the VCA noted yam as having high potential industrial food value as well as a promising commercial value both in the domestic and export markets.

Dr. Lorenzo Caranguian, PRDP's project director in CAR stressed that the commodity investment plans must support the Regional Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Plan.

"The Department of Agriculture has identified ube as one of the high value commercial crops in CAR and is tagged as one of the country's five major rootcrops with export potential. It is high time that ube production and marketing (in CAR) be explored and improved through the PRDP," he added. *(Mabel Zabala, DA-PRD P RPCO-CAR InfoACE Unit)*

LUZON B (South Luzon) Masbate fisherfolk to benefit from rehab of MPA

The proposed rehabilitation and improvement of the San Fernando

Fish Sanctuary and Marine Reserve (FSMR), as well as the seaweeds production sub-project under the PRDP are expected to provide an alternative source of income for fisherfolk within the marine protected area (MPA) while they conserve the municipality's coastal and marine resources.

"We would want to have a well-managed, progressive and productive fish sanctuary and marine reserve area that can be an eco-tourism site later," Florizel Lim, municipal agricultural officer of San Fernando said.

Her LGU has proposed for the P313 million-worth rehabilitation work for the San Fernando FSMR, with a separate allocation of P1.5 million for the seaweeds production project through a grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

According to Lina Alcaraz-Abayon, president of the Nagkakaisang Mangingisdang Burubarangay, the project will positively change the plight of some 1,200 fisherfolk who rely on fishing as their major source of income. *(Annielyn L. Baleza, RPCO 5 InfoACE Unit)*

VISAYAS PRDP launches Citizens' Monitoring in Bohol

The PRDP has partnered with the civil engineering students of the Bohol Island State University (BISU) and the barangay officials of Loboc town in the launching of the Pilot Citizens' Monitoring Tool (CMT) for Central Visayas.

The CMT ensures that sub-projects are constructed in accordance with prescribed design, standards, timeline, and social and environmental safeguards. As it actively involves communities, the tool boosts the sense of ownership of sub-projects among citizens.

According to BISU student Nikki Angela Vergara, the training and field application will enable communities call the attention of implementers to correct likely violations.

Barangay Cadansag Councilor Patricia Ramin said their involvement in the monitoring process will help ensure that corruption is prevented. *(Bexmae Jumao-as, RPCO 7 InfoACE Unit)*

MINDANAO Agusan villagers take active role in monitoring infra projects

Residents of Barangay San Isidro in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur have taken active roles in monitoring the progress of the 1.4-kilometer Taganahao-San Isidro FMR sub-project implemented under the PRDP.

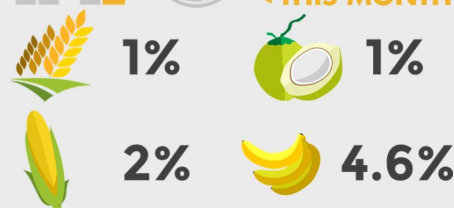
Village chief Ferdinand Lazaga, for instance, recommended to the project managers the proper placement of the culvert to avert excessive water outflows while construction is ongoing.

"Barangay officials should be active in the implementation to ensure that the needs of the community are met," Barangay Captain Ferdinand Lazaga stressed. He said that while there is a detailed project plan, barangay officials and residents should ensure that they regularly monitor its implementation.

Project contractors have also recognized the importance of involving barangay leaders and community residents in the implementation of road projects, according to Miguelito Baron, village chief of Barangay Songkoy Kitcharao town, Agusan del Norte where the construction of the 1-kilometer Gamoton-Lake Mainit FMR is in progress.

The FMRS in the three Agusan towns are part of the P966-million approved infrastructure development sub-projects for the CARAGA region, with seven already under implementation and 12 under different procurement stages. *(Jay M. Rosas, PSO Mindanao InfoACE Unit)*

inFOCUS THIS MONTH



**PRDP FMRs:
Reducing Transport Spillage
and Spoilage**

Among other benefits, PRDP's climate-resilient FMRs help farmers and fisherfolk reduce transport losses—in spillage and spoilage—hence, contributing to the overall efficiency of the country's food production systems. Besides reducing wastage, these roads also enable farmers and fisherfolk to reduce output hauling costs by about 43%, or from P54 to P30. These savings in costs correspond to higher incomes for rural families.

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