

## North Luzon

### FMR improvement uplifts living condition in Nueva Ecija

"It was really hard for us to transport products to and from the market. It took us days before we could deliver products because of lack of tricycles that pass by here. Our products get spoiled before they even reach the market and we could not sell them anymore," recalled Virginia Baleroso as she described the previous situation of the road she passes by everyday.

With the intervention of the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP), the improvement of a 5.17 kilometer farm-to-market road traversing barangay San Jose City, Nueva Ecija was completed and now being benefited by 1,432 households and 6,736 residents.

Data gathered from the Rapid Appraisal of Emerging Benefits (RAEB) revealed that travel time using the road reduced by 36.41%, while the number of public transportation increased by 31%.

Roldan Batungbakal, a resident from Barangay San Juan said that they now save a lot on gasoline consumption.

"We now deliver vegetables with better quality and the road is not muddy anymore," he said.

With the old unrehabilitated road, farmers used to deliver their produce to buyers or traders, causing about one kilo worth of damaged products. Now, traders and rice millers personally pick up farmers' produce directly from the farm.

In terms of employment, the improvement of the farm-to-market road resulted to a seven percent increase in additional employment, while the average net income of farmers increased by 17%.

RAEB is a PRDP-initiative that determines the extent of success and benefits from completed subprojects that contribute to the achievement of the project's development objectives. It is jointly conducted by the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit, Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES) Unit, Geomapping and Governance Unit (GGU), I-BUILD/I-REAP Component, Economists and the Information, Advocacy, Communication and Education (InfoACE) Unit. (Kayla Arceo, InfoACE North Luzon)

## South Luzon

### GEF leads seaweeds techno-demo farm establishment

MAGALLANES, SORSOGON – The Magallanes Fish Sanctuary and Marine Reserve in Brgy. Biga, measuring 57.6 hectares, is one of the five marine protected areas (MPA) in Bicol endowed with diverse but globally threatened species.

Fish visual assessment conducted by the Resources, Environment and Economics Center for Studies Inc. (REECS) in April 2016 showed that fish density, biomass, and fish diversity in and out the Fish Sanctuary are in poor condition.

According to Nilda Llorera, 55, a fisherman's wife from Brgy. Biga, fish catch dwindled over the last two decades. "Noon, madaming huli, ngayon konti na lang. Dati nakakahuli ang asawa ko ng sampung kilo, ngayon, minsan, wala na kahit pang-ulam (We used to catch large amount of fish. My husband could even catch up to 10 kilos, but now, there are instances that he has no catch at all even for our own consumption)," she said.

As part of the Philippine Rural Development Project Global Environment Facility (PRDP-GEF) unit's intervention, a P1.71 million-worth Seaweeds Production and Marketing Project is now under procurement process. The enterprise development (I-REAP) subproject is designed to reduce fishing pressures in and around the Fish Sanctuary while MPA rehabilitation is ongoing from 2017 to 2021. It also aims to provide additional income to the beneficiaries in the area.

Also, the PRDP-GEF conducted a hands-on training to

about 20 members of Biga Farmers and Fishermen Association (BFFA) on diversified seaweeds farming methodologies and culturing systems on April 20 to capacitate them in implementing the I-REAP subproject. (Annielyn L. Balez, DA-RAFIS V)

## Mindanao

### Accelerating Development in Mindanao

The second largest group of islands in the country, Mindanao remains a strong potential to be country's bastion of food as its land assets are vastly agricultural. Yet, about a third of the country's poor live in Mindanao – a challenge that both government and private sectors have been trying hard to address for a long time.

Mindanao is rich in cultural heritage with its unique set-up of peaceful co-existence of large populations of tri-people – the Muslims, Lumads (Indigenous Peoples) and the Christians.

Located in the southern part of the Philippines, Mindanao has grown booming cities, competitive rural centers, with stronger urban-rural linkages.

To accelerate its development, the Department of Agriculture has frontloaded funds and projects equitably among the six regions and 27 provinces across Mindanao.

DA's Philippine Rural Development Project, a World Bank funded project, is one flagship project that has broadly touched-based the grassroots communities and extensively invested in infrastructure and enterprise developments to promote inclusive growth not just to the direct beneficiaries of the project but to the whole community in general.

DA-PRDP in Mindanao has:

- improved connectivity among remote rural production sites to the markets;
- increased road networks for faster transport of farm inputs and outputs as well as in the delivery of public services;
- reduced post-harvest losses;
- propelled agri-enterprise investments; and
- introduced innovations to improve agricultural planning and prioritization of investments.

Ensuring Mindanao's development by enabling farmers and fishers' organizations and expanding their marketing and economic opportunities benefits the country as a whole. (Sherwin B. Manual/PSO Mindanao)

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## Partner agencies adopt PRDP's planning process through PCIP

To gather feedback on the use of the PCIP, assessment activities were held where partner LGUs, national government agencies and stakeholders lauded the tool and committed to continuously provide support for the institutionalization and enhancement of the PCIP.  
(Photo by Joseph Caldino, NPCO InfoACE)

In support to the enhancement of the Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Plan (AFMP), local government units and national agencies have started to incorporate the use of the Provincial Commodity Investment Plan (PCIP) in identifying and implementing projects.

The PCIP is a three-year rolling plan that contains investment opportunities and strategic interventions for the development of priority commodities. It is PRDP's main basis for selecting eligible subprojects for funding.

All regions in the North Luzon cluster have now secured the Regional Development Council (RDC) resolutions for the utilization of the PCIP as reference in the planning of national government agencies.

With this, agencies such as the Departments of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Interior and Local Government (DILG), Science and Technology (DOST), Tourism (DOT), Trade and Industry (DTI), and regular programs under the Department of Agriculture (DA) have allotted funds to implement projects identified through the investment plan.

As reported by PSO North Luzon Project Director Roy Abaya during the World Bank Implementation Support Mission in Bataan, 415 non-PRDP funded subprojects have been identified through the PCIP amounting to P3.33 Billion. 172 of these are now completed and now being benefited by many.

### From proposal to livelihood

One of these completed projects is a goat enterprise in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija funded by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI).

"After being identified in the PCIP, ATI committed P1 million for the upgrading of goats in Cuyapo. The Municipality of Cuyapo also committed P100,000 for the housing; the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) to provide pure bred goats, and the Provincial Veterinary under the Nueva Ecija Provincial Government to provide upgraded goats," said Christina Ellana from the Nueva Ecija Provincial Agriculture Office.

[Read more on p. 3](#)





## Transforming lives, making better future

Bonifacio, Misamis Occidental—Farmer Democrito Calibo, recalled the difficulty of their lives in Barangay Mapurog where pothole-filled and muddy roads can only be traversed on foot or by horses.

“We have to endure the one-day travel time just to reach the nearest market in Bonifacio town, with transportation costing around P20.00-P30.00 per basket on horse’s back. Sometimes, the bumpy road would cause some of our products to fall off the horse which resulted in damages and depreciated market value of our crop,” said Calibo.

The poor road condition was the main reason why transportation was very expensive then. Aside from the regular fare, they had to pay for the labor cost in hauling their products to the nearest road accessible by horses or carabaos.

“With the new concrete road, we no longer have to worry about transporting our goods to the market. Vehicles can now reach our areas where transportation cost is much lesser and our travel time shorter. Buyers also come to our barangay to purchase our farm products because we already have a well-paved road,”

added Calibo.

Barangay Mapurog is also home to the Subanen Tribe. This IP community suffered from the effect of the poor road condition where social services had been inaccessible.

“Before, most of us IPs do not have a good education because the school was very far and we had to walk several hours just to get to the nearest school. During health emergencies, some of our brothers would not make it to the hospital and even pregnant women sometimes gave birth along the way,” said Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives (IPMR) Charlie Torres.

Through this new farm-to-market road, they believe that this project will change their lives.

“With a better road now, many of our children are able to go to school. The cost of travelling from the town to Sitio Migsale and vice-versa has decreased from P60.00-100.00 to P50.00. We can now traverse safely and during emergencies ambulances would be able to respond quickly. Government support like the 4Ps program can now reach us, which encouraged parents to send their children to school,” added Torres.

Aside from the Department of Agriculture, other agencies like the Department of Tourism has been assisting the communities of Barangay Mapurog through religious tourism in the area and one of the challenges they encountered is bringing the technology to the community.

“As a field worker, it was very hard for us to reach Sitio Migsale in Brgy. Mapurog and it was also difficult to bring the technologies we want to impart to their community because of the terrible road conditions. But now, it’s easier and convenient for us to deliver the information about government programs as well as monitoring the development in the community. For the DOT, we will be giving them livelihood programs like handicraft trainings soon,” said Tourism Officer Landy Anthony Hisola.

According to Brgy. Captain Felix Tagalog, increase in economic activities has been observed in the area. Many residents are inspired to expand their farms since transportation of their agricultural products will be easier, and others opened up sari-sari stores.

[Read more on p. 3](#)



The 4.96 km farm-to-market road worth P67 million is already in 92.78% completion. Completed sections are now passable to many vehicles especially farmers who deliver their farm products to Bonifacio town and including traders and businessmen. (Photo by Gian Enrique, InfoACE Mindanao)

## Partner agencies adopt...(from page 1)

Municipal Agriculturist Orlando Ramos said that from the identified projects in the PCIP, there were other agencies that helped and provided assistance to develop the goat industry in the municipality.

"Through this, the goat industry here will be upgraded, quality will be improved and of course, the growers' income will also increase," said Ramos.

### Tools for development

In Zambales, project planners are also fully utilizing the PCIP. With four commodities integrated in the plan – mango, cassava, sweet potato and beef cattle – significant information on commodity's trajectory, trend and key

players are seen that will help planners identify what project is most suitable and helpful for farmers.

"We were directly involved in crafting the PCIP," recalled Librada Guevarra, Provincial Planning Development Coordinator of Zambales.

"I really appreciate the preparation of the PCIP because through this, projects are really identified with proper basis. We can also see the value chain, if a project is feasible and what would be the intervention for the farmers."

She added that aside from the PCIP, the Expanded Vulnerability and Suitability Assessment (e-VSA) also aided them in reviewing and approving

various proposals.

"Before, if a certain executive proposes for a baseless project, we cannot provide any proof why it cannot be implemented. Whereas with the tool introduced by PRDP called e-VSA, we can now defend the project prioritization, technically and scientifically."

The e-VSA is a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based tool that takes into account the combined analysis of vulnerability and suitability as well as socio-economic conditions of a particular area.

To date, all 22 provinces of the cluster have their approved PCIPs –of which 15 are currently updated. (Kayla Arceo, North Luzon InfoACE) ■

## Transforming lives...(from page 1)

As of now, the construction of the road is still on going and it is targeted to be completed this year. LGU officials and residents of Brgy. Mapurog are looking forward to the completion of the project where they expected more improvement in their livelihood as well.

Through the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural

Development Project, the 4.96 km farm-to-market road worth P67 million is about to be completed soon.

A total of 326 households and 1,490 beneficiaries of Brgy. Mapurog are now starting to feel the impact of the project.

PRDP together with partner LGUs and private sectors are working hand in hand in providing infrastructure

and facilities to raise the income, productivity, and competitiveness in the countryside.

The farm-to-market road is under the PRDP's Intensified Building up of Infrastructure and Logistics for Development of I-BUILD component. (Joy M. Montecalvo, PSO Mindanao/InfoACEUnit) ■

## Communication made easier

As communication plays a vital role in the delivery of service, the Geo-Mapping and Governance Unit (GGU) of the Philippine Rural Development Project has initiated the development of an internet-based video conferencing tool, to enable a stronger link between the National Project Coordination Office and its regional counterparts.

With the project requiring a regular assessment and evaluation and frequent travel to project sites, the

use of video conferencing is seen to benefit both the government and the project beneficiaries.

Last May 10 and 11, a trial web-conference was conducted by the GGU, which was participated by Deputy Project Director Cirilo Namoc, GGU officials and representatives from the four location clusters of the Philippine Rural Development Project.

The simulation was part of the improved communication strategy of the Project, which seeks to institutionalize a more regular coordination scheme between implementers, from the clusters and regional offices.

Aside from being cost-effective and time-efficient, the tool is very significant in the execution of plans of actions of the PRDP as it will be instrumental in providing easy access to project information on initiatives conducted in the 81 provinces covered.

With the assistance of the Information Communication and Technology Service of the Department of Agriculture, the teleconferencing online platform can accommodate 25 participants in different sites with a minimum requirement of just one megabyte per second of internet connection. (Adora Rodriguez, Info Officer, NPCO InfoACE Unit) ■