



DA-PRDP secures AF2 with EU Grant to further implement interventions benefitting farmers and fisherfolk affected by the pandemic

The Department of Agriculture – Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) scored a major victory as the NEDA Board confirmed the approval made by the Investment Coordination Committee (ICC), chaired by the Department of Finance (DOF) and the National Economic and

Development Authority (NEDA), of the US\$280 million (M) Second Additional Financing with EU18.3-M EU Co-financing grant (AF2-EU) on April 21, 2021.

DA-PRDP National Deputy Project Director Shandy Hubilla provided the good news during the closing of the pilot test for the

Project's enhanced Operations Manual on April 23, 2021, announcing the majority of the approval from the NEDA Board via ad referendum.

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“Nakapag-secure na po tayo ng walong boto sa NEDA Board. Ibig sabihin po ay tuloy na tuloy na po ang ating Additional Financing 2 at EU Grant. Maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat at sa inyong suporta,” Deputy Project Director Hubilla expressed.

“We have secured eight votes from the NEDA Board. This means that our second additional financing and EU grant is on its way to actuality. Thank you everyone for your unyielding support.”

The AF2-EU has a total project cost of PhP19.175 billion (B), with funding assistance through a loan from the World Bank, and grant fund from the European Union. The said cost consists of PhP14-B (\$280-M) from the World Bank Loan Amount, PhP1.006-B (EUR18.3-M) from the EU Grant, PhP2.424 billion from the GOP-DA Counterpart, and PhP1.745-B for the Local Government Unit (LGU) and Proponent Groups.

Following the NEDA Board

approval, the DA-PRDP is currently facilitating the requirements for the Loan Negotiation that is anticipated to happen next month. The project aims for the AF2-EU Grant to be included in the World Bank approval date on June 24, 2021, with the signing of the Loan Agreement to be done in the early part of July 2021.

The loan is expected to take in effect 90 days after the signing of the Loan Agreement around October 2021. Implementation will effectively commence towards the fourth quarter of 2021.

The AF2 is the second tranche of the \$450-M AF from the World Bank as approved by the ICC in 2016. With the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting food supply chains and logistics, the DA saw the PRDP as a platform that notably responded to past crises, to which the Department has proposed to retrofit the Project to be more responsive to addressing the impacts of the current situation.

Retrofitting for the new normal

With the proposed retrofitting of the AF2, its activities are expected to complement and expand the DA’s initiatives, aligned with the IATF-approved Food Security Development Framework (FSDF) for food security and resiliency. Particularly, under the AF2, the Project will continue to implement interventions for its beneficiaries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, building on its response mechanisms to crises and calamities.

Around PhP13.4-B rural infrastructure and PhP2.3-B rural enterprise subprojects are in the pipeline that aim to benefit 324,000 farmers and fisher households. With these projects, around 76,400 jobs are estimated to be created towards food production and marketing. *(Iconn Mel D. Cayabyab, NPCO InfoACE)* ■

I-PLAN concludes three-week pilot test for its Enhanced Operations Manual

The enhanced Operations Manual (e-OM) of the I-PLAN Component moves closer to its eventual rollout, as the DA-PRDP officially concluded its three-week pilot testing on April 23, 2021.

Serving as the final stage, the closing ceremony summarized the experiences, learnings, and recommendations of participating

provinces, through the updating of the Provincial Commodity Investment Plans (PCIPs) during the three-week pilot test held from March 29, 2021 until April 14, 2021. Lessons learned were discussed to further plan the succeeding steps for the larger e-OM rollout nationwide.

During the event, National Project Coordination Office (NPCO)

I-PLAN Component Head Assistant Secretary Agnes Catherine T. Miranda expressed that years of consultation and support from its partners have paved the way for the overall enhancement of the Operations Manual.

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The NPCO I-PLAN Component hosts the closing of the eOM pilot test at the Department of Agriculture Central Office.

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“The success of the reforms introduced through DA-PRDP and the momentum gained from the experiences of the past six years, as evidenced by all 81 provinces having Provincial Commodity Investment Plans, which are utilized as basis of PRDP’s subprojects and local investment planning decisions, have paved the way for further enhancing the planning process to incorporate the risk and resiliency criteria among others, making the PCIPs more relevant and responsive to the call of the times, and the development in the agri-fishery sector,” Asec. Miranda said.

“So, with the support from the DA and Technical Assistance of the World Bank, the areas of enhancement we collectively envision for the DA-PRDP I-PLAN Operations Manual have since been substantiated through a series of consultation meetings with all the regions and concerned LGUs, as well as with our partners at the NPCO, DA Operating Units, and National Government Agencies. As

a result, the valuable feedback we gathered significantly informed and land credibility to the process of updating the Operations Manual,” Asec. Miranda added.

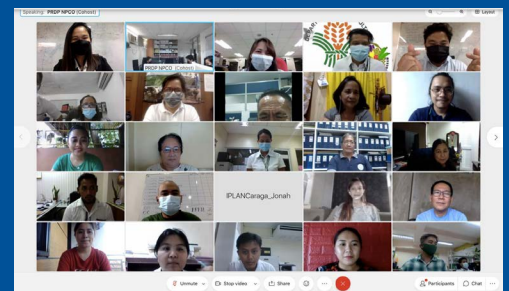
During the event, cluster representatives presented their experiences and recommendations during the conduct of the pilot test, which was followed by feedback and synthesis from TA consultants, representatives from the DA Climate Resilient Agriculture Office (DA-CRAO), and the DA-PRDP NPCO.

With the closure of the e-OM pilot test, it is expected that rollout activities will commence on the second week of June 2021.

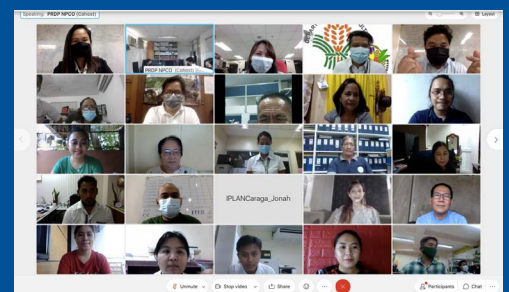
Present during the culminating event were representatives from the DA-PRDP components and units at the NPCO, Project Support Offices (PSOs), Regional Project Coordination Offices (RPCOs) from Regions II, IV-A, VII, X, and selected offices from partner LGUs for the pilot. *(Iconn Mel D. Cayabyab, NPCO InfoACE)* ■



NPCO I-PLAN Component Head Asec. Agnes Catherine T. Miranda delivers her closing message during the conclusion of the three-week pilot test of their enhanced operations manual.



Participants from all over the country gathered online for the closing of the eOM pilot test.



North Luzon

Construction of post-harvest facility nears completion

The construction of the Post-Harvest Facility for Aromatic Pigmented Rice in Barangay General Luna is nearing completion, as the infrastructure has registered a 95% physical accomplishment rate as of March 11, 2021.

Funded under the DA-PRDP, the post-harvest facility is seen to meet the local demand for rice in the municipality and nearby areas.

Technical officers and engineers from the RPCO 3 and the PSO conducted a joint inspection on March 11, 2021 to gauge the current status and progress of the subproject.

I-BUILD Rural Infrastructure Engineer Bon Alexis Guatato said that the building will be completed before the end of March 2021, where part of the warehouse will be used for storing aromatic rice and housing the rice mill equipment.

"The entire project has been in the works for the past months, with the majority to fast track the interior and finishing of the facility," Engineer Guatato said.

Once completed, the post-harvest facility will strategically facilitate linkage between farmers and rice dealers/traders that is expected to increase profitability. *(Ma. Reina Len Luna, RPCO III InfoACE)*

South Luzon

Puerto Princesa FMR provides safe, convenient, cost-effective road

Residents of Barangays Maruyugon, Lucbuan, and Buenavista in Puerto Princesa (PPC), Palawan can now rejoice in having a concrete road in the area, as the Maruyugon to Buenavista Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) is now complete.

The new road, which was completed on December 6, 2020, is the third FMR-type intervention that is currently being implemented by the City Government of Puerto Princesa, through the DA-PRDP.

With an estimated cost of PhP118 million, the said FMR has a length of 6.5 kilometers, with a road influence area comprising the above-mentioned barangays.

The completed FMR aims to improve and provide a safe, convenient, and cost-effective road, reducing travel time by 30 minutes, transportation and input hauling costs by 90%, expand the production area of cashew by 195 hectares (has), and overall, to increase farmers' income.

Barangay Buenavista Chairperson Juanito Capin conveyed that ever since the road was constructed, work has been more convenient. Through the FMR, it is now easier for them to move around and transport their agricultural products from one point to another, as more vehicles can now traverse to their areas.

"We are very thankful that a road project has been opened for us. We will give all our support to do what needs to be done for the proper implementation and success of this farm-to-market road," Chairperson Capin said.

Before the FMR, the road situation before was very difficult for everyone to travel through. The areas were served by not all-weather roads and barely passable, which resulted in increased logistical costs. It was also difficult for the farmers to improve the varieties of their planting materials, having limited access to appropriate farming technologies due to the absence of a concrete road.

Realizing the benefits and importance of the DA-PRDP, the LGU of Puerto Princesa continuously partners with the Project to enhance the farm and fishery productivity in the city and the province as a whole. The City Agriculture Office will remain to work hand in hand with the PRDP for the success of their subprojects. *(Lea Caliuag, PSO South Luzon InfoACE)*

Visayas

PRDP hands in PhP7.4-M for sugar enterprise in Negros Occidental

The DA-PRDP – PSO Visayas handed over the check amounting to PhP7.4 (M) to the Kalibutan Society, Inc., for the Muscovado Production and

Marketing Enterprise on April 14, 2021.

PSO Visayas Deputy Project Director Engineer Jose Albert Barrogo, together with Negros Occidental Governor Jose V. Lacson, handed over the check to Kalibutan Society Inc. President Antonio Castillo and Project Manager Arlene Dela Rosa.

These checks are part of the first tranche release of the DA-PRDP intended for the purchase of machineries and equipment of the Muscovado Production and Marketing Enterprise in Barangay Oringao, Kabankalan City. The total subproject cost amounts to PhP24,486,208.65.

The enterprise aims to increase the muscovado production of Kalibutan Society, Inc. to serve the demand of the target market by procuring new milling equipment and establishment of building requirement to produce quality products. *(September Noon Macahilo, PSO Visayas InfoACE)*

Mindanao

PRDP turns over longest FMR in Region 10

The long wait is over as the longest FMR in Region X is finally turned over by the DA-PRDP to the LGU of Damulog, Bukidnon on April 8, 2021.

The Sinarayan – Pocopoco – Tangkulan FMR is the longest DA-PRDP road project in the region, with a length of 13.94 kilometers worth PhP188,411,870.61.

Damulog Mayor Melino L. Buro is glad that the newly completed road is situated in the area where it is greatly needed.

"The barangays that will enjoy the benefits of the newly constructed road are actually the barangays that need road access the most because these are farming areas and at the same time, an Indigenous People (IP) area. With the new road, they will no longer have a hard time transporting their produce. This will also greatly serve our IP brothers and sisters because majority of them earns a living through farming," Mayor Buro said.


In his message, DA-10 Regional Executive Director and PRDP-10 Project Director Carlene C. Collado commended the efforts of every stakeholder involved in the completion of the project.

"This is the biggest project in PRDP nationwide. I know that completing this project is very difficult especially that we need to follow the standards of PRDP which is very strict. I am grateful for your hard work to achieve this project that will give a better living for our farmers," Collado added.

Tangkulan Barangay Captain Minerva Joy M. Aloba added that the FMR greatly impacts the community "Having this long road feels like I also won PhP188 million pesos in a lottery because of its impact in our lives, such as in our education, our health, and our economy, particularly in farming. We will not worry for our children's education, we will not worry if there are emergencies, and transporting our produce is much easier now. Before, it will take a day just to transport our produce from barangay Tangkulan down to the center of Damulog, but now, we can even do it twice a day. We are really grateful for this new road," Aloba expressed.

The newly turned-over FMR will greatly help the 5,931 household beneficiaries which includes farmers of rubber, corn, rice, sugarcane, banana, and cassava. *(Joy Montecalvo, PSO Mindanao InfoACE)*

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