

DEVELOPMENT STORIES

*A compilation of MRDP stories published on
national, regional and local newspapers,
and news websites.*

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Department of Agriculture

MINDANAO RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2

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Rural road increases food production

by Noel T. Provide

Published in: Edge Davao, July 6-12, 2009

Mindanao Magazine, July 2, 2009

www.pia.gov.ph, July 2, 2009

Mindanao Examiner, July 3, 2009



HIGHLAND ROAD. The highland roads of Malapatapan, Sarangani Province has encouraged rural folks back to farming as the community who long endured trudging small slippery trails is now provided better road access of access to the central part of town.

One option to address food security is to maximize upland areas for food production.

The upland farmers in Barangay Tuyan, Malapatan, Sarangani Province had long seen the huge potentials of their farms to help in securing enough food in their town. However, they need better infrastructure for them to be productive.

"Although we have fertile lands, farmers in our barangay cannot go full blast in food production because they cannot easily bring their produce to the market," said Wahid Musa, the barangay's chief official.

Allan Malagante, one of the farmers in locality affirmed their difficulty in transporting their

produce to the markets.

"Following a very small trail, we carry our produce either by riding horses or simply on foot which usually takes several hours before we can reach the market. That is why the quality of our produce usually deteriorates resulting to cheaper price from the traders," Malagante recants.

"When I assumed as the barangay captain of Tuyan, I prioritized the establishment of farm-to-market road (FMR) which has been the clamor of my constituents for a long time. Since it would not be possible for our barangay budget to fund, we sought the help of our town officials and we are glad that they responded to our need," Musa said.

Mayor Aida Singcoy for her part said the local government had seen the need to open up road network in the said barangay not only in boosting food production but also in fast tracking the delivery of basic services in the area.

Through the FMR project under the Department of Agriculture – Mindanao Rural Development Program (DA-MRDP) as well as the Provincial Government of Sarangani, a road network was opened early this year and about to be completed within this month.

“Like other developing towns, there a lot of infrastructures that must be put in placed here in Malapatan. We are glad that through DA-MRDP we were able to save a least 50 percent of the construction cost which can be used in extending other needed services to my constituents,” Singcoy said.

Singcoy added that the provincial government through Governor Miguel Dominguez has also provided a bulk amount of their local counterpart.

MRDP program director Roger Chio said the investments on the construction of rural infrastructure form part of the government’s agenda to boost food productivity and make farming more profitable for small stakeholders.

“In implementing food security projects, DA-MRDP is mere facilitators as our local leaders are the lead implementers. We are glad that LGUs like the Province of Sarangani and Malapatan town had been our active partner in

enhancing capability of our farmers in food production,” Chio said.

“With the FMR addressing the need to lower transport cost and postharvest losses, our highland farmers can are now encouraged to expand their production areas,” Musa said.

“Just recently, the provincial government has delivered 200 bags of corn seeds which is a big boost to the potential of our barangay to be one of the major corn producing areas. We are confident that more assistance will be poured in our area,” Musa said.

The establishment of the at least 8-kilometer FMR do not only benefited 6,000 residents but also opened up other economic and social activities.

There is already a regular motorcycle that ferries residents to the downtown area not to mention that enthusiasm among school children of going to school safely. More importantly, farmers in the areas have renewed their confidence to contribute in securing their families and community enough and affordable food.

“With the FMR addressing the need to lower transport cost and postharvest losses, our highland farmers can are now encouraged to expand their production areas,”

Kidapawan villages benefit from infrastructure projects

by Malu Cadelina Manar

Published in: *Manila Bulletin*, July 5, 2009

www.positivenewsmedia.net, July 9, 2009



POSTHARVEST. Warehouses and solar driers are among the postharvest facilities the program provides to improve quality of produce from farmers, increase harvest yield and ensure better income.

Thirteen of the 40 barangays, mostly farming villages, in this city would benefit from various agriculture and infrastructure projects proposed by the city government under the Mindanao Rural Development Project (MRDP), according to the city's chief executive.

The projects would include construction of warehouses and solar driers, which will help rice and corn farmers dry and process their produce.

Also, the proposal would include the construction of flat bed

driers for rice for five different rice-producing villages in the city, including San Roque, Macebolig, Binoligan, Linangkob, and San Isidro.

Mayor Rodolfo Gantuangco said that each flat bed dryer could accommodate up to 12 tons of harvested palay.

Gantuangco said five farmers organizations from 10 villages here will be the beneficiaries of the agri-infra projects, which include the Kalaisan-Mabakal Farmers Association in Barangays Kalaisan, Macebolig, Sumbak, and Kalaisan;

the Paco–Binoligan Farmers Association in Barangays Paco and Binoligan; the SanRotado–San Roque Farmers Association in Barangays San Roque and Patadon; Linangkob–Sikitan Farmers Association in Barangays Linangkob and Sikitan; and Ganesan–San Isidro Farmers Association in Barangays Gayola, New Bohol and San Isidro.

To augment the rural infrastructure projects stated in the MRDP-City LGU agricultural development proposal, the city government is set to use part of the Community Fund for Agricultural Development, which amounts to P2.5 million.

“This would be utilized to finance livelihood programs for farmers during the off-season of harvest,” said Gantuangco.

The projects, according to the mayor, would be implemented this July or during the third quarter of the year.

Since February, series of farmers’ field training on Rice Harvest Sustainability Development were conducted by the City Agriculturist Office and the Department of Agriculture.

At least 161 farmers from different villages attended the trainings.

Pupils in Bansalan barangay school now enjoy safe water

by Sherwin b. Manual

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Sun Star Davao, July 17, 2009



BASIC NEED. Potable water in the barangays of Bansalan town in Davao del Sur bring about changes in the community life: for the school children improved academic performance as fetching water does not cost them valuable schooltime and for the residents safety and accessibility which saves time.

The newly installed faucet in Darapuay Elementary School here reduced the risk of pupils from water-borne diseases and improved their academic performance.

This is how Mrs. Lanie L. Cabahug, the school in-charge, describes the impact of the newly established communal potable water system in Brgy. Darapuay.

"Before, our pupils have to go out from the campus to fetch water every time they have to attend to their personal necessities. This cost them valuable time at school,"

Cabahug said.

"Going around the community to fetch water also exposes children to the danger of stray dogs and passing vehicles," she added.

She added that there had been an experience when a mongrel bit one of the children as he enters one residence in the area to fetch water.

"In 2007, some of our pupils were hit by diarrhea, and with six children became critical. We found out that it was due to their poor hygiene owing to lack of

safe water,” the head teacher recounted.

Today, the school has its own faucet installed in the campus. This is one of at least 35 units communal faucets installed all over the barangay.

The project was implemented through the local government unit of Bansalan and the Department of Agriculture - Mindanao Rural Development Program (DA-MRDP) under its Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD) component.

MRDP and the local government have invested for two potable water systems in the town. The other one is in Brgy. Marber.

Aside from the school that accommodates over 450 pupils, the water system has directly benefited around 250 residents who are members of the Darapu-ay Water System Users Association (DAWASUA).

The residents themselves have long suffered the hardship of fetching clean water from makeshift wells consuming most of their productive time which could have been devoted to farming as well as in marketing their produce.

DAWASUA has included the elementary school as one of the beneficiaries by installing, so far, one faucet.

“Now, we fetch water beside our school building. It’s now easy for us and we have more time doing school activities,” a Grade 5 pupil said.

Cabahug said that the school is now planning to activate existing

and install additional faucets in each classroom.

“The Department of Education has really pushed for hygiene practice in each campus but it was hard for us to comply since clean water was not available then. But now, we could really impose proper hygiene practice as potable water is now accessible within our campus,” she said.

“We are happy the municipal officials, our mayor Edwin Reyes and barangay officials has actively responded to our clamor to really include the school as one of the beneficiaries of the potable water system of MRDP,” Cahabug said.

“Now, we fetch water beside our school building. It’s now easy for us and we have more time doing school activities.”

New roads in Sarangani open opportunities for B'laan

by Sherwin B. Manual

Published in : Mindanao Times, July 25, 2009

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Edge Davao, July 27-August 2, 2009



ROAD ACCESS. The highland community of B'laans, the indigenous peoples group in Sarangani, now have better road access as the Program and the local government of Malapatan complete an 8km farm-to-market road that connects Brgy. Tuyan to the town.

For the highland community of B'laans here, the new road which connects them to main hub of the town is a gateway to better farming income while for the local government unit, an easier and faster delivery of services.

"With the use of motorcycles or trucks, it is easier for us now to bring our produce to the market since the condition of the road is favorable," said Alan Malagante, one of the B'laan farmers.

"Before, we only use horse to bring our produce, or worst we carry it and on foot, we bring our products to the market following a muddy and even slippery trail, particularly when it rains," Malagante recounted.

He said their fertile lands in the mountains have been producing enough yield of corn whose income could sustain his family's needs. But come harvest time, he has to endure the unfavorable road condition which only a horse could tread.

"It was really difficult for us. And due to the poor handling of our crops, traders buy it (products) in lower prices," he said.

"But today, we don't expect that to happen again. This early we have already seen the help of this road as our income has increased and hope to do better in coming days," he said.

For Mayor Aida Sincoy, the impact of road is easier access to

the community in bringing them the necessary social services.

"It is now easier on our part to bring for instance medical services and other assistance since the road has provided access," the mayor said.

"School children now enjoy easy walk from home to school and back since the road is wider and safer to traverse," she added.

The construction of the 8-kilometer farm-to-market road (FMR) which directly benefited over a hundred households was made possible through the efforts of the local government unit of Malapatan, the provincial government and the Department of Agriculture - Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP).

Leadership thrust

Singcoy said that her administration really focused on the construction of road networks since she knew of its impact on the lives of the people.

She said the road is not only for boosting food production but also for the government services to reach the area.

"In Malapatan, I understand that need to put in place more infrastructure just like any other developing towns. We are happy that MRDP as well as the provincial government is with us in this thrust," the mayor added.

More opportunities

The newly accessible road brings more than ease of transportation but a whole lot of new opportunities.

The provincial government of Sarangani has recently given at least 200 sacks of corn seeds for the farmers to start their corn farming.

"The farmers here are encouraged to further expand their farms since they don't fear of losing anymore," said Wahid Musa, the barangay's chief official.

"In the past, some residents and farmers here had abandoned their land since farming has been a failure. But now, they are back to their parcel of land they till and starting to rebuild their houses where their farm is since they no longer worry on the thought of farming defeat," Musa said.

Aside from farming, the road has created jobs for motorcycle drivers that now ferry residents and students to the downtown area.

There is also another non-governmental organization that invested for the spring development of the barangay.

Further, the mayor has stressed that road opening could also trigger tourism activities in the area since it (the barangay) has a scenic panoramic view of Malapatan, natural land formations and Sarangani bay.

Grateful B'laans

Alan Malagante, in verge of tears said he couldn't say in words how thankful he is for the road built for them.

"Kining kalsada nagdala og dakong pag-asa sa among kinabuhi (this road has brought us new hope in life.) he said.

Small infra project bridges productivity, safety in Polomolok

by Noel T. Provideo

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BRIDGING THE GAP.

Farmers and residents now enjoy safer crossing and easier market access through the box culvert constructed over a flood-prone creek by the local government and the Program. Aside from safety, the bridge provides faster movements of farmers' produce which are mainly corn, vegetables and other high value crops. Lower photos show the plight of people crossing the widened creek using the makeshift bamboo bridge.

They used to cross a narrow lane of makeshift bamboo bridge to reach the town proper while the eminent danger of falling into heavy boulders and scouring floodwater of a widened creek underneath is with their every step.

These are just some of the difficulties being endured by the residents of Purok Masagana in Barangay Magsaysay in Polomolok South Cotabato.

"For such a long time, we had been bothered by the dangers of crossing the narrow bridge. During heavy rains the situation is even more difficult as the water from the creek overflows causing the bridge to collapse. Most of the residents

have no choice but to stay at home and wait for water to subside or the bridge to be rebuilt," Iluminda Jaranilla, a former purok leader said.

Aside from the dangers it poses to the residents, it has also affected the income of farmers in the area.

"Since no vehicle can cross the bridge, we need to double haul our produce and pay an additional P10 per sack," said Eduardo Salarsa adding:

"Double hauling oftentimes damage the quality of our produce especially vegetables. Once damage they can no longer

command higher price and worst if buyers will reject it,” he said.

Thanks to the two barrel box-type culvert constructed in their sitio, the difficulties and dangers of crossing the makeshift bridge are now just water under the bridge. The said establishment of the said infrastructure was made possible through the partnership of the local government unit of Polomolok and the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP).

“There were several attempts to construct a permanent structure to make the creek safely passable but did not materialize. We are glad that our local officials have finally realized our long time dream,” Jaranilla said.

“As a farmer I am happy that the vehicle can now directly carry my produce to the market. The need to double haul my produce was eliminated which means reduction of more than one half of the transport cost. The savings would also mean increase in my income,” Salarsa said.

As a grandfather Salarsa is also happy to note that with the permanent bridge being erected, his grandson can now safely cross the creek and study at the adjacent day care center.

Meanwhile, Polomolok Mayor Isidro Lumayag for his part said he prioritized putting up of necessary infrastructure in production areas to promote farm productivity.

“Aside from sustaining the town’s economic growth, the bridge in Sitio Masagana has also secured the lives of the residents as they go along with daily

activities,” he added.

When asked if how they can do their share in the operation and maintenance of the almost completed infrastructure project, Barangay Captain Emmanuel Labrador said they are already planning to come-up with flood control activities as well as in regulating the use of the bridge based on its required capacity.

“If there was one good thing that the old bridge has brought us, it was on how we have enlivened our bayanihan spirit. Now that their dream of having a permanent bridge has become a sparkling reality, I am confident that they more than willing to maintain its utility,” Labrador said.

“As a farmer I am happy that the vehicle can now directly carry my produce to the market. The need to double haul my produce was eliminated which means reduction of more than one half of the transport cost. The savings would also mean increase in my income.”

Rural infra to enhance farm productivity in R-10

by Rosie Paasa

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LONG STRETCH. Farm-to-market roads in Bukidnon stretches long and far covering key production areas in of the province.

More rural infrastructure will soon be established to further improve farm productivity in Northern Mindanao .

Based on the recommendation of the Mindanao Rural Development Program-Regional Program Advisory Board (MRDP-RPAB) at least seven rural infrastructure subprojects are now undergoing review and eventually be opened for public bidding.

The said subprojects are the five farm-to-market roads for the towns of Kibawe and Sumilao in Bukidnon and Libertad, Kinoguitan, and Salay in

Misamis Oriental; and two post-harvest facilities for Claveria, Misamis Oriental and Lala, Lanao del Norte.

RPAB is the regional oversight committee tasked to ensure that policy directions are carried out in the planning and implementation of the MRDP2 activities within the region. RPAB-Region 10 is chaired by DA-RFU 10 Regional Executive Director Lealyn A. Ramos with its members from each covered province and the regional directors of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), National Commission

on Indigenous People (NCIP), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Chair of the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Council.

Department of Agriculture (DA) regional executive director Lealyn A. Ramos said the RPAB are encouraging the local government units (LGUs) enrolled in MRDP to propose more subprojects considering the bulk of available funds allocated for rural infrastructure.

Ramos who also chairs the RPAB said rural infrastructure such as irrigation, farm-to-market roads, and postharvest facilities are fundamental in improving agricultural production as it will not only increase farmers yield but would also improve quality of farm produce.

“To ensure its sustainability, beneficiaries are required to observe policies on operations and maintenance for government investments to have long term impact in rural communities,” Ramos said.

Regional Technical Director Constancio C. Maghanoy, Jr. added that the MRDP's package of investments for rural development is offered only for Mindanawons and urged the LGUs to grabbed this opportunity.

Magahanoy who is also the MRDP regional coordinator in Region 10 said LGUs should take advantage of this great privilege.

More rural infrastructure will soon be established to further improve farm productivity in Northern Mindanao .

DA targets more areas for irrigation rehab

by Noel T. Provide

Published in : Sun Star Davao, August 4, 2009



IRRIGATION systems play crucial role in rice production. The program targets to to rehabilitate and construct over 9000 hectares comprising community-owned and managed run-of-river communal irrigation systems.

To ensure food security and sufficiency in the coming years, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is targeting to restore and rehabilitate national and communal irrigation systems.

Covering a total of 368,000 hectares of land, the enhancement of our irrigation facilities is under a five-year program being implemented till 2010 under DA's FIELDS program.

FIELDS, which enumerates the six areas where government support are being focused under the President's food security and sufficiency agenda, stands for Fertilizers, Irrigation and other

rural infrastructure like farm-to-market roads, Extension services and education for farmers, Loans, Dryers and other postharvest facilities, and Seeds and other genetic materials.

DA Secretary Arthur Yap said the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), which is carrying out the five-year program, has so far rehabilitated existing communal and national irrigation systems covering 103,568 hectares of land and restored an area servicing 122,909 hectares since 2006 through funds it has received totaling P7.27 billion.

Yap said that focusing

on irrigation and other rural infrastructure has already yielded positive results with palay production expanding by 5.1% or double its average growth a year ago. The NIA's rehabilitation and restoration work has allowed farmers to plant an additional 69,000 hectares of farmland or 5.7% more than last year.

He said such gains were the result of the President's increased spending on agriculture P25.36 billion in 2007; P36.55 billion in 2008; and 46.86 billion this year.

Meanwhile, the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP), a poverty alleviation initiative of the national government implemented under the DA is also working on the rehabilitation of irrigation facilities in Mindanao.

"Mindanao has vast tracts of lands and is seldom visited by typhoons. But lack of irrigation facilities hampers the realization of the island-region's potential to lead in rice production," said agriculture regional director for Region XI Roger Chio.

Chio who is also the concurrent MRDP program director said to augment DA's infrastructure support for Mindanao, bulk of the program's funds had been allotted to rural infrastructure to pump-prime the local economy.

Around P440 million had been allotted for irrigation, farm-to-market roads, potable water system as well as bridges and postharvest facilities.

Specifically, MRDP targets

the rehabilitation of estimated 8,300 hectares compromising community-owned and managed run-of-river communal irrigation systems.

Chio said a bulk of MRDP funds still remain untapped and urged the local government units to send their project proposal. He however stressed that a 50:50 cost-sharing scheme is observed where 50 percent of the project cost will be shouldered by MRDP and the other half by the LGU.

"This is already a favorable cost-sharing scheme considering that the succeeding development projects will have to adopt to the 70:30 cost-sharing of which the higher amount will be raised by the LGUs," Chio said.

Chio said the LGUs should help in investing for rural infrastructure especially irrigation facilities if they aim to improve their farmer-constituents' income.

"Food program is a devolved function. That is why we are offering our support to local officials for them to effectively and efficiently perform their role as food security managers," he said.

WB to assess anti-poverty program anew

by Sherwin B. Manual

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www.pia.gov.ph, August 18, 2009

Business Mirror, 19, 2009



VEGETABLE production is among the viable and sustainable livelihood projects that MRDP has given to its beneficiaries through the community fund for agricultural development. This member of Awao High Value Vegetable Growers Association in Awao, Agusan del Sur, is starting her harvest of vegetables which are sold in the markets of nearby towns and as far as Leyte in the Visayas.

The World Bank is set to assess the impact of the Department of Agriculture's efforts in combating poverty in Mindanao.

The WB team will evaluate the program implementation of the DA's Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) for three weeks starting today, August 17, 2009. The review mission kick-starts here and project visits to community beneficiaries across six regions of the island will follow in the ensuing days.

Jointly funded by the World Bank, the national government and the Local government units, MRDP is five-year program geared towards uplifting lives of the poorest of the poor in Mindanao by increasing income of farmers, capacitating women and indigenous peoples, enhancing local governance and environmental protection.

MRDP is said to be the package of investments which combines the infrastructure project

and livelihoods, reforms on local governance and environmental conservation to create impressive impacts on poor rural communities.

To date, over P1 billion will finance various infrastructure project of farm-to-market roads, irrigation, post-harvest facilities. Close to P26 million worth of farm-to-market roads have been completed. While over P250 million projects are in progress or near completion. And the remaining amount is at various level of the procurement and review levels.

For the Community Fund for Agricultural Development, the livelihood component, has given over P47 million for over 500 livelihood projects across Mindanao benefiting mostly women and Indigenous Peoples (IP).

Further, the Program has granted to communities over P24 million worth of investments for environmental conservation and protection.

WB task team leader for MRDP Carolina Figueroa-Geron will head the evaluating team together with various consultants for the components of the Program. Ms. Geron is also the WB's Senior Operations Officer for Rural Development, Natural Resources and Environment Sector for East Asia and Pacific Region.

Program director Roger C. Chio said he is confident that the WB team will be satisfied of the performance of the program.

"Despite some bottlenecks on implementation, we have gained

grounds in our aim to uplift the lives in rural Mindanao," Chio said.

"We have created jobs, we've opened opportunities and we have made a difference, this even in the face of global economic crises," he added.

"We have created jobs, we've opened opportunities and we have made a difference, this even in the face of global economic crises."

Davao lumads see promise in banana

Noel T. Provideo

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Edge Davao, August 10-August 16, 2009

Business Mirror August 19, 2009



GOIN' BANANAS. Tagabawa-Bagobo tribal chieftain Gideon Tolentino (2nd R) and Sibulan Upland Farmers Association chairman Danilo Abe (extreme R) receive tissue cultured banana planting materials from Jane Abadilla (2nd L) of Mindanao Rural Development Program in a simple turnover ceremony recently. Also in photo is Dr. Melinda Rubillano (extreme L) of Davao del Sur Provincial Agriculture Office.

Indigenous people (IP) here seize the opportunity of growing lakatan banana for an increasing local market.

Their barangay's high elevation is a plus factor as bananas grown in these areas are observed to be sweeter and bigger than those in the lowland.

"Traders from Davao City and Gen. Santos City are coming over in our community just to buy

our lakatan banana. This came after they have found out that the bananas grown here are not only bigger but also sweeter," said Danilo Abe, chairman of the Sibulan Upland Farmers Association (SUFA).

Although they have already realized the potential of growing lakatan banana, Abe said financial constraint limits them from expanding their production area.

Among the inputs needed include quality and clean planting materials as well as appropriate amount of fertilizer.

"We are glad that the local government unit of Sta. Cruz endorsed our association to be one of the beneficiaries of the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) so we were able to access funds for expansion of our banana production," Abe said.

MRDP is a poverty alleviation initiative of the national government implemented under the Department of Agriculture and funded through a loan portfolio from the World Bank. One of its major components, the Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD) is geared to provide livelihood assistance particularly to the disadvantaged sectors like the IPs.

Through their proposed banana lakatan production project, the SUFA was given P250,000 which they used to purchase tissue cultured planting materials and organic fertilizer.

"The inputs were turned-over to at least 67 household members. After 16 months these beneficiaries can already harvest and initially pay back the amount they have received which will be used for our next in-line beneficiaries," Abe said.

Abe added that aside from financial assistance, the local agriculture office also trained the farmer-beneficiaries on recommended technologies to improve their farming practices.

He said traders buy their

lakatan all-in (meaning regardless of class) at P13.00 a kilo which is already reasonable. With the expansion of lakatan production, Abe said their association looks forward to a more promising business enterprise as they can consolidate enough supply and negotiate for better price.

MRDP program director Roger Chio said IPs are among the primary focus of the program.

"IPs are among the country's vulnerable sectors. To help them alleviate their plight, MRDP prioritized them as recipients of livelihood projects and rural infrastructure," Chio said.

"This project (lakatan banana production) implemented by Tagabawa-Bagobo is not only a showcase of a community demand-driven but also market-driven approach that guided our farmers on selecting economic activities with ready markets that can ensure regular income," Chio said.

Tribal chieftain Gideon Tolentino for his part said they are glad that the development programs such as MRDP are giving priorities to IPs. The lakatan banana production will not only boost their incomes, it also conforms to their tribal's cultural practice.

"It is environment-friendly as we don't need to cut our existing trees. Lakatan banana are being intercropped with our coconut, durian, lansonez and other trees. We are also using organic fertilizer," he said.

Lack of roads still the main concern of towns: officials

by Carmelito Q. Francisco

Published in : Mindanao Times, August 19, 2009



NEEDED INFRA. Road networks connecting farm and the market remain a much needed infrastructure of farmers in the countryside of Mindanao. The Program projects to establish and rehabilitate over 2000 kilometers of farm to market roads to provide farmers opportunity of improving their incomes.

Lack of roads is still the main concern of municipalities in Mindanao considering that farmers still have the difficulty in bringing their goods to the market.

This was based upon the assessment of the Mindanao Rural Development Program, a 15-year program, which started in 2004, was designed to alleviate poverty, particularly in the countryside.

Arnel V. de Mesa, deputy director of the \$84 million program, pointed out that out of the P1.2 billion program exposure

since the start of its second phase, 63% of which went to farm to market roads.

"These would indicate that roads are still the main projects needed for development in Mindanao municipalities," said de Mesa during a press conference Monday at the Waterfront Insular Hotel here.

Other projects are potable water systems, irrigation and others that communities need, he added.

Carolina F. Geron, World Bank senior operations officer who is

overseeing the program, said that projects that are implemented are “demand-driven” considering that local government units pay them as loans.

Unless the local government unit identifies the project that it wants funded, then nothing will be implemented, Geron explained.

Under the new mechanisms, local government units pay half of the project cost, while the remaining half is paid by the national government. In the previous phase of the program, sharing was 80% for the national government while 20% was shouldered by the local government unit.

There was also an attempt to compel local government units availing of the funding to come up with policies that would result in higher revenues, but Geron said the idea was shelved during the discussion process between the local government units and the national government.

She said the program “would have been a good venue” for the idea considering that would also show the creativity of local government units in increasing their revenues.

Under the concept, local government units could convert part of their loans in grants if they were able to increase their revenues by five percent.

De Mesa added that the top borrowers are municipalities of Agusan del Sur in the Caraga Region.

About two years ago, then Presidential Assistant for

Mindanao Jesus G. Dureza took note that foreign funding usually were used in projects within the so-called conflict affected areas in Mindanao, while other areas that were known for being poor could hardly receive help.

Among these areas, Dureza said, was the Caraga Region.

Roger C. Chio, Agriculture regional director and program executive director, said while some areas have had more projects, those in the Davao Region have lesser because they either have yet to apply for funding for their projects or some of these areas have projects funded by other funding institutions.

Mindanao towns laud gains of anti-poverty aid

by Sherwin B. Manual and *Edu Lopez

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Sun Star Davao, August 23, 2009

Edge Davao, August 24-August 30, 2009

**Manila Bulletin, October 18, 2009*

Business Mirror August 24, 2009

More than half of the covered towns of the antipoverty program of the Department of Agriculture in Mindanao have gained results of their investments.

Barely eight months after it formally commenced project implementation, DA's Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) has benefited 146 of its 225 covered towns across the island regions.

MRDP is an \$83 million poverty alleviation program of the government funded through an adaptable program loan from the World Bank plus the funding from the national and local government units (LGUs).

As it gears to improve incomes of small farmers and ensure food security, the program aims establish agricultural infrastructure

like farm-to-market roads, irrigation, potable water system and post harvest facilities. Coupled with agri-based livelihood projects, the program takes a more holistic approach to rural development.

In his report during the kick-off activity of the three-week World Bank review mission, Deputy Director Arnel V. De Mesa said that at least 146 towns have reaped initial gains in their investment.

"Six months after we have had our catch-up plan to cover our 18 month delay, we have seen initial and surely promising headway," De Mesa said.

He explained, however, that the gains are at various levels. "Some have completed the projects, other projects are nearing completion, others are at

procurement level, and some more are waiting for notices to proceed,” he said.

To date, De Mesa reported that of the P1.2 billion on the pipeline for infrastructure projects under the Rural Infrastructure (RI) component, P25 million has been completed and many of the on-going projects are within 70 – 85 percent complete.

Out of the P127 million worth of livelihood projects earmarked for the Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD) component for it year one town, over P47million has been completed, close to P22 million are on-going projects while the remaining amount is on the procurement process.

Leading regions and provinces

Of the six regions in Mindanao , Region 10 leads in the implementation of the projects with its total P270 million worth if infrastructure projects on the pipeline. Of this amount, over P17 million worth of farm-to-market roads in Linamon and Salvador towns in Lanao del Norte and Manolo Fortich in the province of Bukidnon have been completed.

Caraga region follows closely with its pipelined P215 million worth of infrastructure projects. The towns of Esperanza, Agusan del Sur and Carmen in Surigao del Sur had finished their farm-to-market roads.

Further the top five performing regions are Agusan del Sur, Sultan Kudarat, Zamboanga del Sur,

Lanao del Norte and Sarangani Province .

Fresh opportunities

Beneficiaries said that the projects have brought substantial development and new opportunities for the LGU and the rural folks.

For Malapatan Mayor Aida Singcoy in the Province of Sarangani , the farm to market road which reached to highland villages of B'laans in her town has spurred more economic activities among the lumad farmers and allowed easier delivery of social services on the part of the LGU.

In Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte, Mayor Benjie Baguio said that the road which connected the farthest barangay to the town center contributed much in securing peace and order in his town.

While in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur and Polomolok, South Cotabato the FMR and bridge constructed in their respective areas has reduced transport costs of their produce making them earn better farming incomes.

Other town beneficiaries

Other covered towns are yet to benefit from the program as they are on the process of completing the paper requisite while others are still preparing for their financial counterpart.

The program applies 50:50 cost-sharing scheme for its RI component and P500 thousand for the CFAD component.

‘Brotherhood’ makes aid effective: WB official

by Sherwin B. Manual and *Bong S. Sarmiento

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www.bworld.com.ph, September 1, 2009

Edge Davao, August 31-September 6, 2009

The ‘big brother – small brother’ relationship between the provincial and the municipal governments has made the implementation of the Department of Agriculture – Mindanao Rural Development Program (DA-MRDP) effective, World Bank official said.

WB senior operations officer Carolina F. Geron described this relationship as helping one another particularly poor towns to better serve their communities.

“In this way, the provincial government helps its towns to effectively implement various interventions it (town) employs on the ground,” Geron said.

Geron who is also the MRDP Task team leader heads the current three-week WB review mission which kicked-off early this week here to assess how the program fares in its goals set early this year after an 18-month hiatus.

Meanwhile, on a separate statement recently, WB acting director Maryse Gautier said the Philippines needs a Provincial Development Strategy (PDS) to address the need for coordination among local government units (LGU) in the implementation of

foreign-funded projects.

“A (PDS) could help address key issues in governance, capacity building and coordination,” Gautier said.

MRDP, an \$83 million long term poverty alleviation program jointly funded by the national government, the local government unit and the World Bank, is geared at increasing incomes and uplifting lives of the poorest of the poor in rural Mindanao. It covers 225 towns in Mindanao’s 26 provinces.

Lesson learned

MRDP Deputy Director said that in the experience during the first phase of the program, one province intervened with the municipal implementation of the infrastructure project since it had difficult time in completing the said project.

“With the strong partnership of the provincial and municipal government all projects have been completed in the first phase. This is among the lessons we learned in our over seven years of implementing development projects around Mindanao,” De Mesa said.

De Mesa added that there are a number of towns that experienced technical and even financial adversity. "Convergence of their efforts ensures the proper delivery of services to the community," he added.

Convergence

MRDP has been approved in 2007 but it was only in December 2008 when it started to roll out its targeted projects due to the counterparting policy.

The program applies 50-50 cost-sharing where half of the project cost is shouldered by the LGU and the other half is given as grant by the program.

"Some LGUs find it difficult to source out from their local coffer the fifty percent counterpart. As strategy, municipal local chief executives ask the provincial government to help put up the required cash equity," De Mesa said.

In Sarangani province, the fifty percent equity is shared by the provincial government and the town recipient of MRDP projects.

"The provincial government as big brother to his towns shares 70 percent of its fifty percent counterpart making it easier for small brother to come up with its cash value equity," De Mesa cited one example.

"We are thankful to our governor Migz Dominguez for his generosity in helping particular us in Malapatan a fourth class municipality to come up with our counterpart for our farm-to-market road," Mayor Aida Singcoy said in

a separate interview.

"To extend more help the community, governor Dominguez also distributed corn seeds which encouraged our farmers to expand their production," the mayor added.

Meanwhile, fifth class town of San Isidro, Davao del Norte has sourced out its funding equity from the RDR WHEELS project of Governor Rodolfo Del Rosario.

San Isidro mayor Tomas Abelita said that without the provincial counterpart it would have been impossible for them to come up with the farm-to-market road which is needed in his locality.

"We are the cacao capital in the country. But we cannot improve our production without infrastructural support to our farmers. Although a little difficult, I really pushed to have a farm-to-market road project to help our local farmers," mayor Abelita said.

Geron in a forum said she is expecting the technical, even financial assistance of the 26 "big brothers" to the 225 "small brothers" who are at the forefront of MRDP implementation to capitalize on the bulk of funds which have been readied since 2007.

"With this complementation we want to see five to seven more years from now that communities are able to eat three square meals a day and their incomes improved," Geron said.

Further De Mesa added that at this early, this convergence has resulted to tangible gains in terms of fortifying peace and development across Mindanao.

Region 10 leads in MRDP project implementation

by Rosie Paasa

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Business Week Mindanao, September 27, 2009

www.pia.gov.ph, October 15, 2009



Among the six regions in Mindanao, northern Mindanao (Region 10) is leading in the implementation of various subprojects under the Mindanao Rural Development Program Adaptable Program Loan 2 (MRDP2) in barely eight months of its implementation.

MRDP2 is a poverty-alleviation initiative implemented through the Department of Agriculture jointly funded by the World Bank, National Government, and Local Government Units covering Mindanao's 26 provinces and 225 municipalities.

The second phase MRDP seeks to further improve rural incomes and achieve food

security through agri-fishery rural infrastructure, livelihood enterprise, and biodiversity conservation projects.

Under the rural infrastructure (RI) component of the program, as of August 2009, Region 10 is implementing a total of 28 farm-to-market roads (FMRs) with a total cost of P270 million. Of this amount, over P17 million worth of farm-to-market roads in Linamon and Salvador towns in Lanao del Norte and Manolo Fortich in the province of Bukidnon have been completed. Some are on-going within 50-90 percent completion, others are below 50% completion, and some are at procurement level, waiting for notices to

proceed, and completing some requirements.

Other RI sub-projects like bridges, irrigation systems, potable water systems, and other infrastructures like post-harvest facilities now on the pipeline for implementation in the region.

Aside from infrastructures, MRDP is also providing livelihood to the identified poor communities in Mindanao under its Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD) component. Region 10 beneficiaries in eight towns enrolled in CFAD for year one implementation are now benefitting their various sub-projects like cut-flower production, livestock and crops production, and other livelihood projects. These are in Lantapan and Impasug-ong, Bukidnon; Linamon and Salvador, Lanao del Norte; Don Victoriano and Tudela in Misamis Occidental; and Claveria and Sugbongcogan in Misamis Oriental.

Eighteen more towns are coming in for CFAD for year 2, five in Bukidnon, four in Lanao del Norte, four in Misamis Occidental, and five in Misamis Oriental.

For biodiversity conservation, the region is implementing sub-projects under the Natural Resources Management (NRM) component of MRDP with a total cost of Php7 million in Linamon, Lanao del Norte. Such, are the Coral Reef Restoration and Enhancement through Community Based Coral Transplantation in Marine Protected Area for Fishery Production and Eco-Tourism Development worth Php3.335

million; Larapan Riverbank Stabilization Project worth P1.3 million; and the Agro-Forest Conservation and Eco-Tourism Development of Tinago Sub-Watershed worth Php2.365 million.

Regional program coordinator Constancio C. Mahganoy, Jr. said the smooth and efficient implementation of the projects in the region is due to the strong partnership of the local government units and the DA X.

Region 10 is implementing a total of 28 farm-to-market roads (FMRs) with a total cost of P270 million

Fund sharing agreement delays MRDP2 implentation

by Judy Quiros

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Philippine Daily Inquirer, Agust 19, 2009

Bandera, August 19, 2009



DELAYS. Some project implmentation of the program has experienced delays accordingly due to cost-sharing policy. The 50-50 cost-sharing scheme of the program is said to be costly for the LGUs.

The issue on fund sharing between the national government and local government units (LGUs) has caused a setback on the implementation of the second phase of the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) which is a recipient of a total loan portfolio of \$84 million from the World Bank (WB).

Speaking at a press conference yesterday at the Davao Insular Hotel, WB team leader Carolina Geron said the MRDP2 was

approved in 2007 and was targeted to start in December 2008 to January 2009.

However, the problem of counterpart fund sharing on the part of the national government and the LGUs had created an “uncertainty” that triggered the delay of the project implementation, she said.

MRDP is a poverty alleviation intervention project implemented under the Department of Agriculture (DA) jointly funded by the

national government, the World Bank, and the LGUs.

MRDP2, which covers 225 municipalities in 26 provinces throughout Mindanao, finally took off in February 2009 after the national government and the LGUs agreed on the sharing scheme and has also finished discussing on how to go about the catch-up plan to cover the delay, Geron said.

The national government and the LGUs have arrived at a 50-50 percent counterpart fund sharing agreement in which LGUs will shoulder 50 percent of the total cost of the project in cash and the other 50 percent as counterpart of the national government, Geron said.

Deputy program director engineer Arnel de Mesa confirmed that the sharing issue has hindered some LGUs from implementing the projects pipelined under MRDP 2 for their localities.

To date, of the 225 municipalities which are covered by MRDP2, only 86 municipalities have implemented the projects.

"The problem of the LGUs is the sharing system especially now that it should be in cash. Other LGUs are finding the difficulty in shouldering their share," he said.

But Geron said the WB believes in the "small-brother-big brother" relationship between the municipality and the province, in which the province is there to help the municipality concerned

in relation to its 50 percent loan equity share.

She said it is the province that recommends the municipalities that should be enrolled with the MRDP.

Noel Provideo of the Department of Agriculture (DA) 11 for his part said the original sharing system stood at 70-30 sharing agreement wherein 70 percent will be shouldered by the LGUs and 30 percent by the national government.

But the 50-50 percent sharing is only applicable for MRDP 2. The rest of the projects will go back to its 70-30 original sharing, he said.

De Mesa said P1.2 billion worth of infrastructure projects are now pipelined under MRDP2. Of this, P30 million worth of projects were already completed, he said.

Of the projects, 63 percent are farm-to-market roads while the rest are on potable water supply and other projects, de Mesa said.

The WB team will conduct an inspection on the project in the next three weeks, in which a number of project will also be formally opened in the municipalities, Geron said.

WB urges MRDP to showcase decentralization of agri services

by Noel T. Provideo

Published in : www.pia.gov.ph, October 1, 2009

Mindanao Daily Mirror, October 5, 2009

Agri Trends, October 5-11, 2009



Aside from improving rural incomes, the Mindanao anti poverty program is also urged to focus on decentralization of agricultural services.

World Bank (WB) senior operations officer, Carolina Figueroa-Geron told stakeholders of the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) to give equal importance on the decentralization process to fully meet its development objectives.

MRDP is a long-term poverty alleviation initiative of the government implemented by the Department of Agriculture (DA) through a loan portfolio from the WB.

“There are only two indicators that MRDP’s success will be judged upon. These are on how well we have improved rural incomes systems, potable water systems, and other infrastructures like post-harvest facilities now on the pipeline for implementation in the region.

Aside from infrastructures, MRDP is also providing livelihood to the identified poor communities in Mindanao under its Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD) component. Region 10 beneficiaries in eight towns enrolled in CFAD for year one implementation are now benefitting their various sub-projects like cut-

flower production, livestock and crops production, and how well we have institutionalized the decentralization of the delivery of agricultural services,” Geron said.

Based on Local Government Code of 1991, decentralization is defined as the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resources generation and allocation from the central government and its agencies to the lower levels of government.

Development experts deemed decentralization necessary to facilitate faster delivery of needed basic services and promote participatory governance. It will also help in the development of the nation by bringing the government closer to the people through administrative de-concentration and political devolution.

“The delivery of agricultural services as per Local Government Code is already a devolved function. Further, the country’s Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) also supports devolution of agricultural services to the local government units,” Geron said adding:

“The DA for its part could function as providers of state-of-the-art technologies rather than doing the delivery of basic services.”

She said this is the kind of setup being observed in other countries like China and Brazil who had been successful in developing their agricultural landscape as service provisions are accessible at the local level.

“For true decentralization to get off the ground it should start right at the planning process where inputs from the communities are there identifying their needs as well as the necessary investments,” she said.

Meanwhile, MRDP program director Lealyn Ramos said the DA had been enlisting the active participation of the LGUs in the implementation of agricultural projects on the ground.

Ramos who is also the concurrent regional executive director of DA in Region 10 said ideally, DA are mere facilitators and local leaders are the implementers of our food security program.

“With MRDP, we are able to reinforce the decentralized set-up and put focus on the capability building of LGUs in handling not only the physical implementation but also the financial management of a particular project,” Ramos said.

She said LGUs with good track record will boost not only their own confidence but also those in the national government and other donor agencies like the WB of their capability to implement development projects.

MRDP is also complementing decentralization by observing community demand-driven (CDD) approach in implementing livelihood projects. CDD emphasizes in giving communities and local officials the power, information, and skills to determine the best use of development resources.

Calla lilies bloom in Bukidnon's veggie town

by Noel T. Provideo

Published in : www.businessmirror.com.ph, October 6, 2009



Lantapan is Bukidnon's leading vegetable producer but rural women here have also seen the potential of cutflower as a good source of income.

While the town's cool climate and fertile lands make it ideal for growing vegetables, it is also suited for growing high value cutflower particularly Calla lily.

"An Igorot immigrant from Benguet brought Calla lily bulbs here in our barangay way back in 1970s. Having almost similar climate with Benguet's, the lilies thrived well," recounted Salvacion Longjas, the chair of the Songco's Rural Improvement Club (SoRIC).

Having seen how Calla lily's vibrant foliage and well-shaped white flower blooms, Longjas and other women were fascinated and could not help but grow the plant in their own backyards.

Little do they know that aside from beautifying their landscape it has huge demand among florists as the long stem and white flower fits as a décor in special occasions either as table centerpiece or bridal bouquet.

"A trader came here and offered to buy the flowers from our backyards. She even asked us if we can supply up to 1,000 dozens a week. It was only then that we realized the potential of Calla lily

as a good source of income,” she said.

Longjas said their group also learned that in meeting huge demand would require them to improve cultural practices and expand production area. It also needs necessary inputs such as fertilizers as well as additional shoots and bulbs.

“Since we lack financial resources to address production constraints, we sought the assistance of the local government unit. We are glad that they endorsed our association to be one of the beneficiaries of the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) so we were able to access funds to start up a microenterprise venture,” Longjas said.

MRDP is a poverty alleviation initiative of the national government implemented under the Department of Agriculture and funded through a loan portfolio from the World Bank. One of its major components, the Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD) is geared to provide livelihood assistance particularly to the disadvantaged sectors like the rural women.

Through their proposed Calla lily project, the SoRIC was given P100, 000 which they used to purchase organic fertilizer and additional planting materials for expansion.

“At present we only supply a small volume of cutflower ranging from two to six dozens

per member per month. Now that we have given funds to expand and improve our production we are confident that we can cope up with demand and eventually make good profit from Calla lily,” Longjas enthuses.

She said that although they are earning a little just yet, the benefits of venturing into Calla lily project are already felt among the SoRIC members.

“We used to be idle before just relying only on our husbands to make both ends meet. Now we can look forward to additional source of income and at the same time learn how to work together to become a productive women organization,” Longjas said.

Mindanao farmers profit from postharvest support

by Noel T. Provide

Published in : *Edge Davao*, October 26-November 1, 2009

Sun Star Davao, October 26, 2009



In the heart of sprawling rice field stands a progressive type rice mill building operated by farmers themselves.

The establishment of this rice mill facility brought much relief to rice farmers in this town where lack of the said postharvest facility limits their capacity to produce quality rice.

"We used to bring our palay as far as Shariff Aguak where we pay P20 per sack in milling. If it can no longer be accommodated we go as far as Isulan where we pay as much as P40 per sack," related Benjamin Abdulmaoti, the chairman of the Mamayagan People's Organization.

"Bringing our palay to the other place for milling would mean additional transport cost as well

as losses where mishandling are oftentimes unavoidable," he added.

Although not profitable, most of the farmers here opted to sell their palay to traders sans the difficulty of milling their own produce.

To address the need for better postharvest facility, Abdulmaoti along with the other members of the people's organization (PO) sought the assistance of their local agriculture office and endorsed their proposal to be part of the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP).

MRDP through its Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD) is providing livelihood assistance to boost rural incomes of farmers across Mindanao. It also provides infrastructure

and environmental conservation supports to 225 covered towns.

"When we evaluated the area, we appreciate its potential of producing enough rice for our town. It has 300 hectares of irrigated rice fields and a rice mill will be of great help both in minimizing farm losses and in increasing income," said municipal agriculturist Modrika Masukat.

The rice mill project installed in Barangay Manungkalin was the first and the only facility in the area. The size (9 x 15 x 6 meters) is much bigger as compared to the usual mini-rice mill project which is only 4 x 6 x 6 meters.

"During project planning the PO members agreed to expand the size of the building to have enough space in storing palay during peak harvest. This turns the facility into a multi-purpose building where milling and storing of both palay and rice can be done," Masukat said.

Since the P550, 000 funding is just enough for the purchase of milling facility and construction of a small building the POs sourced out funds from the local government units.

"The barangay government provided the sand and gravel including the earth fill while the municipal government provided the solar dryer in the adjacent," Masukat added.

Now that the rice mill facility was installed, the farmers' difficulty in bringing their palay to distant places is no longer a problem. The accessibility of the milling facility has eliminated their transportation

expenses and help in improving their incomes.

Milling cost for PO members is P1.00 per kilo while non-members is charged P1.50 per kilo. Abdulmaoti said the income they are earning will be used for continued construction of their building.

"When we started our first milling operations, the harvest season was about to end so we only earned P10, 000. We are confident that in the succeeding cropping seasons we could earn more," he said.

"The farmers will now have better option as to where they are going to sell their produce. They can sell the milled rice to their cooperative or to other rice retailers that offers better buying price," Masukat said.

"Rice farmers must be given access to modern milling and postharvest facilities to minimize postharvest losses and increase their income," said MRDP program director Lealyn Ramos.

"Given the increasing demand to secure the supply of our staple food, the challenge now is how to make rice production more profitable so that we can entice more farmers to sustain rice farming," Ramos added.

Ramos said while MRDP looking into the potentials of rice farmers in meeting the country's food security, the program is also concern in improving postharvest practices for them to make headway in feeding millions of hungry people.

Livelihood grant benefits fishermen in Surigao Sur

by Mike Crismundo

Published in : Manila Bulletin, November 5, 2009



The livelihood and development projects of Mindanao Rural Development Program–Adaptable Program Loan 2 (MRDP2) has uplifted the economic condition of the fisherfolks and farmers in the province of Surigao del Sur, particularly in Carrascal town, it was learned Wednesday.

At least 13 other MRDP 2 projects are also set to commence in the municipalities of Marihatag and San Agustin.

At present, the MRDP 2 through the Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD) has served and helped a lot the members of the Doyos Eastern Coast Fishermen Consumers Cooperative (DECFISCOCO) in

Carrascal town.

Because of the MRDP2 grant, the cooperative was able to purchase seven pump boats and fishing paraphernalia and other fishing requirements needed for their hook and line fishing.

Working hand in hand with the Municipal Project Management and Implementation Unit (MPMIU), the cooperative has displayed outstanding performance and increased their income and employment. They also produced more fishing units.

The members of the cooperative are already seeing a bright future ahead of them. With an increasing fish catch of seven to 10 kilos per day, they are

now able to bring home to their families more than enough for their consumption and a considerable income to support their respective basic needs.

MRDP-CFAD interventions have not only given hope to DECFISCOCO but also to other thriving organizations in nearby Carrascal town such as the Bagin Fishermen Coop with their bottom drift gill net project.

Meanwhile, farmer-recipients of the working animal subprojects were also grateful for having received the assistance which helped them in cultivating their farmlands and also increase their farm production.

According to Nenita Sotoniel of the Carrascal Tabon-Tabon Farmers, she is now able to save P900 per hectare out from what she spends for land preparation since she no longer rents a carabao to plow her farm before going into planting.

“The MRDP projects are big help to the fishermen and farmers and added income and employment in our province,” observed Surigao del Sur Gov. Vicente Pimentel

WB grants \$6.3 M for agri projects

by Tony PE. Rimando

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Mindanews, September 18, 2009

www.gmanews.tv, September 18, 2009

www.worldbank.org.ph, September 17, 2009

Philippine Star, September 20, 2009



A grant worth at least \$6.3 million (approximately over P300 million) for an agriculture-related project in various areas of Mindanao has been approved by the World Bank (WB), said Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

Yap said the project, to be financed from the WB's "Global Environment Facility," is part of the second phase of the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) which is designed to alleviate poverty affecting many inhabitants of the country's second largest island region.

Yap said in a published statement that the WB reported the grant will also be utilized to

increase by some 30 percent the fish production in several Mindanao coastal municipalities.

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The WB added that the project also seeks to reduce by 10 percent the silt and sediment in identified coastal areas to increase live coral and sea grass cover.

According to the bank, the project will ultimately "improve public awareness and community participation in an effort to address environment issues in the entire southern Philippines."

The project specifically aims at boosting the fisheries and forestry sectors which are significant in the ultimate upliftment of Mindanao's

socio-economic advancement, the WB stressed.

Quoting the Agriculture secretary, WB country director Bert Hofman said, "For 14 years, fishing accounts for an average of four-percent of the total gross domestic product (GDP) of the country even as it accounted for about two-percent the gross value added in the agriculture, fishery and forestry sectors.

In Mindanao, these sectors are important as they accounted for one-third of the island region's GDP.

Hofman, noted that due to global climatic change, the Philippines and other developing nations are at risk of a deteriorating overall production and therefore projects that will help address climate change.

DA to launch P300M biodiversity conservation in Mindanao

by Sherwin B. Manual, *Mick M. Basa and **Nonoy E. Lacson

Published in : Mindanao Daily Mirror, November 7, 2009

Sun Star Davao, November 9, 2009

Mindanao Times, November 7, 2009

**Manila Bulletin, November 8, 2009*

***Manila Bulletin, November 23, 2009*



Mindanao's rich biodiversity will be the focus of the island-wide environmental conservation project of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

The department, through the second phase Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) will launch on November 9 in Pagadian City the US\$6.3 million (over PhP300 million) conservation project grant from the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Specifically, the grant will support MRDP's Natural

Resources Management component that will implement protection and conservation projects in 11 sites across Mindanao that house globally significant species such as dugong, manta ray, giant clams, sea grasses and mangroves.

"Environmental risks like climate change are weighing down heavily on natural ecosystems in Mindanao on which many local communities depend for their livelihood and food. This is a great tragedy because the Philippines has been identified to have a

biodiversity that is among the world's richest. We need all the help we can get for our people in the south to fully benefit from and sustain such rich biodiversity," Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said in a statement.

Meanwhile program director Lealyn A. Ramos said that the national government and the Washington-based funding agency have recognized the urgency to salvage marine and forest resources of Mindanao .

"We are proud that our biodiversity here is among the world's richest, but we also know that it is highly threatened due to human actions and climate change," Ramos said.

She added: "almost one-third of the Philippines ' poor is in Mindanao who mostly depend on the bounty of the seas and forests for their food and livelihood."

The 11 covered towns include Olutanga, Mabuhay, and Talusan in the province of Zamboanga Sibugay; Rizal and Sibuitad in Zamboanga del Norte; Margosatubig and Vencinzo Sagun in Zamboanga del Sur; Marihatag and San Agustin in Surigao del Sur; Datu Blah Sinsuat in the province of Maguindanao and Lamitan in Basilan in Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

With the local government units at the helm of project implementation, the World Bank and the national government expect fish population in covered towns to significantly increase (as indicated by a 30-percent rise in fish biomass and density), reduce

silt and sediment in targeted coastal areas by 10 percent, build up live coral and sea grass cover by 10 percent.

Further, the project is designed to expand the number of protected mangrove areas in the covered towns and heighten public awareness and community participation in the protecting endangered species by 20 percent.

"It will take five or more years before we can see the impact of this project because of the long gestation period of the projects like fish sanctuary, mangrove rehabilitation among others. But at least we have made appropriate actions to arrest the challenges of climate change before it could harshly hit us," Ramos said.

"These targets in general will contribute to the over-all target of MRDP which is to reduce poverty, increase incomes, promote social growth and strengthen the decentralization mandate of the department," Ramos added.

\$6M AusAID grant eyed to improve governance in agri projects

by Noel T. Provideo

Published in : www.pia.gov.ph, December 29, 2009

Edge Davao, January 11-17, 2010



Delivery of agricultural services will be given a boost as the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) will pour in \$6 million US dollar to improve governance in agriculture sector.

This after the World Bank (WB) as requested by the Department of Agriculture-Mindanao Rural Development Program (DA-MRDP) arranged for additional grant from the AusAID for governance reform.

MRDP is a poverty alleviation initiative implemented under DA and jointly funded by the WB, national government

and the local government units (LGUs). The program implements rural infrastructure and livelihood projects, natural resource management as well as governance reforms interventions.

Institutional governance reform (IGR) is one of the components of the second phase of MRDP. However, in line with the Philippines government policy, close to two-thirds of WB loan for MRDP2 was earmarked for rural infrastructure component.

"We are glad that the AusAID through WB has given us an additional grant that will support and raise the quality and volume of complimentary IGR-activities to a level proportionate to the increasing livelihood and infrastructure projects," said MRDP director Lealyn Ramos.

Ramos said IGR is equally important component as this will lead to better governance which is the key to a stronger investment climate in the rural areas.

"It will also improve revenue and accountability mechanisms that will enable the LGUs to prioritize delivery of agricultural projects and spur development in the countryside," she added.

WB consultant Cesar Umali said, the AusAID grant will bring long-term benefits through enhanced and improved planning, supervision and operation and maintenance of infrastructure projects.

"Capability building activities under the grant will introduce new way of doing business to make livelihood and natural resource management projects sustainable," Umali said.

He added that the objective of the grant will enable both the DA and the LGUs to effectively deliver all devolved agricultural and fisheries services in a manner and quality satisfactory to target client farmers and fishers leading to increase in production, income and food security.

MRDP turns over P5 Million livelihood in Caraga region

by Emmylou T. Presilda

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The Department of Agriculture–Mindanao Rural Development Program (DA-MRDP) has turned over some P5.809 million worth of livelihood projects in the Caraga Region.

In a statement sent to the Manila Bulletin, the DA said the amount involved over 31 livelihood projects spread at targeted areas in the region.

According to the Regional Program Coordinating Office 13 (RPCO 13), the livelihood projects include livestock and crop production, fishery support livelihood, and pre- and post-harvest facilities.

In Carrascal town, Surigao del Sur, fishery projects which include hook and line fishing, deep sea net, and bangus cultivation have gained initial momentum as fisherfolk have increased incomes in their fishing activities.

Meanwhile, cattle and carabao under the livestock project have eased farmers in their daily farm activities.

Farmers in Talacogon town, Agusan del Sur benefited from the livestock and pre-and post-harvest facilities which are expected to improve their production.

These projects were implemented under the

community-demand driven projects of the livelihood component of the program Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD).

The DA-MRDP statement said the CFAD aims to fight poverty in the countryside of Mindanao by increasing income and empowering women, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable sector through agri-based enterprises.

Salvador Tibugson, member of the Manobo Farmers Association in Barangay Marbon of that same town, said they now have the chance to improve their production and better their farming practices now that they have the necessary infrastructure for increasing their productivity.

