

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority:

Can This Special Economic Zone Sustain Its Success?

One look at the sleek and smooth North Luzon Expressway and you know that good things are brewing up north outside Metro Manila, particularly in Central Luzon. Composed of Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Tarlac, Zambales, Nueva Ecija and Aurora, Central Luzon or Region III has long been known as the “rice granary” of the Philippines.

Today, according to the Central Luzon Regional Development Plan, Region III’s development strategy is anchored on the “W” growth corridor strategy that aims to maximize the comparative advantages of the seven provinces and growth areas in the region. The “W” growth corridor also enhances the development roles of the areas in the corridor and in effect prioritizes development interventions in the area to benefit the rest of the region.

Part of the region’s development interventions is the Global Gateway plan, which involves the linking of airports, seaports and highways in Clark in Pampanga and the Subic Freeport Zone. Initiated by the Subic Clark Alliance for Development (SCAD), the Global Gateway plan would synchronize efforts in developing Central Luzon as an air-sea-and-land logistic hub in the Asia-Pacific region.



Creating an intermodal transportation park using the Subic Container Port Terminal, the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport and the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Toll road, the new Global Gateway was created precisely to support the competitiveness that the Arroyo administration aims to establish.

Furthermore, the Subic port development and the Subic-Clark-Tarlac toll road will transform Central Luzon into the country’s modern growth center.

Businessmen believe that the inclusion of Subic and Clark in the ten-point agenda of President Arroyo would build up investors’ confidence in the Arroyo administration. With the full blast development of both Subic and Clark, these economic zones will become more attractive to foreign investments and economic progress in the entire region will be assured. Also, this will further increase export performance in the region, which would translate to more job opportunities for Filipinos.

In particular, the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), which was established under Republic Act 7227, is the government’s implementing agency to develop Subic Bay Freeport Zone into a globally competi-