

Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) Infrastructure Bringing Markets to the Poor

Infrastructure development such as farm-to-market roads (FMRs) spurs economic growth by providing easier access to markets, thereby alleviating poverty in the rural areas and in isolated regions as well.

From 2004 to 2007, the government's transportation infrastructure program involved the provision of the roll-on-roll-off (RORO) system to reduce transportation costs. Based on the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 2004-2010, about 612 FMRs with a total of 1,291 kilometers (kms) have been constructed to link the production areas in the provinces with the major roads to the market. Local government units (LGUs) report that about 31,293 kms of provincial roads and 36,885 kms of municipal roads have been paved as of September 2007.

For 2006, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) reported that about 152 FMRs worth PhP191 million have been constructed or rehabilitated (see Table 1). Region 3 or Central Luzon got the most number of projects with 41 (PhP31.5 million) followed by Region 5 (Bicol) with 34 (PhP47 million) then Region's 6 (Western Visayas) with 21 projects, worth PhP22 million.

Table 1
2006 Department of Agriculture-FMR Development Program
As of February 29, 2008

REGION	PROGRAMMED		COMPLETED		Length (Km.)
	Number of Projects	Program Amount (Php Million)	Number of Projects	Program Amount (Php Million)	
NCR					
CAR					
Region-I	2	6,000.000	2	6,000.00	5.43
Region - II	7	7,500.000	7	7,500.00	14.64
Region - III	41	31,500.000	41	31,500.00	23.12
Region IV-A	15	19,500.000	15	19,500.00	8.60
Region IV-B	1	2,000.000	1	2,000.00	1.18
Region - V	34	47,000.000	34	47,000.00	11.15
Region - VI	21	22,000.000	12	15,000.00	11.89
Region - VII	3	3,000.000	3	3,000.00	1.70
Region - VIII	11	17,500.000	11	17,500.00	5.89
Region - IX	1	1,500.000	1	1,500.00	1.00
Region - X	12	20,000.000	10	17,000.00	6.75
Region - XI	2	2,700.000	2	2,700.00	1.24
Region - XII	2	8,000.000	2	8,000.00	27.20
Region - XIII	-	-	-	-	-
ARMM	2	2,000.000	2	2,000.00	2.00
TOTAL	163	200,000.00	152	191,000.00	130.07

Table 2
2007 Department of Agriculture-FMR Development Program
As of February 29, 2008

REGION	PROGRAMMED		COMPLETED		
	Number of Projects	Program Amount (Php'000)	Number of Projects	Program Amount (Php'000)	Length (Km.)
NCR					
CAR					
Region-I	4	21.00	1	16.00	3.11
Region - II	26	33.00	24	28.00	46.70
Region - III	6	15.00	6	15.00	14.00
Region IV-A	1	5.00	1	5.00	7.50
Region IV-B	7	15.00	7	15.00	14.76
Region - V					
Region - VI	24	48.00	24	48.00	53.54
Region - VII	3	14.00	2	4.00	1.95
Region - VIII	2	10.00	2	10.00	4.95
Region - IX					
Region - X					
Region - XI					
Region - XII	2	11.00	2	11.00	8.90
Region - XIII	6	15.00	4	10.00	6.85
ARMM/Region X	3	13.00	3	13.00	4.48
TOTAL	84	200.00	76	175.00	166.74

For 2007, 76 out of the 84 FMRs have been completed worth PhP175 million (see Table 2). Five projects are ongoing while three projects worth PhP5 million have not started yet, pending approval of requests for funding realignment. Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) got the most number of projects with 26 (PhP33 million) followed by Region 6 with 24 (PhP48 million) then Region 4-B (Southern Tagalog) with seven projects (PhP15 million).

For 2008, some 57 FMRs totaling 634.33 kilometers are set to start in the first semester according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Linking Markets to Fight Poverty Via DA's Priority FMR Infrastructure Projects

The goal of FMRs infrastructure is to ensure farmers' access to basic social and market facilities. Thus, helping them produce more crops and earn more money.

With the construction and rehabilitation of roads in the agrarian reform communities (ARCs), this will help farmers and other AR beneficiaries open up opportunities for diversifying incomes and provide more jobs as well.



With FMRs in the regions, combined with capacity building, agricultural technology and local resource mobilization, ARCs will have increased agricultural production, more employment, improved household income, and strengthened rural institutions.

The following ongoing and priority projects of the DA hope to promote the construction of FMRs to support government's program on poverty reduction and food security:

- **Agrarian Reform Communities Project (ARCP).** The project hopes to improve the quality of life of agrarian reform households in at least 140 ARCs nationwide by providing basic infrastructure such as rehabilitation and construction of FMRs and bridges, improvement/rehabilitation of existing wells and installation of additional wells. This also involves the development of support services towards increasing agricultural productivity and household income by introducing alternative farming systems and small enterprise to cooperatives and agrarian reform beneficiaries as well as providing trainings and credit facilities.
- **Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project Phase II (ARISP II).** The project involves collaboration among the implementing agencies in the provision/construction or rehabilitation of rural infrastructure facilities such as irrigation, FMRs and post-harvest as well as development of farmers' organizations in the ARCs through trainings and programs.
- **Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project (ARISP III).** Just like ARISP II, the project aims to provide, construct or rehabilitate rural infrastructure facilities such as irrigation, FMRs and ARC Investment and Management Centers. This also aims to develop farmers' organizations.

- **Second Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDP 2).** The project aims to continue the momentum achieved by ARCDP I in increasing farmers' income and providing them more opportunities for sustainable growth. This project also aims to promote the expanded role and capacities of local institutions, particularly the local government units (LGUs), in managing and sustaining local development initiatives and programs.
- **Mindanao Sustainable Settlement Area Development Project (MINSSAD).** The project calls for the development of initially eight settlement areas in Mindanao in collaboration with other government agencies, non-government organizations and other sectors as well. The project aims to alleviate poverty, spur economic growth as well as ensure viable and sustainable development in the settlement areas.
- **Nothern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Natural Resource Management Project (NMCIREMP).** The project aims to reduce poverty for targeted household, indigenous peoples, coastal and lake fishermen and agrarian reform beneficiaries in Regions 10 and 13. This is through the establishment of community institutions at the settlement level and the development of their capabilities by providing infrastructure facilities such as FMRs, conducting training and capability building activities, providing equity to self-help groups through microlending, providing social support services as well as improving the quality and coverage of agricultural extension services through training programs.
- **Western Mindanao Community Initiatives Project (WMCIP).** The project aims to increase subsistence, crop and fishery production of about 16,000 farm and fishing households in Region 9.
- **Italian Agrarian Reform Community Development Support Project.** The project primarily involves the establishment of three Farmers Support Centers (FSCs), one each in Malabang, Lanao del Sur, Malungon, Saranggani and Datu Montawal, Maguindanao. This also include the acquisition and distribution of agricultural equipment in ARCs in Saranggani and non-ARCs in the province of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao. The FSCs will provide the necessary services and support to the ARCs in their pre and post farming operations.

Other programs include the Mindanao Sustainable Settlement Area Development Project II, the Comprehensive Agrarian Communities Development Project/ARCDP Phase III (CARCDP/ARCDP III), and the Bridge Construction to Support Expanded ARCs.