

Major RDC CAR Accomplishments for CY 2017 to 1st Semester 2018

1. Regional Development Planning

In 2017, the Cordillera Regional Development Plan (RDP) 2017-2022 was finalized and adopted. The CAR RDP 2017-2022 continues to adopt regional autonomy as its overarching development agenda. Along this line, the RDC intensified its IEC to increase public awareness, capacitated stakeholders and pursued alliance-building with strategic partners to advance the cause of regional autonomy. Of note is the engagement of the RDC with former rebel groups to pursue regional autonomy through participative and peaceful processes. On the legislative front, HB 5343 on establishing a Cordillera Autonomous Region was filed by all CAR Congressmen on 20 March 2017 with RDC support. The counterpart Senate Bill 1678 was filed by Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri on 1 February 2018.

On monitoring of the region's economic performance, the 2016 Annual Regional Development Report (ARDR) as well as the 2016 and 2017 Annual Regional Economic Situationer (ARES), along with the Quarterly RES were prepared. These reports were incorporated in the annual State of the Region Address (SORA) conducted by the RDC as part of the yearly Cordillera Month celebration in July. In 2017, the CAR registered the highest growth rate among all regions nationwide.

The RDC CAR also supported integrated area planning and development with the endorsement of the Integrated River Basin Management and Development Master Plans for the Abra and Apayao-Abulug River Basins to the DENR for funding and implementation. These master plans are in consonance with the RDC's advocacy of payment for environmental services and promoting the Cordillera as the watershed cradle of Northern Philippines.

The RDC likewise promoted complementation and improved coordination among research institutions with the formulation and adoption of the Regional Research Development Agenda (RRDA) 2018-2022. This document identifies priority research areas in line with the RDP goals of social development, sustained economic growth, environmental quality and cultural integrity.

2. Policy Review and Recommendations

In terms of addressing interregional concerns, RDC CAR was represented in meetings of the Luzon Regional Development Committee (RDCom) and the North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (NLGQ). A policy paper on "Irrigation Development for Upland Areas: Cordillera Administrative Region" was prepared and presented at the 16 April 2018 Luzon RDCom meeting. In relation to this, the RDC CAR requested NIA CO to consider the application of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) in the estimation of irrigable areas in the region. This is to advocate for equity in the implementation of irrigation projects to consider agriculturally developed areas in CAR beyond the national standard of maximum 3% slope for areas to be eligible for NIA projects.

Participation of the RDC in the NLGQ meetings and workshops, on the other hand, aimed to increase productivity through improved connectivity in the agriculture, industry, tourism and transportation sectors across the regions of North Luzon. Identification of programs and projects included improving infrastructure facilities and enhancing the linkages in the value chain of commodities and services in the NLGQ.

In addition, the RDC Sectoral and Support Committees reviewed and provided inputs to the following proposed policies, legislation, plans and programs:

1. Creation of the Chico River Development Authority
2. Creation of the BLISTT Development Authority
3. CAR Regional Statistics Development Program 2017-2023
4. Climate Responsive Integrated Master Plan for the Agno River
5. RDC I resolution on the Repeal of Tax Exemptions for Cooperatives
6. Upper Agno River Basin Resource Reserve Eco-Tourism Plan
7. Draft Issue Paper on the Delayed Implementation of the Department of Education School Building Program

3. Investment Programming, Budgeting, Project Development

In support of RDP implementation, the Cordillera Regional Development Investment Program (RDIP) 2017-2022 was updated and reviewed by the RDC sectoral committees and approved by the RDC. The updated RDIP with investment requirements of Php 268 Billion for the planning period included projects to promote the primary regional growth areas: the Baguio-La Trinidad-Itogon-Sablan-Tuba-Tublay (BLISTT) southern growth center and the Eastern Kalinga Growth Center as northern growth node.

The annual budgets of the regional line agencies (RLAs) and state universities and colleges (SUCs), on the other hand, were endorsed by the RDC through the conduct of regional budget consultations held in March. The budget consultations with the participation of RDC private sector representatives ensured the adoption of more responsive agency budgets while proposing increased allocation from national government. The RDC CAR also participated in the annual RDC-Agency Central Office (ACO) dialogue to negotiate for the favorable consideration of proposed regional budgets at the national level. Actual total budget allocation in 2018 was Php 45 Billion or 37% of the RDC-endorsed budgets. For 2019, total budget proposed for RLAs and SUCs is Php 78 Billion. In addition, the RDC endorsed for 2019 eighty seven road projects under the DTI-DPWH convergence program (ROLL-IT) and 25 road projects under the DOT-DPWH convergence program (TRIP).

In 2017-2018, the RDC Infrastructure Development Committee (INFRACOM) addressed concerns on priority infrastructure projects, i.e., funding for gaps in the Cordillera Roads Improvement Program (CRIP) and modernization of the Baguio Airport. With regards to opening the Baguio Airport for commercial operations, meetings were held by the RDC Chairman and Vice Chairperson with CAAP officials, other government partners particularly DPWH and DOTr, and private sector stakeholders to resolve constraints in operating the airport. The RDC likewise endorsed the proposed 2019 budget of the Baguio Airport to CAAP for the

improvement of airport facilities. Coordination with CAAP led to the conduct of an aeronautical survey for the Baguio Airport, a basic requirement to assess the feasibility of the airport for commercial operations.

On regional integration, aside from endorsing the increased DPWH CAR budget and the DTI-DPWH, DOT-DPWH convergence program road projects, improving the regional road network was supported with the RDC endorsement of the conversion of strategic local roads to national roads and the funding of missing link road sections.

The RDC also issued a resolution requesting the NIA to increase the irrigation coverage in the province of Kalinga particularly the municipality of Pinukpuk in the implementation of the Chico River Pump Irrigation Project. This is to ensure sustainability of the project and promote equity in the distribution of benefits considering the headwaters and catchment basin of the Chico River emanate from the watersheds of the Cordillera. The resolution also reiterated the requirement of the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples as provided for by the IPRA in the approval and implementation of projects within their Ancestral Domains.

On project development, and in further support of the BLISTT growth center, the RDC likewise established the Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) System Ad Hoc Committee to study the feasibility of this locally developed mass transport system for Baguio City and the municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet. The Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by the DOST CAR, caused the preparation of a pre-feasibility study and is presently finalizing the TOR for an FS to be submitted to the PPP Center for PDMF assistance.

In addition, the RDC endorsed projects supportive of the goals and priority sectors in the RDP. This includes the Philippine Solid Waste Management Sector Project: La Trinidad Subproject. The municipality of La Trinidad is the rapidly urbanizing capital town of Benguet Province that serves as a major vegetable trading center in the region. The RDC assisted the LGU comply with the requirements of NEDA-ICC evaluation of the ODA-proposed project. Another proposal endorsed by the RDC is the Chico River Basin Development Flagship Program submitted by the province of Kalinga as part of the Eastern Kalinga Growth Center (EKGC). A component of this flagship program is the Chico River Basin Flood Control Project proposed by the DPWH CAR for GAA funding.

4. Project Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to facilitate the implementation of critical infrastructure projects, the Cordillera Regional Project Monitoring Committee (RPMC) bolstered its monitoring activities with the conduct of problem solving sessions (PSS) to resolve the causes of delays in project implementation. In 2017, 22 projects were monitored by the committee, of which 20 projects were subjected to PSS. These included two bridges in Besao, Mountain Province; two irrigation projects in Kalinga; school building projects in Kalinga and Apayao; and DA-PRDP warehouse projects in Apayao. The

conduct of PSS resulted to the completion of these projects upon subsequent inspections while others reported improved implementation rates.

In the 1st semester of 2018, problem solving sessions were conducted for 11 projects, three irrigation projects and eight school building projects, while three projects inspected earlier were re-visited for validation. In relation to this, an issue paper was drafted on the causes of delay in the implementation of school building projects. Among other causes, the lack of local skilled labor may be addressed with the hiring of non-local labor to be assisted in adjusting to local conditions such as extreme weather.

An improvement to project monitoring is the conduct of impact evaluation for completed road projects. The M and E Fund-supported Impact Evaluation of the Cervantes-Mankayan-Abatan Road that facilitates travel from Benguet and Mountain Province in CAR and Cervantes, Ilocos Sur in Region I was contracted out and supervised by the INFRACOM/RPMC secretariat who gained skills in impact evaluation. Capacity-building activities were also conducted for RPMC members as well as monitoring and evaluation committee members including NGO partners at the provincial, municipal and barangay levels.

5. Other Significant Accomplishments in relation to Regional Development

- a. In the 1st Semester of 2018, the RDC Committee on Indigenous Peoples' Concerns steered the approval of the RDC Resolution "Urging all Provincial, City and Municipal LGUs in CAR to establish their Local Culture and Arts Councils". This is in recognition of the rich cultural heritage of the Cordillera that needs preservation and appreciation for its role in regional development. A Regional Forum on Culture was held on 4 May 2018 to encourage LGUs to establish their local culture and arts councils, and inform them on how to avail of National Commission on Culture and Arts assistance in promoting and preserving their cultural heritage.
- b. In recognition of the significant contribution of research, development and innovation in sustaining the competitiveness of the region, the RDC approved the establishment of the Regional Research Development and Innovation Committee (RRDIC) as support committee of the RDC during the Joint RDC-RPOC meeting on 24 January 2018.
- c. The continuing advocacy of the Cordillera RDP 2017-2022 and regional autonomy was done through the Tangguyob, the quarterly newsletter of the RDC. In addition, the RDC Secretariat published the annual RDC accomplishment report magazine, which was disseminated to all members and partner agencies. Quarterly accomplishments were reported during the quarterly RDC-RPOC Joint meetings through the RDC Secretariat's Report.