

Rural Development in Philippines



We join the international community in commemorating World Rural Development Day and the Foundation Day of the Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP). This milestone underscores our shared commitment to achieving an inclusive, sustainable, and equitable transformation in rural areas. On this significant occasion, we take great pride in highlighting the contributions of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to the advancement of rural development in the Philippines. The department's ongoing initiatives continue to have a meaningful and positive impact on the lives of millions of rural Filipinos.

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) is the lead government agency in the Philippines responsible for implementing the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and its successor, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER), as well as the newly enacted New Emancipation Law. The agency's primary mission is to distribute land to landless farmers and provide support services that empower rural communities and promote inclusive growth.



DAR operates through a decentralized system that consists of a Central Office, along with Regional, Provincial, and Municipal Offices across the country. This structure enables efficient program execution and allows for localized responses to the specific challenges faced by rural areas.

At the heart of the agency's mandate are the following core functions:

1. Land Tenure Improvement: Ensuring equitable land distribution through land acquisition and distribution (LAD), leasehold operations, and land surveys.

2. Agrarian Justice Delivery: Providing legal support to resolve land disputes, enforce agrarian laws, and uphold the rights of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs).

3. Program Beneficiaries Development (PBD): Providing support services to ARBs and their organizations, including infrastructure development, capacity building, enterprise development, access to credit, livelihood assistance, farm productivity improvement on awarded lands, and market linkages.

DAR's comprehensive approach to rural development emphasizes social justice, economic empowerment, and national progress, going beyond just land reform. It has implemented transformative programs that significantly enhance rural livelihoods and agricultural productivity in the country. Some of the most impactful initiatives include:

1. Land Acquisition and Distribution (LAD)

Distributed millions of hectares of agricultural land to farmer-beneficiaries, empowering rural families with ownership and a sense of dignity. In 2023, Republic Act No. 11953, the New Agrarian Emancipation Act, provided

for the condonation of unpaid land amortizations for farmer-beneficiaries or agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), thereby relieving them of financial burdens and enabling them to fully own their awarded lands.

2. Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT Project)

Through the World Bank-funded SPLIT Project, DAR aims to subdivide and issue individual land titles to ARBs who previously received collective Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs). This initiative enhances tenure security and encourages increased agricultural investments and productivity.

3. Social Infrastructure Building (SIB)

SIB supports the development of group structures and institutions to empower agrarian reform beneficiaries and smallholder farmers. These social institutions provide essential services to enhance productivity and income, ensuring land security and access to basic needs.

4. Enterprise Development and Economic Support (EDES)

EDES focuses on interventions that diversify and innovate rural enterprises for agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) and smallholder farmers (SHFs). It promotes environmentally friendly technologies, market orientation, skill development, and employment generation to enhance productivity and income, thereby driving community economic growth.



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5. Climate Resilient Farm Productivity Support (CRFPS)

The CRFPS aims to enhance agricultural productivity in agrarian reform communities by increasing climate resilience among agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs). DAR supports farmers with machinery, equipment, and training in climate-smart agriculture to improve yields and incomes while mitigating the effects of climate change.

6. Value Chain Innovation for Sustainable Transformation in Agrarian Reform Communities (VISTA)

VISTA, co-funded by the Philippine Government and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), supports smallholder households in coffee and cacao production, with a focus on women, youth, and indigenous peoples in the Cordillera Autonomous Region and the Soccsksargen region. The initiative aims to reduce poverty, improve food security, enhance ecosystems, increase income, create jobs, and promote climate resilience through inclusive value chains and sustainable resource use.

These programs and projects have had a significant and far-reaching impact on rural development in the Philippines:

- **Poverty Reduction:** Land redistribution and support services have significantly improved the lives of many agrarian reform beneficiaries, enabling them to escape poverty through sustainable income and improved living conditions.
- **Social Justice:** Agrarian reform has addressed long-standing inequities in land ownership, promoting social

cohesion and peace in rural areas.

- **Gender Empowerment:** DAR has integrated gender equality into its programs, ensuring that rural women have equal access to land rights and opportunities for skill development.
- **Food Security:** By empowering smallholder farmers, the DAR contributes to a more secure and sustainable domestic food supply.
- **Local Economic Growth:** Communities supported by DAR often see increased local revenues due to enhanced productivity, better access to markets, and the growth of rural enterprises.

DAR's work aligns closely with CIRDAP's vision of "sustainable, integrated rural development" throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Both institutions promote participatory development, capacity building, regional cooperation, and the empowerment of marginalized rural communities. As a long-standing member of CIRDAP, the Philippines is dedicated to fostering shared learning and collaboration for rural development.

The ongoing reforms align with the broader regional priorities advocated by CIRDAP, particularly in areas such as promoting climate resilience, encouraging digital innovation in agriculture, and creating inclusive value chains that empower small-scale farmers and cooperatives.

As we celebrate World Rural Development Day and CIRDAP's Foundation Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to empowering rural communities, protecting the rights of farmers, and investing in agriculture. Rural development is a shared responsibility that requires collaboration among the government, civil society, and rural populations. The Department of Agrarian Reform is dedicated to creating a just and equitable rural Philippines, ensuring that no tiller is landless and that all communities can thrive. Together, let's work towards achieving a vision of rural development that benefits everyone.

Mabuhay ang mga magsasaka! Mabuhay ang repormang agraryo! Mabuhay ang CIRDAP!

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