

## Philippines-Australia's road improvement partnership

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Manila, Philippines – Three more provinces – Aklan, Davae del Norte, and Lanao del Norte – have been included in the partnership program between the Philippines and Australia to improve road conditions in the Philippines, bringing to 10 the number of provinces covered by the five-year P4.3-billion (\$100-million) Provincial Road Management Facility (PRMF) funded by the Australia International Aid for Development.

PRMF, signed between the two countries on October 21, 2008, is helping provincial governments in Mindanao and the Visayas to upgrade and maintain their core road networks, increase economic activities, and improve public access to infrastructure and services. It started in seven partner provinces; Bohol, Guimaras, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, and Misamis Occidental. After significant results, Australia decided to extend the program to three more provinces. The target is to assist the Philippine government in managing and maintaining more than 1,000 kilometers of provincial roads up to 2014.

The PRMF, working in collaboration with the Department of the Interior and Local Government and provincial governments, has completed 14 road rehabilitation projects, benefiting 51,393 people and delivering socio-economic benefits to the communities. While a large portion of the program's funds are spent on road rehabilitation and maintenance, PRMF also supports local governance reforms to improve the quality and efficiency of public service. The fundamental purpose of Australian development assistance is to help people overcome poverty.

“Australia's use of incentives aligns strongly with President Aquino's performance-based approach to fast-track local governance reforms. Our partner provinces are building momentum and introducing good governance reforms. They are increasing their revenues to fund essential services to the poor. Their budgets are more transparent and allow for easier expenditure tracking. Good governance practices are critical to sustain service delivery, including quality roads,” notes Australian Ambassador to the Philippines Bill Tweddell.

By 2014, an estimated four million Filipinos will benefit from the Philippine-Australia partnership program, through access to better road networks, more economic activities to enliven communities, and improved delivery of basic services. MABUHAY!

Source: <http://www.tempo.com.ph/2012/philippines-australias-road-improvement-partnership>

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