



Resource Development (Phils.) Inc.

NEWS RELEASE

Public-Private Partnership Advances Rice Farming in Zamboanga del Sur



Golden opportunity. A farmer in Bayog tends to his “happy helpers” – ducks that were distributed by the provincial government of Zamboanga del Sur and mining company TVIRD as a result of a public-private partnership program established in the area. Growing livestock and crops together takes after a Japanese farming system that utilizes ducks to eliminate pests and produce natural fertilizer for rice to grow, eliminating the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur / July 2013 – Zamboanga del Sur Governor Antonio Cerilles, Bayog Mayor Leonardo Babasa, Jr. and Jake Foronda, Vice President for Operations of program partner TVI Resource Development Philippine Inc. (TVIRD), last week distributed close to 3,000 ducks to rice farmers in the municipality of Barangay Dipili, Bayog as part of a Public-Private Partnership livelihood program between the provincial government and the mining firm. Aside from livestock, the beneficiaries were also provided

with farm implements, bio-feed and organic fertilizers. The program was established last year and is aimed at supporting the government's mandate to reduce poverty in the countryside. PPP is a scheme implemented by the Aquino administration, tapping both government and private sector expertise, in various development projects nationwide.

The Integrated Rice-Duck Farming System is one of the four major components of the partnership between Zamboanga del Sur and TVIRD, which is the provincial government's first private sector partner. The other programs under the PPP are the *Cassava Gahung-Gahung* program, *Gulayan sa Kabahayan* and *Gulayan sa Paaralan*.

In February this year, the company allocated some Php5.5 million as counterpart to the Php6.1 million appropriation from the Zamboanga del Sur government under the program, which benefited indigenous Subanen farmers in the area. Some 400 farmer-beneficiaries received financial assistance and farming implements for their farms.

The proverbial Golden Goose

"The project, if implemented to the fullest, will give the farmers the opportunity to add more income for their families through the eggs they can sell to the market and more rice produce as their rice fields are expected to yield more with this project," Gov. Cerilles explained in his speech.

The farming system was developed by Dr. Takao Furuno in Japan where rice and ducks are grown together in the rice fields. It is adopted in Bayog – a municipality touted as a major rice granary – through the offices of the governor and provincial agriculturist.

A study made by the country's Department of Agriculture (DA) showed that growing rice and ducks together in rice fields resulted in higher rice production. Aside from an improved yield, the system also proved to be environment-friendly and low-maintenance.

"It is easy to understand why rice fields yield more with ducks raised there. Ducks produce dung that enhances soil fertility. They also eat harmful insects and pests, thus reducing the use of commercial fertilizers and chemicals," said project beneficiary Richard Dillera.

Dillera disclosed that duck eggs are sold in the market at Php7.00 each. These are purchased by *balut* producers in the province and are sold at Php15 to Php18 each. *Balut* is a boiled duck egg that is sold as a local delicacy across the country while its production is considered a growing industry in Zamboanga del Sur.

Grateful beneficiaries

“I will make sure the program will live-up to the expectations of its proponents,” said Rogelio Bustamante in appreciation to Gov. Cerilles and TVIRD. Along with other farmer-beneficiaries, Bustamante looks forward to improving his household income in the future.

“I am of the firm belief that the project is designed to alleviate the difficulty of the farmers by reducing the cost of farm inputs. The partnership of the provincial and local government units and TVIRD is an initiative that will surely improve the living standard of the farmers. If this will happen, we are reducing poverty in the countryside,” said Cerilles who earlier discouraged the farmers from using chemicals to improve farm profitability and do away with borrowing money from traders and loan sharks.

“I am encouraging you to practice organic rice farming since organic rice commands a higher price in the market than,” he said, expressing his confidence that the partnership with TVIRD will bring change to the lives of the farmers as well as strengthen democracy by reducing poverty.

“TVIRD has committed itself to help us even before starting its operations. We have programs to help alleviate your living condition and I thank TVIRD for its concerns to the people’s welfare,” Cerilles concluded.

A strong partnership

“I am elated that the program’s benefits have reached the community level,” said TVIRD’s Jake Foronda, explaining that while the company is engaged in mineral production, it continues to foster partnerships with the government to mobilize development programs and projects.

“TVIRD is not only concerned with mining but also looks after the welfare of the community. Towards this, we adhere closely to the principles of sustainable development and in accordance with the plan of the local government, community, and the indigenous people in the area,” said Foronda.

TVIRD holds the Mineral Processing Sharing Agreement (MPSA) covering the 4,779-hectare Balabag property in Bayog town and is authorized by the government to operate its gold-silver project in the area.

Press photos:



- 1 **Above:** Gov. Antonio Cerilles officiates the formal handover of close to 3,000 ducks to farmers in Bayog town. **Below:** Cerilles (center, in blue) along with key officers of TVIRD release ducks into the rice fields owned by an Integrated Rice-Duck Farming System beneficiary in Barangay Dipili, town of Bayog. Flanking him are (from L to R): TVIRD Operations VP Jake Foronda and Plant OIC Col. Valentino Edang.



- 2 Zamboanga del Sur government officials and key officers of TVIRD join farmers in releasing the ducks into the ricefields in Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur.

About TVI

TVI Resource Development (Phils.) Inc., is the Philippine affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration and production of precious and base metals from district scale large system, high margin projects located in the Philippines.

We are committed to exploration and mining practices that promote transparency, responsible stewardship of the environment, and the inalienable rights to life, dignity, and sustainable development of our host communities.

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