



Resource Development (Phils.) Inc.

## ADVERTORIAL

### TVIRD's First Ten Years in Bayog Town: its Natural Environment Transformed and its Town Reborn

*Prestigious Presidential Mineral Industry Environment Award conferred on TVIRD's Balabag Project*



*PMIEA Validators are joined by TVIRD field officers during the site inspection of Migligilian Tree Nursery where they witnessed the ongoing transformation of Bayog's forest. To date, the Company has planted and grown 405 thousand trees, earning for itself the recognition of Best Mining Forest – Second Runner-Up.*

**BAYOG, Zamboanga del Sur / November 2022** – On its first full year of commercial operations, the Balabag Gold and Silver Project of TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. (TVIRD) in Bayog Municipality, Zamboanga del Sur was recently honored with the Presidential Mineral Industry Environment Award (PMIEA) – the country's highest accolade for excellence in environmental, social, and health and safety practices.

Balabag follows the celebrated tradition of its sister projects under the TVIRD Group – the PMIEA Platinum-awarded Canatuan Gold-Silver / Copper-Zinc Project, and the Agata Nickel Project, which was thrice feted with the PMIEA Presidential Award as well as an ASEAN Mineral Award.

In addition to its notable history, the Company draws confidence from lessons learned and Agata's core philosophy of "*Starting it Right, Keeping the End in Mind*" – a set of future-oriented values that instill environmental responsibility way before mining operations even began.

But it was not always smooth sailing for TVIRD in Balabag. And to say that the Company had to navigate through rough waters may be the greatest understatement yet.

### **Bayog: a checkered past**

In September last year, Bayog's mining stakeholders were jubilant that TVIRD finally commenced its mining operations in Sitio Balabag. The news also brought a smile to the late Timuay Casiano Edal – a member of the Subanen tribal council called *Pigsalabukan Gokum de Bayog* (PGB) and one of the signatories of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the tribe and TVIRD.

"After many years of waiting, TVIRD is finally operational. I never thought I would still witness its mining operations," said the chieftain who was among the many Subanens that welcomed the Company's geologists who explored Balabag in the early days.

In 2012 – prior to TVIRD's entry – the provincial government of Zamboanga del Sur dismantled illegal mining operations that plundered the environment and contaminated the bodies of water in the area. A *Cease-and-Desist Order* was implemented by a multi-agency task force, led by the DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau for this purpose.

Under the MGB's supervision, TVIRD embarked on a major clean-up activity to address the indiscriminate cutting of trees, un-engineered tunnels and earth-moving, and mine waste laced with mercury, cyanide, nitric acid, and other hazardous chemicals left by the illegal operators.

Some TVIRD employees recall how they were forced into child labor under the illegal miners back then. It was for "livelihood," they said, and like the others, it was their only way to earn a living.

TVIRD Community Facilitator Marvin Edal, grandson of the late chieftain, cringes at his former life working in the tunnels: "We manually carried rocks out of tunnels and hammered on them to fit into the operator's ballmill. They also cut down trees without permits and used the rivers and streams as their makeshift tailings ponds."

“But now with TVIRD, every tree is replaced several times over and employees are provided with hard hats, gloves, and protective equipment. The focus on environment and safety is the big difference – and I am grateful for this,” Edal said.

### **Protecting indigenous cultural communities**

The Subanens whom the illegal mining operators hired as laborers for their processing plants were not treated with dignity nor paid just wages. Instead, they were exploited in their own homelands.

Prior to the Philippines’ enactment of the Indigenous People’s Rights Act (IPRA Law) in 1997, TVIRD signed a MOA with the indigenous Subanons for its maiden project in Canatuan, town of Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte.

Also prior to operating in Balabag, TVIRD signed an MOA with its host Subanen tribe in 2015, securing a “social license” to operate in the area. The Company likewise received social licenses to operate via signed resolutions from Bayog’s twenty-eight (28) barangays, its Municipal Government as well as the Provincial Government of Zamboanga del Sur.

Today, under the leadership of Timuays Lucenio Manda and Tony Edal who succeeded his father, the collective tribe receives royalties from TVIRD’s mining operations and are now able to invest in their future. And with the implementation of the Community Royalty Development Program – a common development roadmap for the Company and the indigenous Subanens – they are able to chart their own path to self-determination.

TVIRD’s security personnel, aside from being trained on the Voluntary Principles on Human Rights and detailed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, have also assisted TVIRD’s host communities as they likewise come from those communities – and some being indigenous people themselves.

### **Responsibility and coexistence**

During its period of care and maintenance, and eventual project development, TVIRD contributed significantly to various livelihood projects in the Bayog Municipality and its surrounding communities. The people of Bayog were finally on the path to a meaningful and sustainable development after decades of unwanted illegal mining.

The Municipal Government likewise anticipates increased economic activity that will uplift the town, hopefully to a first-class municipality as TVIRD’s Canatuan model has proven.

During its years of conducting exploration and pre-development activities in Bayog – and its established track record of safe and responsible mining in Canatuan – TVIRD has demonstrated a genuine commitment that goes beyond business alone. The immediate community and the townspeople are a living testament to this.

### **Beyond compliance, beyond business**

Since bringing its operations on-stream in 2021, TVIRD has successfully completed thirty (30) shipments of gold and silver dore to refineries in Australia, Hong Kong, and Zurich, Switzerland. It has also ramped-up its operations, and the delivery of direct benefits to its host and nearby communities.

Also, since then, TVIRD adhered to all applicable laws and regulations as evidenced by its outstanding Tenement, Health and Safety, Environment, and Social Performance in the past fiscal year. Aside from having no *Notices of Violation*, it likewise has Zero Fatal Accidents and garnered the top spot as the Safest Mine under PMIEA's Surface Mining Operations category. The Company's responders also train with the Philippine National Red Cross and the Bureau of Fire Protection with whom they team up in emergency situations.

Its associates, Rachel Pingkian and Edwin Loreno were respectively named Best Mine Safety Supervisor, and Best Safety Inspector for their commitment to their chosen profession.

In terms of reforestation, the Company has thus far planted and grown 405,822 trees in over 346 hectares, earning for itself the recognition of Best Mining Forest – Second Runner-Up. Its aggressive *Plant Plant Plant* Greening Program promotes biodiversity complemented by the creation of SIDLAK (Sustainable Integrated Diversified Livelihood Agricultural Knowledge) – the only farm school run by a mining Company in the Zamboanga Peninsula.

In close collaboration with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Department of Agriculture, the Company's SIDLAK Demo Farm School teaches locals the proper methods for gardening, tree planting, raising livestock, managing their farms and marketing their products.

To date, its thematic landscaping program has introduced the eco-tourism concept to its beneficiaries – an alternative source of income that will eventually go beyond the life of the mine.

The Company's mining operations created vast opportunities for all its stakeholders. Despite operating for barely a year, its programs have already laid the groundwork for leaving a meaningful legacy.

At the height of the pandemic, the TVIRD Group played an active role in helping those who were affected by Covid-19 and provided PPEs and food packs to individuals whose livelihood were curtailed. The group also sourced rice and vegetables from community organic farms that it helped create through its partnership with TESDA.

In times of natural calamities, the TVIRD Group has been a first responder and extended its assistance to those who are affected in the Zamboanga Peninsula and Caraga Regions during recent typhoons

And every time the community needs help, TVIRD's synergistic response – through Balabag, Agata, Greenstone, and the help of VillarSIPAG Foundation – the TVIRD Group is now able to roll-out an even more integrated response with even wider coverage. All for the benefit of the communities it serves.

### **Ten years hence**

A decade after the dismantling of illegal mining operations in Bayog, the town's natural environment has grown into lush, forested areas that thrive around TVIRD's gold and silver operations. The town itself has experienced a rebirth: new roads, a four-story school building, community stores and livelihood programs as well as a bustling downstream economy.

"We operate under business ethics that never compromise the safety and health of our employees, communities and the environment," said TVIRD President Yulo E. Perez. "We are opening our doors for everyone to see what we're doing so our stakeholders are informed. Because we firmly believe we can do more if we have the community's participation."

"We likewise keep an eye on the future. The overall plan is geared towards life after mining and that the Subanen farmers can still grow and produce farm products in their mined-out ancestral lands long after TVIRD has concluded its project," according to the executive.

From a social perspective, TVIRD is confident that its chosen roadmap for the future is the right one. Its social programs have been crafted in consultation with its beneficiaries to help both parties navigate the future together.

From an environmental perspective, mining is not forever. That is why programs were put in place – with the end in mind. The future success of TVIRD's programs is a testament that there is life after mining.

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**Press photos:**



- 1 Bird's eye view.** TVIRD's field office and processing plant sit at the crest of Balabag Hill, which provides a good vantage point for monitoring its mining operations and progressive rehabilitation as well as a proper slope for directing effluents to its tailings impoundment and storage facility down below.



- 2 Circa 2021:** Members of the Operation Group are ecstatic, having met the Company's objective to mine and process at the newly-constructed Mill Plant.



- 3 *TVIRD produces gold and silver dore at its processing plant. Since bringing its operations on-stream in 2021, TVIRD has successfully completed thirty (30) shipments of gold and silver dore to refineries in Australia, Hong Kong and Zurich, Switzerland.*



- 4 *Timuay Casiano Edal and grandson Marvin (Right & Left, respectively) of the Subanen tribe were ecstatic upon hearing the news that the Company is now operational. The late tribal leader, who is succeeded by his son, Tony, said projects embodied in their Community Royalty Development Plan (CRDP) could now be implemented.*



- 5 *“We firmly believe we can do more if we have the community’s participation,” said TVIRD President Yulo E. Perez on TVIRD’s vigorous IEC Campaigns that have encouraged locals to actively participate in the Company’s reforestation efforts – a shared responsibility for the conservation of Bayog’s natural environment.*





- 6 **A helping hand.** TVIRD's Community Relations team led by Khalil Tabernero distributes food packs to Imelda Town's flood victims who were lining-up alongside the Company's service vehicle. Some food packs were delivered directly to households by the team.



- 7 **Eco-tourism** is made a reality through the Company's thematic landscaping within its MPSA.



- 8 **Proper benching.** TVIRD employees place coconut mats and planted grass to protect and stabilize the slopes and prevent soil erosion. The slopes are also "benched" to add more stability.





9 TVIRD Environment personnel conduct desilting activities after several days of constant raining.



10 The happy faces of the graduates of the Community-based Training on Organic Agriculture spearheaded by the TVIRD-supported SIDLAK Techno Demo Farm and TESDA.

#### **About TVI in the Philippines**

TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. (“TVIRD”), is the local affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining Company focused on the exploration, development and production of precious and base metals from district-scale, large-system, high-margin projects located in the Philippines. Concurrent ownership of ventures is shared with partner Company, Prime Resource Holdings Inc.

The commercial operations of Agata Mining Ventures Inc. (AMVI) mark the third successful mining project that TVIRD brought on-stream in a period of 10 years. With its Balabag Gold-Silver Project ramping-up operations, the Company remains 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 its host communities.

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