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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Mindanao Affairs (Technical Working Group)	<p>Discussion with government departments/agencies on their respective 2019 budget proposals and plans and programs for Mindanao</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Tourism (DOT) 	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Peter "Sr. Pedro" Unabia (1st District, Misamis Oriental), has been conducting a series of meetings to discuss with government agencies their proposed budget for 2019 and plans and programs for Mindanao. The TWG was created by the Committee on Mindanao Affairs to study possible ways by which budget allocations for Mindanao could be increased, noting that the region has been getting only a small percentage of the budget of each department or agency.</p> <p>In today's meeting, it was the turn of the Department of Tourism (DOT), Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) to present their 2019 budget proposals and plans and programs for Mindanao.</p> <p>DOT Assistant Secretary Maria Lourdes Japson expressed her support for efforts to increase Mindanao's 2019 budget to help uplift the economic condition of the region, especially the poorer provinces. She went on to say that any increase in the budget of the DOT regional offices in Mindanao would allow them to implement meaningful capability building programs. She added that with the move to increase the budget in Mindanao, the DOT regional directors in the area started discussing and identifying additional plans and programs for possible implementation.</p> <p>The DOT, through Justin Tech, executive assistant at DOT's Office of the Secretary, presented the Tourism Road Infrastructure Program (TRIP), a convergence program of the DOT and the DPWH which involves the upgrading or construction of roads leading to tourist destinations in order to encourage more tourists to visit these areas. He said that the TRIP has 677 projects nationwide that are expected to be fully accomplished by the year 2022.</p> <p>Rep. Alberto Ungab (3rd District, Davao City) sought the DOT's explanation on why the Department allocated 90% of its budget to the National Capital Region (NCR) with only very little left for the rest of the areas of the country.</p> <p>Japson explained that the NCR budget includes the allocation for the DOT Central Office which takes charge of downloading funds to its regional offices.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Unabia suggested that the DOT should inform the public of the positive developments in Mindanao, specifically in the tourism sector, during the period of implementation of martial law (since May 2017) because of the threat of terrorism, to which Japson agreed.</p>

<p>Continuation... Mindanao Affairs (Technical Working Group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) • Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) • Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) 	<p>TIEZA's Project Planning and Development Chief Chet Lacson said that TIEZA works closely with MinDA in identifying its projects in Mindanao. She reported that TIEZA has recently approved three tourism assistance center (TAC) projects for Mindanao.</p> <p>TAC will house basic facilities and services tourist may need while they are on the road. It has comfort rooms, rest areas, charging and WiFi stations, tourist information desks, police posts, as well as Go Lokal stores where products from small businesses in the area can be sold.</p> <p>TIEZA, a government corporation attached to the DOT, is mandated to develop and manage tourism infrastructure projects in the country, as well as to regulate and supervise the tourism enterprise zones (TEZs) nationwide.</p> <p>Engineer Nenita Jimenez, OIC-Development Planning Division, DPWH, reported that the DPWH allocated P189.94 billion or 33.19% of the DPWH's 2018 budget to Mindanao.</p> <p>Jimenez also apprised the body that 98% of the national road network in Mindanao are already paved. She explained that the DPWH cannot fully accomplish paving the national roads because of the continuing conversion of local roads into national roads.</p> <p>Rep. Ungab requested the DPWH to survey other areas which can be constructed as new roads to continuously develop the road network in Mindanao.</p> <p>Director Reyzaldy Tan of MinDA's Planning, Policy and Project Development Office presented the Mindanao Development Corridors (MinDC), a spatial development strategy that aims to increase the competitiveness of Mindanao industries by providing them with common service facilities. The program also aims to achieve physical integration among key economic clusters in Mindanao in its bid to become self-reliant and internally dependable.</p> <p>Tan said that the MinDC strategically grouped the Mindanao regions into five development clusters: Industrial Trade, Mariculture and Trade, Biodiversity and Eco-Tourism, Food Basket, and Food, Agri-Business and Logistics.</p> <p>Tan declared that the MinDC has 43 inter-regional projects comprising of six bridges, four flood control infrastructures, and 33 interconnectivity roads. He presented the following criteria in prioritizing projects: contribution to economic growth and local culture preservation and enrichment; access to public transport; proximity to tourism clusters; disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA); and social development inclusiveness.</p> <p>Tan promised to submit the details of the MinDC projects to the TWG.</p>
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