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SMEDSEP-LRED helps improve economies in Leyte, rest of Visayas

By [Rodrigo S. Victoria](#)

Naval, Biliran (11 March) -- Started in September 2003, Phase 1 of the Small and Medium Enterprise Development for Sustainable Employment Program (SMEDSEP)-Local and Regional Economic Development (LRED) has made significant impact on the economic activities of some Local Government Units (LGUs) in Region 8 and the rest of Visayas.

This was emphasized in the LRED presentation made by Desiderio P. Belas, Jr., Provincial Director of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in the province of Leyte during the LRED orientation briefing held at the Sangguniang Bayan (SB) Session Hall in Naval, Biliran on March 4, 2008,

In the presentation, Director Belas stressed that the SMEDSEP-LRED helps (LGUs) in streamlining business permit licensing in order to shorten the period, minimize the number of forms to be issued, the needed basic requirements and the processing steps in the processing of business permits and licenses

A concrete example is the city of Bacolod in region 6 where it takes only two days now to process business permit license compared to nine days before.

Here in Eastern Visayas, significant changes in the business permit licensing happened in LGU-Isabel where before 11 signatories were involved, eight forms were issued, eight basic requirements were needed, 12 processing steps to be followed and one to two weeks processing before one can finally get a business permit license.

At present, LGU-Isabel has significantly reduced the number of signatories to just two, issued only two forms, needed two basic requirements, limited the processing steps to four for renewal and five for new and processed business permit license in only two to four hours.

The streamlining of the business permit licensing in LGU-Isabel was also adopted in the municipalities of Palo Palompon and Ormoc City all in the province of Leyte where this program of DTI was piloted during the 1st phase of its implementation.

Other specific major results and impact of SMEDSEP-LRED were noted like the increase in clientele and revenues to BDS providers in the Information Technology (IT) sector in Cebu and tourism industry in Negros Occidental.

There was also an increase in SMEs loan portfolio of partner banks to 41% in one and a half years and institutionalized a participatory Local Economic Development planning process resulting to the implementation of 11 lighthouse projects or quick wins in Baybay, Carigara, Ormoc and Palompon.

In the province of Leyte, significant achievements include the establishment of Tourism and Investment Promotion Office, creation of Master Tourism and Investment Development Plan, outbound investment mission to Malaysia and Kuala Lumpur, release of P2M grant from the Philippine Tourism Authority for the Ambacan River Eco-Tourism and the coming of investors like Jollibee, SC Global Oil Mill Products and Ambacan River Resort took place in Baybay which is one of the newly created cities in Eastern Visayas.

In Ormoc City, SMEDSEP-LRED helped in initiating the systematic promotion of Lake Danao through website development and maintenance, production of promotional materials and formulation of the Lake Danao Management Plan.

The DTI program also strengthened the Ormoc Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. through the design and production of business directory,

development of OCCI website, enhancement of existing brochures, provision of display area/incubator and the provision of support to the chamber's organizational development through the German Development Service (DED) consultant, introduction of cold storage facility, identification of potential pro-poor investment like the Bagsakan facility and inclusion of the same in the city's Annual Investment Plan (AIP).

In the municipality of Carigara, the DTI program helped establish a Virgin Coconut Oil manufacturing plant and an organic fertilizer plant, printing of packaging of materials for Roscas cookies, increase of income of coconut farmers to 14 %, generated 26 additional employment in VCO, improved cooperation among LGUs and private stakeholders and replicated Roscas packaging in Barugo, Leyte.

In Palompon, SMEDSEP-LRED helped reclassified the municipality from fourth to a third class, increased local and foreign visitors to Tabuk Marine Park and Sanctuary by 30%, prepared its tourism plan, established the Investment Promotion Unit, develop the website and brochures and created an estimated 100 new jobs within a year in the municipality.

At present, Naval was selected to become a partner in the DTI-GTZ SMEDSEP for the second phase of the program. (PIA-Biliran) [\[top\]](#)

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