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**CEBU Business**

**Cluster approach introduced to more LGUs**

By AJ de la Torre (The Freeman) Updated October 16, 2009 12:00 AM

BOHOL , Philippines — More provinces and Local [Government](#) Units are being introduced to the cluster approach that would help gain economic growth and development after municipalities in Bohol have attested to the great support it has given their areas.

During yesterday's event on the Local and Regional Economic Development forum that discussed "Accelerating Economic Development through Cluster Approach," representatives of the Abatan cluster in Bohol, which is the five municipalities that have worked together to protect and develop the Abatan river, shared their continuing efforts led by the Department of Trade and Industry and the German Technical Corporation.

The cluster approach is a partnership among the local government, private sector and the community for economic growth and [employment](#) generation, poverty alleviation and mobilizing people and making them work together in order to have a positive effect on economic change."

Catigbian Mayor Roberto Salinas, Chairman of the Abatan River Development shared to LGU representatives, stakeholders, NGO and other participants the achievements and the struggles they went through in implementing the Abatan ecotourism development project being participated by the five municipalities in the area namely Antequera, Balilihan, Catigbian, Cortes and Maribojoc.

Salinas said that it has done a lot for their communities especially in generating jobs for the residents and increasing their yearly income.

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continuous achievement and are even planning to extend their plans and are hoping to include more municipalities in their area.

Congressman Edgardo Chatto, who gave the keynote address on "Accelerating Local Economic Development through Inter-LGU Alliances or LGU Clusters," said that that clustering may be a good strategy seen to bring us back in the frontline through providing livelihood and other means to help the economy.

"Our country can move to different heights of developments and success" said Chatto adding that clustering would be very successful if there is willingness from the parties involved and the strong identification of common resources that would be used for the development of their cluster.

DTI-7 Regional Director Aster Caberte said that they are very pleased with the results of the LRED and the clustering approach in Abatan River as well as the Maqueda bay cluster in Samar. Caberte said that in Cebu for instance, they have brought the LRED to some municipalities and are looking for possible areas to apply the cluster approach.

She said that aside from the partners that they have at present, they are seeing a lot of potential partners for next year and this is a proof of the success of the program.

Dr. Volker Steigerwald, the program manager of GTZ-PSP, a German international development enterprise which have been actively assisting different efforts of the Philippine government in strengthening the capacity of the people in improving the lives of the Filipinos, said that the cluster approach is an effective way to gain economic growth as "joint effort are more stronger than individual efforts."

Steigerwald said that they have helped other countries as well that have been doing the same approach and they were not hesitant to assist the Philippines since the practice that they have been doing fit the situation here.

He also said that they were pleased with the commitment that have been promised and displayed by the communities, agencies and individuals here in the country, which is not seen in all of the

He said that for his municipality for example, before the inter-LGU alliances they only had a direct income of P2.1 M a year which has dramatically increased since the clustering approach.

It likewise gave boost to the [tourism industry](#) as well as opportunities in investment promotion and marketing program, which allowed the LGU to package and market some of its economic development potentials and emphasized the opportunities for entrepreneurship in the municipalities.

Salinas said that they are optimistic of the

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Cluster.

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