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# **Quarterly Performance Report October - December 2013**

## **Investment Enabling Environment (INVEST) Project**

Submitted to:

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Office of Economic Development and Governance  
U.S. Agency for International Development/Philippines  
under Contract No. AID-492-C-11-00005  
(Output No. 4.2, Deliverable 4, Component 3)

February 3, 2014

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACCP	American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines
AG&P	Atlantic Gulf and and Pacific
ASEAN	Association of Southeast East Asian Nations
BF	Business Forum
BFP	Bureau of Fire Protection
BLGF	Bureau of Local Government and Finance
BOC	BPLS Oversight Committee
BOSS	Business One-Stop Shops
BBC	Batangas City Business Club
BPCCI	Batangas Province Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BPLO	Business Permits and Licensing Office
BPLS	Business Permits and Licensing System
BPOSS	Business and Occupancy Permits One-Stop Shop
BSU	Batangas State University
CDI	Cities Development Initiative
CEO	City Enginer's Office
CENRO	City Environment and Natural Resources Office
CDO	Cagayan de Oro
CIP-TWG	City INVEST Project Technical Working Group
CPA	City Program Adviser
CPDO	City Planning Development Office
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DBP	Development Bank of the Philippines
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DOF	Department of Finance
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
DOT	Department of Tourism
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EO	Executive Order
FFCCCII	Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc.
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAP	Gender Action Plan
HEPP	Higher Education Partnership Project
HRDMO	Human Resources Development and Management Office
IBC	Iloilo Business Club
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTIPB	Iloilo City Trade and Investment Promotions Board
ICTO	Information and Communications Technology Office
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILED	Iloilo Economic Development Foundation, Inc.
INVEST	Investment Enabling Environment Project
IPC	Investment Promotions Center
IRO	Investor Relations Office
ISSP	Information System Strategic Plan
IT	Information Technology

ITSD	Information Technology Services Division
JIT	Joint Inspection Team
JMC	Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, series of 2010
LEIPO	Local Economic and Investment Promotion Officer
LGSP-LED	Local Government Support Program for Local Economic Development
LGU	Local Government Unit
LIIC	Local Investment Incentives Code
MIGEDC	Metro-Iloilo Guimaras Economic Development Council
LTTA	Long-term Technical Assistance
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCC	National Competitiveness Council
OC-BPLS	Oversight Committee for Business Permits and Licensing System
OCVAS	Office of the City Veterinary and Agricultural Services
OIDCI	Orient Integrated Development Consultants, Inc.
PagIBIG	Home Development Mutual Fund
PBED	Philippine Business for Education
PBR	Philippine Business Registry
PCCI	Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc.
PhilHealth	Philippine Health Insurance Corp.
PMO	Project Management Office
PPDO	Provincial Planning Development Office
PSB	Philippine Savings Bank
PSHS	Philippine Science High School
PTO	Project Technical Officer
RCC	Regional Competitiveness Committee
RFP	Request for Proposal
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SGLG	Seal of Good Local Governance
SIMM	Scaling Innovations in Mobile Money
SOW	Scope of Work
SSS	Social Security System
STTA	Short-term Technical Assistance
TCCP	Turkish Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc.
TIN	Taxpayer Identification Number
TWG	Technical Working Group
UPV	University of the Philippines Visayas
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# I. INTRODUCTION

The Investment Enabling Environment (INVEST) Project is a two-year project of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under its Partnership for Growth program. The Project seeks to improve the enabling business environment in three partner cities: Batangas City, Iloilo City, and Cagayan de Oro City. Over the past two years, the Project worked with the local government units and other stakeholders in the partner cities, and engaged national government agencies to create a policy environment supportive of the efforts to improve competitiveness.

The Project was awarded by USAID to the Orient Integrated Development Consultants Incorporated (OIDCI) on September 30, 2011 and was launched on November 3, 2011. On April 10, 2013, USAID issued a Preliminary Notice of Intent to Exercise of Option. Subsequently, a modification of original contract was made on September 26, 2013 that extended the life of the Project up to September 2014 with additional budget for the Option Year. The Project submitted its revised Workplan for the Option Year on September 27, 2013, which was approved by USAID on October 2, 2013.

Under this Workplan, the Project will be implemented along three components. In Component 1, the Project will (1) continue the studies that were started in the latter part of Year 2 and work towards the adoption of business permitting reforms at the national level;(2) assist the cities in setting up a computerized business permitting system, introducing risk-based inspection system, streamlining the procedures for securing construction-related permits and those operating hotel establishments and tourism-related activities; (3) assess the business permitting reforms that will be adopted by the partner cities in 2014; (4) review the Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, series of 2010 (JMC) which set service standards in processing business permits in the country, with the objective of refining these standards to match those followed in other countries in Asia; and (5) provide technical support to national inter-agency committees that oversee policies on business permitting.

In Component 2, the Project will give priority to activities related to the conduct of Business Forums for each partner city. The Project will (1) conduct investment planning sessions with the participation of the local government and the private sector in identifying investment priority areas and opportunities for the business sector; (2) develop marketing materials for the Business Forum, such as investment kits and press releases; (3) engage partners to co-sponsor the event, and (4) assist the partner cities in setting up Investment Promotion Centers, where prospective investors can get information on the city's investment opportunities.

In Component 3, the Project will (1) enhance the system for measuring the level of competitiveness in partner cities and (2) undertake project closeout activities. Project management will ensure that the requirements for project closeout will be complied with. A demobilization plan will be prepared and an exit strategy for the Project in each of the partner cities will be discussed with USAID.

## **Major Accomplishments for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

### *The Batangas City Business Forum*

In the first quarter of the Project's Option Year (9<sup>th</sup> Quarter of project implementation), the Project successfully organized the Batangas City Business Forum (BCBF) on December 11, 2013. This forum was originally scheduled in the second year of Project implementation, but was moved to a later date because of the elections and the need for more time to undertake preparatory activities that will make the forum more meaningful. The Project had to work with the local private sector in Batangas City to organize a group that would represent them in the Organizing Committee for the business forum. This was needed because Batangas City did not have a city-level private sector organization that can partner with the local government for investment promotion. The Project believed that while holding a Business Forum was possible even without private sector support in the Organizing Committee, it was important to involve them so that the outcome will be owned and shared by both the local government and the private sector. It was during the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter when the impetus to organize this private sector group, now known as the Batangas City Business Club (BBC), went into full swing. The need to prepare for the Business Forum became the means towards greater collaboration and partnership between the city government and the private sector. This partnership will matter in the future as the City moves towards its goal of becoming a dynamic investment destination.

### *Further Streamlining of Business Permit Processes*

But while the Forum was a high-profile activity for investment promotion, the Project also held equally important activities to support the objective of making the business permitting systems in partner cities more efficient and less burdensome to businessmen. In preparation for the renewal period in January 2014, the Project conducted the following activities to promote the use of automation in processing business permits in partner cities: (1) coaching for the redesign of the business permit processes for the 2014 renewal period and for the setting up of a more business-friendly business one-stop shop (BOSS); (2) conduct of a study visit to observe the automated business permits and licensing system (BPLS) and online payment procedures of Valenzuela City for the Iloilo City Mayor; (3) introduction of the online payment system offered by the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) to the partner cities; and (4) holding of coordination meetings between Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the partner cities to facilitate the latter's connectivity to the Philippine Business Registry (PBR), a web-based portal that currently processes applications for business name registration, provides tax identification number (TIN), and provides for registration numbers for the Social Security System (SSS), the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) and the Home Development Mutual Fund (better known as PagIBIG). On the PBR, the Project assisted the participation of the partner cities in the PBR operations training organized by the DTI for cities that plan to connect to PBR.

During the quarter, the Project also initiated activities aimed at further simplifying business permitting in the country. The review of the JMC standards, which was started in the 8<sup>th</sup> quarter was continued with the completion of two focused group discussions (FGDs) in Luzon and Mindanao which was participated by 38 local government officials. The Project also started the study that will streamline the procedures for securing building and occupancy permits. It is a well-known observation that businesses often experience difficulties in obtaining construction and occupancy permits. The Project organized three workshops, one per island group, where participants from 35 LGUs were able to share their existing construction permitting systems. A

national conference on best practices in processing construction and occupancy permits was also conducted on November 14, 2013.

A previous initiative of the Project that will reduce the burden of business applicants during the renewal period relates to the requirements of the SSS to secure prior clearance of “no delinquency” before a Mayor’s permit can be renewed. In the 2013 renewal period, the Project worked with SSS and DILG for the removal of this requirement, and for its replacement by a negative list that will be provided by SSS to the cities. In the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Project learned that the same requirement (prior clearance of “no delinquency”) will also be enforced by PhilHealth under its new law. Hence, the Project organized a meeting among social security agencies on November 8, 2013 to address this issue. The meeting led to a consensus to (1) standardize the requirements of the social security agencies, which will be implemented thru a Memorandum of Agreement between DILG and PhilHealth and a Joint Memorandum Circular to be signed by DILG, DTI, SSS, PhilHealth and PagIBIG and (2) build a database of businesses as part of the Philippine Business Registry under the DTI. Drafts of the required legal instruments were done by the Project, which were circulated to concerned agencies during the quarter.

#### *Promoting Competitiveness Policies and Metrics*

Following the success of the Regional Competitiveness Summit which introduced the city/municipality competitiveness indices for more than 200 LGUs, the National Competitiveness Council (NCC) expressed its intention to do another round of competitiveness assessments in 2014. In response, the Project drafted a manual of operations for the 2014 competitiveness ranking of LGUs, which was presented to a Workshop of Regional Competitiveness Committees on December 5-6, 2013 in Iloilo City. This is the Project’s contribution to institutionalize the indicator system for competitiveness monitoring of Philippine cities and municipalities. Relatedly, the DILG has started evaluating the indicator system developed by the Project in connection with the agency’s plan to introduce a Seal of Good Governance, which will include a competitiveness audit.

The Project also assisted in organizing USAID’s monitoring visit to Batangas City on November 22, 2013 to evaluate the implementation of the Action Plan formulated in connection with the city’s inclusion in USAID’s Cities Development Initiative (CDI). The Project assisted in collecting updates on the action plan from the city government. The review was generally positive, indicating the city’s seriousness in conducting regulatory reforms to promote competitiveness and inclusive growth.

#### *Program Management*

The Project experienced staff turnover with the resignation of two long-term technical assistance - the city program adviser for Batangas City and the Project Accountant. While this temporarily caused some disruption in project activities, the management was able to procure able replacements during the quarter. Four short-term technical assistance (STTA) were also hired during the quarter. To comply with USAID requirements, the Project assisted the OI/DCI in conducting a competitive bidding for the audit of the Project’s financial transactions in 2013.

#### **Impact of Project Activities**

The most visible impact of the Project’s involvement in the investment promotion activities of partner cities is the greater awareness among investors of the potentials of Batangas City. The

Business Forum generated a total public relations value of P 2.1 million based on the exposure obtained through TV, print, and radio (refer to annexes for the press releases).

During the Forum, several agreements were signed: (1) a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Batangas City Government and the Philippine National Football Team or Philippine Azkals which provided for the use of the City's auditorium by the Philippine Azkals and the commitment of the Azkals to organize national and international events in Batangas City; (2) a Memorandum of Agreement between Batangas State University and Atlantic Gulf and Pacific (AG&P) for the improvement of English language proficiency of AG&P employees, and (3) three Memorandum of Agreements between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Cities of Batangas, Iloilo, and Cagayan de Oro for the connection of the cities to the Philippine Business Registry.

Another outcome of the Forum is the interest expressed by the Turkish Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc (TCCP) to explore investment opportunities in Batangas City and to send a trade and investment mission to the City. The TCCP specifically mentioned the Business Forum as the reason why they got interested in Batangas City.

The BPLS-related initiatives of the cities during the quarter are expected to lead to further reduction in processing time and steps that businessmen will go thru in renewing their business permits in January 2014. The PBR connectivity, once it materializes, will fast track the formal registration of small and medium scale enterprises which can now be done in the city hall, almost in the same venue where applications for the Mayor's permit are being processed. The standardization of procedures for business renewals of the social security agencies will be a major reform that will reduce the requirements for business renewals.

With the preparation of the manual of operations for the competitiveness ranking of LGUs, the Project was able to institutionalize a system for monitoring competitiveness among LGUs. This is the first time that such a system will be put in place and regularly implemented by the government, through the NCC.

### **The Project in the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

More activities are slated in the next quarter of the Project. The Project will organize, with the partner cities, the Business Forums for Cagayan de Oro (February 12, 2014) and Iloilo (March 12, 2014). These Business Forums will also go through preparatory activities that Batangas went through, specifically the identification of investment priorities and priority projects, the establishment of Organizing Committees based on partnership among the local government, the private sector, partner agencies, and other stakeholders, and the sharing of costs of the Business Forum.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter will coincide with business renewal period. The partner cities are expected to implement major trailblazing reforms during the quarter. Based on their action plans, some of the major changes that can be expected include: (1) piloting of online business registration; (2) further simplification of the business application form; (3) further reduction in steps and processing time as a result of increased use of automation by the cities; (4) reduced prerequisite requirements, including those from national government agencies; and (5) integration of the Bureau of Fire (BFP); and (6) setting-up of a satellite BOSS outside of the city hall.



Similar to the 6<sup>th</sup> quarter of the Project, the partner cities will be evaluated on the extent of reforms implemented and their impact on business establishments. However, unlike in 2013, the assessment will be done in-house. At the same time, the Project is also involved in the Report Card Survey for the three cities in collaboration with the Civil Service Commission and the DILG. This is in addition to the competitiveness and local economic development survey which the Project will be conducting during the quarter.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter, findings of two studies on business permitting are expected to be presented to the concerned agencies and inter-agency committees. These are the JMC and the streamlining of construction permits. Three studies are scheduled to start during the quarter – the tourism permitting study, the risk-based sanitation study and the risk-based fire safety inspection study.

On project management, the financial audit of the Project will commence during the quarter. In preparation for project closeout, a demobilization plan will be submitted to USAID in March 2014.

## II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY PROJECT COMPONENT

Under the Option Year Workplan, the Project will be implemented along three components. Similar to the previous two years, Component 1 focuses on activities that will further streamline business registration processes and lower transaction costs, with particular emphasis on the use of technology in business processing. Component 2 will give priority to activities related to the conduct of Business Forums for each partner city. This will involve the conduct of investment planning sessions that will identify investment priority areas and opportunities for the business sector, development of marketing materials such as investment kits and press releases, and involvement of partners and stakeholders in the event. Component 3 will enhance the system for measuring the level of competitiveness in partner cities, in addition to preparing project closeout activities.

The accomplishments in the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter reflect these priorities.

### **A. Component 1: Streamlining Business Registration Processes and Lowering Transaction Costs**

Pursuant to the Option Year Workplan, Component 1 will continue providing assistance to the partner cities so that they will be showcases of BPLS reforms through the use of technology in processing business permits. The Project will also pursue the introduction of streamlined procedures for construction and selected tourism-related activities. At the national level, the Project will complete its review of JMC 1 based on the experience of partner cities.

In line with the goal of reviewing and improving the standards set under the DTI-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, the Project continued to hold Focus Group Discussions in Mindanao and Luzon. In the area of streamlining construction permits, the Project held a series of workshops where participants shared their existing processes. The Project also held a national conference of best practices in construction and occupancy permits.

#### **1. Program Area 1.1: Ensuring Compliance of Partner Cities with BPLS Standards**

Building on the gains achieved over the past two years, the Project encouraged and assisted the cities to undertake automation of their business registration systems.

##### **a. Key Accomplishments**

The Project sustained its technical assistance to the partner cities in preparing for the 2014 renewal period. In Batangas City, the Project provided support to further improve the BOSS and to put in place the system for online renewal, initially piloting 100 businesses in the city. In Iloilo City, the Project organized a study tour for Mayor Jed Mabilog on October 9, 2013 to Valenzuela City to witness first hand an automated business permitting system with linked data bases among city departments and an online payment system. After this, the Project assisted the city in preparing an action plan for the streamlining of its BPLS, which will pilot an online registration system and the laying out of its new BOSS. With these changes, the Mayor had to issue a new Executive Order on the new procedures for business renewal which the Project assisted in drafting. In Cagayan de Oro City, the Project was instrumental in sourcing a

donation from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) amounting to P1 million worth of computer equipment to be used during the renewal period and in establishing an additional satellite business registration center at Robinsons Mall (thereby allowing business owners to register either in City Hall or in two other malls). At the same time, the Project coordinated with DTI and the partner cities for the establishment of PBR desks during the registration period.

The construction permitting study took off during the quarter, which is being undertaken in partnership with the DILG and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). Data gathering activities were completed during the quarter. On November 28, 2013, the Project held a national conference to identify the best practices of other cities in streamlining construction-related permits. The conference was attended by 36 representatives from city departments involved in construction-related permitting processes and from the Bureau of Fire Protection. Subsequently, the Project held workshops in Luzon (December 18, 2013, with 108 participants), Visayas (December 3, 2013, with 58 participants), and Mindanao (December 5, 2013, with 42 participants) to collect information on the current practices of sample LGUs on construction-related permitting processes. These workshops were also attended by city building officials and fire marshals. In each workshop, 10 LGUs were invited to share their building and occupancy permitting process and determine the common procedures that these LGUs practice. The initial set of findings and recommendations were submitted to the DILG on December 23, 2013.

**Table 1. Comparison of Planned Activities and Accomplishments for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter under Program Area 1.1**

Program Area/Deliverable/Output	Planned Activities for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Activities Completed for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
<b>Program Area 1.1: Ensuring Compliance of Partner Cities with BPLS Standards</b>		
<b>Deliverable 1: Assisted Partner Cities in Setting-up a Computerized Business Permits and Licensing System (BPLS) and an Enhanced Business One-Stop Shop (BOSS)</b>		
Output 1.1. Assessment Report on the Reforms Implemented for BPLS, BOSS and Inspection Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of assistance to cities in computerizing their BPLS</li> <li>▪ Preparation of guidelines in the assessment of the computerized BPLS during the January 2014 renewal period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organized the Study Tour of Mayor Jed Mabilog on October 9 to Valenzuela City</li> <li>▪ Organized a meeting between DBP the service provider of Valenzuela City for online payment, and the officials of Valenzuela City (October 22), Iloilo City (November 21) and CDO (December) to explain the requirements for adopting an automated payment system.</li> <li>▪ Provided technical assistance in preparing and implementing action plans for the three cities which outlined further streamlining of their BPLS towards less steps, simplified forms and enhanced BOSS</li> <li>▪ Assisted Cagayan de Oro City in sourcing computers for the</li> </ul>

		<p>additional satellite registration center and the BOSS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In order to assess the reforms adopted by the cities for the 2014 renewal period, the Project planned to hire a total of 17 process trackers and exit interviewers for the three cities</li> <li>▪ Prepared the guidelines for the BPLS assessment to be conducted in January 2014 which was issued to the CPAs on December 27, 2013.</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 2: Introduced Risk-Based Inspections in Partner Cities (Carry-over from Year 2)</b>		
Output 2.1. Recommendations on the adoption and implementation of a risk-based system for sanitation inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of the SOW and identification of STTA for risk-based system for sanitation inspection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interviewed candidates and identified Mr. Jose Lim as Sanitation Expert to conduct the study</li> </ul>
Output 2.2. Recommendations on the adoption and implementation of a risk-based system for the fire inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of the SOW and identification of STTA for risk-based system for fire inspection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advertised the position of STTA to attract possible candidates</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 3. Introduced Reforms in Securing Permits for Construction and Tourism Activities (Carry-over from Year 2)</b>		
Output 3.1. Recommendations on the adoption and implementation of proposed streamlined processes for securing construction-related permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of SOW and identification of STTA to conduct the study on streamlining processes for securing construction-related permits</li> <li>▪ Submission to USAID of SOW and STTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Secured USAID approval to contract Mr. Paul So to conduct the tourism study but he disengaged from the Project on November 1, 2013</li> <li>▪ Secured USAID approval on October 3, 2013 to contract Mr. Sonny Ducay to conduct the study</li> <li>▪ STTA submitted inception report on the construction study on October 10, 2013</li> <li>▪ Organized a meeting with DILG (October 15, 2013) and DPWH (November 27, 2013) to discuss the direction of the Study on</li> <li>▪ Conducted study visits to the cities of Cebu (November 21-22, 2013), Quezon City (November 25, 2013), and Valenzuela (November 15, 2013) to gather information on the best practices of DILG-identified cities who have already streamlined their construction-related permitting system</li> <li>▪ Conducted a national conference to identify the best</li> </ul>

		<p>practices of other cities in streamlining construction-related permits (November 28, 2013)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conducted three workshops in Luzon (December 18, 2013), Visayas (December 3, 2013), and Mindanao (December 5, 2013) to collect information on the current practices of sample LGUs on construction-related permitting process</li> </ul>
Output 3.2. Recommendations on the adoption and implementation of the proposed streamlined processes for securing permits for hotels and similar establishments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of SOW and identification of STTA to conduct the study on streamlining processes for securing permits for hotels and similar establishments.</li> <li>▪ Submission to USAID of SOW and STTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepared SOW and identified the STTA – Mr. Carlos Libosada to conduct the study on streamlining processes for securing securing permits for hotels and similar establishments.</li> <li>▪ Due to prolonged negotiations with the STTA, USAID approval for the contracting of the STTA will be secured in the next quarter</li> </ul>

**b. Plans for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

In the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter, the Project expects the partner cities to implement major reforms that will substantially reduce the steps and processing time involved in business permitting. An assessment of the reforms will be undertaken by the Project using process tracking techniques and exit interviews, similar to those followed in previous years' assessments.

The Project will also finalize two studies – the review of the JMC and the construction study. Three studies will be started during the quarter – the streamlining of tourism permits and the risk-based inspection for sanitation and fire safety.

**Table 2. Planned Major Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter under Program Area 1.1**

Program Area/Deliverable/Output	Planned Major Activities for the 10 <sup>th</sup> Quarter (January to March 2014)
<b>Program Area 1.1: Ensuring Compliance of Partner Cities with BPLS Standards</b>	
<b>Deliverable 1: Assisted Partner Cities in Setting-up a Computerized Business Permits and Licensing System (BPLS) and an Enhanced Business One-Stop Shop (BOSS)</b>	
Output 1.1. Assessment Report on the Reforms Implemented for BPLS, BOSS and Inspection Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct of the BPLS assessment of the BPLS for new and business renewals as well as the BOSS and the city's inspection systems</li> <li>▪ Drafting of the initial assessment report on the reforms implemented for BPLS, BOSS and inspection systems</li> </ul>

<b>Deliverable 2: Introduced Risk-Based Inspections in Partner Cities (Carry-over from Year 2)</b>	
Output 2.1. Recommendations on the adoption and implementation of a risk-based system for sanitation inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission to USAID of the STTA and SOW</li> <li>▪ Submission (by STTA) of inception report</li> <li>▪ Conduct of workshops/ FGDs</li> <li>▪ Preparation of draft report on the risk-based system for sanitation inspection</li> </ul>
Output 2.2. Recommendations on the adoption and implementation of a risk-based system for the fire inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission to USAID of the STTA and SOW</li> <li>▪ Submission (by STTA) of inception report</li> <li>▪ Conduct of workshops/ FGDs</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 3. Introduced Reforms in Securing Permits for Construction and Tourism Activities (Carry-over from Year 2)</b>	
Output 3.1. Recommendations on the adoption and implementation of proposed streamlined processes for securing construction-related permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of initial findings and recommendations to DILG</li> <li>▪ Preparation of the draft report on the streamlined processes for securing construction related permits</li> <li>▪ Submission of draft circular to implement the recommendations of the study to DILG and DPWH</li> </ul>
Output 3.2. Recommendations on the adoption and implementation of the proposed streamlined processes for securing permits for hotels and similar establishments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission to USAID for request for contracting the STTA for the study</li> <li>▪ Conduct of data gathering for the study, e.g. focused group discussions</li> <li>▪ Preparation of the draft report on the streamlined processes for securing permits for hotels and similar establishments.</li> </ul>

## **2. Program Area 1.2: Strengthening National Government Support to BPLS Reforms**

The Project continued its approach of engaging national government agencies in order to support the initiatives of partner cities and to create a policy environment conducive to BPLS reforms.

### **a. Key Accomplishments**

The Project played a key role in convincing the partner cities to connect to the PBR. Meetings were initially organized between the newly appointed Undersecretary of DTI, Nora Terrado, and the local chief executives of Cagayan de Oro (September 26, 2013) and Iloilo (October 9, 2013) for the former to explain the advantages of and requirements for PBR connectivity. In these meetings, it was generally agreed that the partner cities of Iloilo and CDO will be connected to PBR and the necessary clearances from the respective local legislatures will be sought to allow the Mayors to sign a MOA with DTI to implement the connectivity. These initial efforts led to the actual signing of the MOAs between the DTI and the partner cities on PBR on December 11, 2013 during the Batangas Business Forum. This MOA paved the way for the establishment of PBR desks in the cities by January 2014.

As a follow-thru to the High Level Roundtable Discussion on the Next Generation PBR held on March 18, 2013, the Project encouraged the DTI to endorse the draft Executive Order on the Next Generation PBR to the Office of the President in order to get a new mandate for DTI to pursue the project. There was initial hesitancy on the part of DTI which was responsible for the signing of Administrative Order 38 on May 17, 2013 that created an Inter-Agency Task Force to initiate, implement and monitor ease of doing business reforms. DTI was studying whether the EO on the PBR will still be necessary given AO 38. The Project met with DTI on December

23, 2013 to discuss the necessity of endorsing the EO on PBR, which is a much bigger project that the newly created Task Force may be able to handle. The Project expects DTI to make a decision on the matter in the next quarter.

On the review of the JMC, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organized in Cagayan de Oro and in Manila (to cover Luzon LGUs) as part of the data gathering activities of the study. The FGD in Cagayan de Oro, which was held on October 3, 2013, had 18 participants from about 7 LGUs while the FGD in Quezon City (held on October 8, 2013) was attended by 22 participants, mostly coming from the Business Permits and Licensing Offices and the City Treasurer's Offices of the invited LGUs. Participants discussed their experiences in complying with the DTI-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, s. 2010, its implementation, and their suggestions to improve the BPLS standards set in the JMC.

Related to the review of the service standards for business processing is another initiative of the Project that aims to remove the requirements of the SSS to secure prior clearance of "no delinquency" before a Mayor's permit can be renewed. This reform was initiated in the 2013 renewal period but the new PhilHealth law will enforce the same requirement from business applicants once implemented in 2014. Hence, the Project organized a meeting among social security agencies on November 8, 2013 aimed at replacing the requirements of SSS and Philhealth with a negative list that will be provided to the cities. The meeting led to a consensus to (1) standardize the requirements of the social security agencies, which will be implemented thru a Memorandum of Agreement between DILG and PhilHealth and a Joint Memorandum Circular to be signed by DILG, DTI, SSS, PhilHealth and PagIBIG and (2) build a database of businesses as part of the Philippine Business Registry under the DTI. Drafts of the required legal instruments were done by the Project, which were circulated to concerned agencies during the quarter.

Consistent with its objective of promoting automation in business processing in its partner cities during the Option Year, the Project continued its technical assistance to the Information Communication and Technology Office (ICTO) of the Department of Science and Technology. During the quarter, the Project convened a meeting of the Undersecretaries of DTI, DILG and DOST on November 8, 2013 to discuss the measures to facilitate the promotion of automation of business permitting among LGUs. The Project also held discussions with the ICTO and the DILG on the following: (1) the conduct of the 2014 online survey on e-readiness; (2) the issuance of a Memorandum Circular on BPLS automation; (3) the conduct of a BPLS Seminar designed to equip LGUs with basic knowledge on BPLS automation; (4) drafting of the 2012 e-readiness report; and (5) conduct of a BPLS automation Forum in June 2014 to coincide with the IT month.

To address the wide variation in business-related fees imposed by LGUs, the Project contracted the services of an LGU Finance Training Expert to conduct a Trainers' Training Workshop among the regional staff of the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF) and selected Treasurers who would be tasked to roll-out the guidelines for setting inspection fees based on a cost accounting framework. The proposed workshop will be conducted in the next quarter.

**Table 3. Comparison of Planned Activities and Accomplishments  
for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter under Program Area 1.2**

Program Area/Deliverable/Output	Planned Activities for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Activities Completed for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
<b>Program Area 1.2: Strengthening National Government Support to BPLS Reforms</b>		
<b>Deliverable 1: Provided Technical Support to the Inter-Agency Committees on Philippine Business Registry and the Connectivity of the Partner Cities to the PBR</b>		
Output 1.1 PBR Connectivity of Partner Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of assistance to cities on PBR connectivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organized meetings of DTI Undersecretary Terrado with the Mayor of Iloilo City on October 9 to forge initial agreement on the connectivity of Iloilo City to PBR.</li> <li>▪ Supported the participation of the selected staff of the partner cities in the PBR workshop for cities connecting with PBR in Valenzuela City</li> <li>▪ Paved the way for the signing of a MOA on PBR connectivity between DTI and the 3 cities on December 11, 2013.</li> </ul>
Output 1.2 Signed Executive Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of draft Executive Order on the next generation PBR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Met with DTI Undersecretary Nora Terrado on December 23, 2014 to discuss the merits of having a new Executive Order signed by the President to accelerate the implementation of the PBR</li> </ul>
Output 1.3 Meetings of the Steering Committee and the PBR Technical Working Group Organized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of assistance to DTI in the conduct of meetings of the Steering Committee and the PBR TWG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No meeting of any of the PBR committees was set during the quarter since the DTI was preoccupied with the relief operations for the victims of typhoon Yolanda</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 2: Reviewed JMC Standards</b>		
Output 2.1. Report on the Assessment of the DTI-DILG JMC 1, s. 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct of workshops or FGDs</li> <li>▪ Preparation of final report on the Assessment of the DTI-DILG JMC 1, s. 2010</li> <li>▪ Submission of draft circular to DILG &amp; DTI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conducted FGDs on the Review of JMC 1 (October 3, 2013 in Cagayan de Oro City for Mindanao participants and October 8, 2013 in Quezon City for Luzon participants)</li> <li>▪ Prepared initial report and recommendations</li> <li>▪ Facilitated the meeting of the social security agencies, DTI and DILG on November 8, 2013 to standardize the requirements of SSS and PhilHealth from renewing business applicants</li> </ul>



<b>Deliverable 3. Provided Technical Support to Oversight Committees on BPLS Reforms</b>		
Output 3.1 Report on the Assistance Provided to the Oversight Committees on BPLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Report on the Assistance to Oversight Committees in BPLS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organized a meeting of the Undersecretaries of DTI, DOST and DILG on November 8, 2013 to discuss the promotion of BPLS automation in LGUs</li> <li>▪ Convened a meeting with the ICTO on November 20, 2013 to discuss the BPLS automation training for LGUs</li> </ul>

**b. Plans for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

In the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter, the Project will monitor the setting up and operations of the PBR kiosks in the partner cities. At the national level, meetings will be organized with DTI to discuss issues related to the finalization of the Executive Order that will strengthen the PBR. The Project will provide technical assistance in the meetings of the PBR Steering Committee and the Technical Working Group.

The Project will be spearheading various reform initiatives on business permitting. With the finalization of the report on the assessment of BPLS standards under DTI-DILG JMC 1, s. 2010, a revised circular on new standards will be drafted for presentation to the DILG, DTI, and USAID. Four other circulars will be prepared and hopefully issued during the quarter: (1) the circular promoting BPLS automation; (2) the joint memorandum circular on the requirement of social security agencies; (3) the circular on streamlined procedures for construction permits; and (4) the circular on setting up business-friendly inspection systems, including reforms in securing fire safety clearances.

**Table 4. Planned Major Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter under Program Area 1.2**

<b>Program Area/Deliverable/Output</b>	<b>Planned Major Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter (January to March 2014)</b>
<b>Program Area 1.2: Strengthening National Government Support to BPLS Reforms</b>	
<b>Deliverable 1: Provided Technical Support to the Inter-Agency Committees on Philippine Business Registry and the Connectivity of the Partner Cities to the PBR</b>	
Output 1.1 PBR Connectivity of Partner Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring of the operations of the PBR kiosks and reporting of implementation issues that may arise</li> </ul>
Output 1.2 Signed Executive Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Follow-up of the decision of DTI on the PBR EO and provision of assistance to the DTI in finalizing the EO</li> </ul>
Output 1.3 Meetings of the Steering Committee and the PBR Technical Working Group Organized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of technical assistance to the DTI in organizing the meetings of the PBR Steering Committee and the TWG</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 2: Reviewed JMC Standards</b>	
Output 2.1. Report on the Assessment of the DTI-DILG JMC 1, s. 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of final assessment report on BPLS standards under DTI-DILG JMC 1, s. 2010 and presentation of the recommendations to appropriate committees</li> <li>▪ Drafting of circular enhancing the BPLS standards presented to DILG, DTI and USAID</li> <li>▪ Signing of the MOA between DILG and PhilHealth on the</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>business renewal requirements from business applicants</li> <li>▪ Signing of the Joint Memorandum Circular on the submission of negative lists by SSS and PhilHealth to LGUs</li> </ul>
<p>▪ <b>Deliverable 3. Provided Technical Support to Oversight Committees on BPLS Reforms</b></p>	
Output 3.1 Report on the Assistance Provided to the Oversight Committees on BPLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of assistance to DTI and DILG to convene the BPLS Oversight Committee</li> <li>▪ Provision of assistance to the ICTO-DOST to convene the TWG on eBPLS</li> </ul>

**B. Component 2: Improving Investment Planning and Promotion in Target Cities**

Component 2 seeks to improve the capacity of partner cities in investment planning and promotion, which will be pursued through networking, capability-building, and organizational strengthening initiatives undertaken by the Project.

One of the indicators of the City’s capacity to conduct investment planning and promotion is the holding of a Business Forum. But the measure of success is not simply the conduct of the event itself. The Business Forum should also include the following aspects: (1) a process where the City and the private sector, with support from the Project, jointly identify investment priorities, in line with the City’s vision and mission statements and the various local development plans; (2) an event that is professionally-managed in order to project a favourable image for the City as an investment destination; and (3) an activity that generates expressions of interest among participants to do business in the partner cities.

In the first quarter of the Option Year, the Project achieved all these in the Batangas Business Forum. The Batangas Business Forum was able to engage key officials of the City government, representatives of the private sector (the Batangas City Business Club or BBC), support organizations like the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc., the Development Bank of the Philippines, the Investor Relations Office of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and private banks like the Bank of Philippine Islands, Security Bank, Philippine Business Bank, and the Philippine Savings Bank. The formation of the private sector group, the BBC, was in itself a result of the process leading to the Business Forum. The BBC, which was initiated by the Batangas Province Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, evolved into an effective private sector partner of the city government in preparing for the Business Forum and in addressing various development issues. With the support of the Project, the BBC is currently reviewing its role not only in relation to Batangas City but also to a “metro” Batangas area.

The Forum was a successful event that generated interest among potential investors. A total of 270 persons attended the activity, 22 from foreign chambers, business councils, and foreign embassies, 48 from local chambers and industry associations, 46 from financial institutions, 23 property developers, and 38 representing other corporations/private entities. There were 35 representatives from Batangas local government, 25 from USAID, OI DCI, and USAID partner cities, 20 from various government agencies, and 13 from media organizations.

A number of participants commented on the professional way by which the forum was held, including the flow of the program and time management. The table below, culled from the evaluation forms of the participants, generally gave good feedback of the event.

**Table 5. Batangas City Business Forum Evaluation Result**

<b>Evaluation Question (n = 29)</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents who “agreed”</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents who “strongly agreed”</b>	<b>Total</b>
The presentations provided clear information on the benefits of doing business in the City	48.3	48.3	96.6
Materials provided gave clear description of the investment opportunities in the City	44.8	51.7	96.6
The venue was accessible and appropriate	34.5	62.1	96.6
The time allotted for the activity was adequate	37.9	58.6	96.6
Members of the secretariat were courteous and helpful	44.8	51.7	96.6

One of the attendees, a representative from the Turkish Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, was so impressed by the Forum that she reported good feedback to her principals. Before Christmas 2013, the Turkish Chamber got in touch with the City Government and expressed their desire to send an investment mission in Batangas City. The Project assisted the City in setting up the activity. That mission materialized and will be reported in the next quarter. Another off-shoot of the forum is the proposal from Asian Terminals Inc. (ATI) to hold a locators’ forum for Luzon to highlight the potentials of Batangas Port. This proposal is currently being discussed by the City government, the private sector, and ATI.

**1. Program Area 2.1: Supporting Capacity-Building Efforts of Partner Cities in Investment Planning and Promotion**

In Years 1 and 2, the Project achieved gains in strengthening and integrating planning, investment programming, and budgeting in the partner cities. In the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Project built on these gains to assist the partner cities in organizing their respective Business Forums. The revised vision and mission statements of the cities, the training programs to link planning, programming and budgeting and to prepare project proposals for public-private partnership, and the technical assistance provided by the Project to the Local Economic and Investment Promotion Offices (LEIPOs) all came into play in the preparatory activities for the Business Forums.

**a. Key Accomplishments**

During the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Project assisted the partner cities in conducting planning sessions to identify investment priority areas. This activity is an important input in the preparation for the Business Forum because the priority areas serve as the signal to investors on the opportunities available in the cities. In Batangas City, the planning session was conducted between the City and the newly-organized Batangas City Business Club. The session led to the identification of four priority investment areas: infrastructure, human resource development, agri-industrial sector, and tourism. This was among the first of many activities that highlighted the partnership between the City government and the new business group. In Iloilo City, the Project assisted the city in sector-focused investment planning sessions. Planning sessions for education and tourism were conducted, where potential projects that can be presented to investors were identified. In Cagayan de Oro, the Project supported the Local Stakeholders Forum where the Mayor presented his vision for the City (the result of a visioning exercise held during the previous quarter in partnership with the Development Bank of the Philippines).

**Table 6. Comparison of Planned Activities and Accomplishments  
for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter for Program Area 2.1**

Program Area, Deliverables & Outputs	Planned Activities for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Activities Completed for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
Output 1.1 Investment Plan for Each Partner City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of an investment plan involving the City and the private sector and identifying priority investment areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assisted the CDO in preparing the vision of the city and priority investment areas, which was presented during the Local Stakeholders Forum held on October 11, 2013. This forum was organized in partnership with Orobest.</li> <li>▪ Conducted the City Investment Planning in Batangas City, with the participation of the city officials and the newly organized Batangas City Business Club. The activity led to the identification of priority sectors in the city.</li> <li>▪ Conducted an Investment Planning Workshop on the prospects for the tourism sector in Iloilo City on December 2, 2013. The workshop produced investment areas in the sector.</li> <li>▪ Conducted an Investment planning for the education sector in Iloilo City on December 3, 2013.</li> </ul>
Output 1.2 Revised Local Investment Incentives Code for Each Partner City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identification of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to be included in the revised Investment Incentives Code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Convened a meeting in Batangas City with the City Government and the Batangas City Business Club to identify possible investment incentives (November 12, 2013).</li> <li>▪ Held an LIIC Drafting Committee Meeting at CDO (December 17, 2013)</li> <li>▪ Drafted the revised LIICs for Batangas and Cagayan de Oro Cities</li> </ul>

Program Area, Deliverables & Outputs	Planned Activities for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Activities Completed for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
Output 1.3 Project Briefs and Updated City Profile for Each Partner City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of city profile, sector profiles, and project briefs for the Business Forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepared and finalized the sector profiles and project briefs for the Batangas Business Forum</li> <li>▪ Assisted Mayor Oscar Moreno in the meeting with Swedish investors on the waste-to-energy proposal (October 29, 2013). An MOU between the city government and the Swedish investors will be signed during the business forum as an offshoot of the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Consolidated the project ideas arising from the investment planning activities in Iloilo city which will be transformed into project briefs for the business forum</li> <li>▪ Government officials from CDO presented the preliminary project briefs of the city during the Local Stakeholders' Forum.</li> </ul>
Output 1.4 Proposed List of Programs and Projects for 2014 (Carry-over from Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring of List of Programs and Projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtained list of programs and projects for 2014 from partner cities; report being prepared.</li> </ul>
Output 1.5 Report on the Implementation of the LEIPO Action Plan(Carry-over from Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring of LEIPO Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitored LEIPO Action Plan (report due at project-end)</li> </ul>
Output 2.1 Report on the Conduct of the Business Forums in Each Partner Cities, including Memorandums of Agreement Concluded and/or Partnerships Formed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Drafting of the report on the Batangas Business Forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organized the Batangas City Business Club as the private sector organization to partner with the City in the preparations for the Business Forum</li> <li>▪ Conducted weekly meetings with the City government and the Batangas City Business Club in preparation for the Batangas Business Forum</li> <li>▪ Held the Batangas City Business Forum on 11</li> </ul>

Program Area, Deliverables & Outputs	Planned Activities for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Activities Completed for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
		December 2013 at Intercontinental Manila
Output 3.1 Report on the Post-Business Forum Activities of the Partner Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of assistance to Batangas City in responding to investor interest after the Business Forum</li> <li>▪ Monitoring of response of Philippine Science High School (PSHS) on the offer of Batangas City to host a Campus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitored proposal to set-up a PSHS Campus in Batangas City (per report of INVEST STTA Mr. Filemon Berba, dated 30 October 2013, DOST Undersecretary Fortunato De La Pena has endorsed the establishment of a PSHS Campus in Batangas City)</li> </ul>

**b. Plans for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

In the next quarter, the Project will focus its efforts on assisting the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iloilo in holding of their respective Business Forums. The Project will also provide technical assistance to the partner cities in organizing their Investment Promotion Centers.

In the case of Batangas City, the Project will assist the city officials in coordinating the visit on January 21, 2014 of a Turkish business organization, the Active Industrialists and Businessmen's Association of KOCAELI (KASIAD), in partnership with the Turkish Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines. In addition, technical support will be provided to BBC as they formalize the group.

**Table 7. Planned Major Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter for Program Area 2.1**

Program Area, Deliverables & Outputs	Planned Major Activities for the 10 <sup>th</sup> Quarter (January to March 2014)
<b>Program Area 2.1: Supporting Capacity Building Efforts of Partner Cities in Investment Planning and Promotion</b>	
<b>Deliverable 1: Conducted Preparatory Activities for the City Business Forum in Partner Cities</b>	
Output 1.1 Investment Plan for Each Partner City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finalization of priority investment areas of Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro cities</li> </ul>
Output 1.2 Revised Local Investment Incentives Code for Each Partner City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussion with the city officials of Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro cities re: the investment incentives to be included in the business forum kit</li> </ul>
Output 1.3 Project Briefs and Updated City Profile for Each Partner City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of city profiles, sector profiles, and project briefs for the forum kits of Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro cities</li> </ul>
Output 1.4 Proposed List of Programs and Projects for 2014(Carry-over from Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of the report on list of programs and project for 2014 for the partner cities</li> </ul>
Output 1.5 Report on the Implementation of the LEIPO Action Plan(Carry-over from Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of the report on the implementation of LEIPO action plans of partner cities</li> </ul>

Program Area, Deliverables & Outputs	Planned Major Activities for the 10 <sup>th</sup> Quarter (January to March 2014)
<b>Deliverable 2: Assisted the Partner Cities Conduct their City Business Forum</b>	
Output 2.1 Report on the Conduct of the Business Forums in Each Partner Cities, including Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) Concluded and/or Partnerships Formed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of the report on the conduct of the Cagayan de Oro and Iloilo Business Forums</li> <li>▪ Preparation of integrated report on the conduct of the City Business Forums, including MOAs and partnerships formed</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 3: Undertaken Post- City Business Forum Action Planning at the Partner Cities</b>	
Output 3.1 Report on the Post-Business Forum Activities of the Partner Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct of planning session with partner cities on the establishment of Investment Promotion Centers</li> <li>▪ Conduct of planning session with the Batangas City Business Club</li> <li>▪ Establishment of monitoring system for the deals initiated and finalized arising from the Business Forums</li> </ul>

**C. Component 3: Cross-cutting Concerns**

For the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Project assisted the National Competitiveness Council (NCC) and the DILG in connection with efforts to improve data collection and metrics for measuring competitiveness of LGUs. In addition to addressing the usual requirements for project management such as compliance with contractual reporting requirements, the Project also provided support to USAID during its monitoring visit to Batangas City.

**a. Key Accomplishments**

As a follow-thru to the NCC assistance in Year 2, USAID approved the contract extension of Dr. Alvin Ang, the STTA Expert who formulated the NCC competitiveness framework for computing the 2013 competitiveness rankings of LGUs. The extension was needed to prepare a manual of operations for the data gathering in connection with 2014 competitiveness ranking of LGUs. The manual incorporated the final list of indicators for assessing LGUs' competitiveness and the description of the processes for data collection, processing and reporting of the results. A preliminary draft was presented by the consultant in a workshop of Regional Competitiveness Committees on December 5-6, 2013 in Iloilo City which led to further refinements of the manual. The draft manual is now being edited and will be up for submission to concerned agencies and the USAID in the coming quarter.

The Project also assisted in organizing USAID's monitoring visit to Batangas City to evaluate the implementation of the CDI Action Plan of the City. Conducted on November 22, 2013, USAID commended the city for the progress made so far in the various commitments under the CDI covering growth and investment, health, education and the environment.

To supplement the assessments done for BPLS in partner cities as well as efforts in the area of competitiveness, the Project initiated activities leading to the conduct of a survey on competitiveness and local economic development. Initially intended as an enhancement of the Client Satisfaction Survey of the NCC, the survey is envisioned to provide information on the broader concept of competitiveness (which includes not only questions on the city's regulatory environment but also on its policies to promote investment). The results would complement other third party surveys/data collection on BPLS assessments and city competitiveness. During the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Project issued a Request for Proposal and invited the following

seven (7) institutions to submit a proposal: (1) Demographic Research and Development Foundation, Inc); (2) the Philippine Statistical Association; (3) Philippine Survey and Research Center; (4) Pulse Asia; (5) Statistical Research and Training Center; (6) TNS Philippines; and (7) Transparency and Accountability Network. On October 21, 2013, the Project received clarificatory questions from Pulse Asia, which the Project addressed. Unfortunately, no firm submitted a proposal on November 18, 2013, which was the deadline set for the bid submission. Hence, the Project declared a failure of bid on November 19, 2014. The Project will explore the possibility of rebidding or the commissioning of an STTA Expert to conduct the survey.

In preparation for Project close-out, discussions have started on the possible activities that will showcase the accomplishments of the Project. As an initial move, the Project contracted a Knowledge Management Specialist to prepare guidebooks and training modules for five areas: (1) local economic and investment promotion; (2) plan-budget integration; (3) basic customer service; (4) assessment and design of BPLS; and (5) setting up business-friendly inspection systems.

Details of the accomplishments of Component 3 of the Project for the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8. Comparison of Planned Activities and Accomplishments for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter under Component 3**

<b>Deliverables &amp; Outputs</b>	<b>Planned Activities for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>Activities Completed for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter</b>
Output 1.1 Manual of Operations for the Computation of the Competitiveness Ranking of LGUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extension of STTA services of Dr. Ang for the preparation of the manual</li> <li>▪ Submission of the manual to USAID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ USAID approved the extension of Dr. Ang's services on October 24, 2013.</li> <li>▪ Presented the draft manual in a workshop of Regional Competitiveness Committees organized by NCC on December 5-6, 2013.</li> </ul>
Output 1.2 Survey on Competitiveness and Local Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awarding of the service contract to winning bidder</li> <li>▪ Conduct of the survey</li> <li>▪ Preparation of report on the survey results</li> <li>▪ Submission of report on the survey results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Declared a failure of bid after no firm submitted a proposal on the deadline set for submission of bids (November 19, 2013).</li> <li>▪ Explored other options for the conduct of the study, e.g. hiring of an STTA</li> </ul>
Output 1.3. Report on the Assistance Provided to DILG in the Conceptualization of the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) including the Seal of Competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation in the discussions of DILG on the SGLG and the Seal of Competitiveness</li> <li>▪ Preparation of the Concept Paper</li> <li>▪ Submission of the Concept Paper to USAID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepared a draft Concept Paper on the Seal of Good Local Governance, which is currently being edited and will be submitted to USAID next quarter. Since DILG has not made a decision on the indicators to be used for the award by end-December 2013, the Project decided to</li> </ul>



<b>Deliverables &amp; Outputs</b>	<b>Planned Activities for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>Activities Completed for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter</b>
		wait for the final set of indicators for the Seal before submitting the report.
Output 2.1. Report on the Assistance Provided to Relevant Inter-Agency Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation in meetings and discussions of relevant inter-agency committees</li> <li>▪ Assistance to the secretariat of the inter-agency committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meetings of the inter-agency committees supported by the Project were held in abeyance as agencies were mobilized to assist the Yolanda victims. The DTI was undergoing reorganization during the quarter, which resulted in the reassignment of existing officials and hiring of new officials.</li> </ul>
Output 3.1. Monthly Progress Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of reports for the months of October and November 2013</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepared reports for the month of October 2013</li> </ul>
Output 3.2. Quarterly Performance Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation and submission of Year 2 Project Performance Report (incorporating the 8<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Report)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submitted Year 2 Project Performance Report to USAID (incorporating the 8<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Report)</li> </ul>
Output 3.3. Project Financial Audit Report (RCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct of bidding for an audit firm to conduct the RCA</li> <li>▪ Selection of winning bid</li> <li>▪ Submission of winning bidder to USAID for its approval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invited six USAID-accredited accounting firms to submit a proposal for the activity on November 4, 2013. Of the invited firms, only three (3) submitted their proposals on November 18, 2013.</li> <li>▪ Valdes, Abad &amp; Associates was selected and recommended for contracting to USAID on November 25, 2013..</li> </ul>
Output 2.1 Report on the Conduct of National and City INVEST Experience Dissemination Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No planned activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contracted a Knowledge Management Specialist, Ms. Richelda Miranda to prepare 5 guides and/or training modules that can be turned-over to government</li> </ul>
Output 2.2 Project Terminal/Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No planned activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No activity undertaken</li> </ul>
Output 2.3 Project Demobilization Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No planned activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No activity undertaken</li> </ul>
Output 3.1 Report on Gender Activities included in the Quarterly Progress Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inclusion of gender section in the Year 2 report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Included a gender section in Year 2 report</li> </ul>
Output 3.2 Report on the Gender Perspective in the Business Permitting System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hiring of STTA for business profiling, including gender profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contracted Ms. Sef Carandang for the study</li> </ul>
Monitoring of CDI Action Plans'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No planned activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organized and mounted the</li> </ul>

<b>Deliverables &amp; Outputs</b>	<b>Planned Activities for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>Activities Completed for the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarter</b>
Implementation in Partner Cities (unprogrammed activity)		monitoring visit of USAID and dialogue with city officials and local business groups in Batangas City on November 22, 2014

**b. Plans for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

For the 10<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Project shall endeavor to complete the following: (a) Manual of Operation for the Computation of the Competitiveness Ranking of LGUs, which will be submitted to USAID and the NCC for adoption; (b) survey on competitiveness and local economic development; (c) report on the assistance provided to DILG in formulating the Seal of Competitiveness.

The project will also start the preparatory activities for the Project Close-out. Critical among these activities is the conduct of Project experience dissemination forums initially proposed to be held in Metro Manila and one each in the partner cities. During the quarter, a series of brainstorming sessions and discussions as well as the preparation of an action plan and activity design for the said forums will be conducted. Collaterals and knowledge products will also be conceptualized and drafted during the quarter.

Details of the planned major activities under Component 3 of the Project for the 10<sup>th</sup> quarter are presented in Table 14.

**Table 9. Planned Major Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter under Component 3**

<b>Deliverables &amp; Outputs</b>	<b>Planned Major Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter (January to March 2014)</b>
<b>Deliverable 1: Enhanced Measurement of Competitiveness in Partner Cities</b>	
Output 1.1 Manual of Operations for the Computation of the Competitiveness Ranking of LGUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission of the draft Manual to USAID</li> </ul>
Output 1.2 Survey on Competitiveness and Local Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore possibility of hiring an STTA to conduct the survey</li> <li>▪ Conduct of the Survey</li> </ul>
Output 1.3. Report on the Assistance Provided to DILG in the Conceptualization of the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLC) including the Seal of Competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission of the report to USAID</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 2. Supported Inter-Agency Committees on Investment and Business Registration</b>	
Output 2.1. Report on the Assistance Provided to Relevant Inter-Agency Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of assistance to DTI and DILG in convening the BPLS Oversight Committee and the Sub-Working Group on Local Investment Reforms</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 3. Prepared Project's Regular Progress/Performance Reports</b>	
Output 3.1. Monthly Progress Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of report for the month of December 2013, January, February and March 2014</li> </ul>
Output 3.2. Quarterly Performance Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation and submission of the performance report for the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter</li> </ul>
Output 3.3. Project Financial Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awarding of service contract to the selected audit firm</li> </ul>

<b>Deliverables &amp; Outputs</b>	<b>Planned Major Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter (January to March 2014)</b>
Report (RCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct of RCA</li> <li>▪ Presentation and submission of the draft audit report</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 4: Undertaken Activities and Prepared Reports for Project Close-Out</b>	
Output 2.1 Report on the Conduct of National and City INVEST Experience Dissemination Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finalization of the guide and training modules on Project activities</li> <li>▪ Conduct of initial discussions and brainstorming sessions on the Forums</li> <li>▪ Preparation of action plan and activity design for the conduct of the Forums</li> </ul>
Output 2.2 Project Terminal/Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No planned activity</li> </ul>
Output 2.3 Project Demobilization Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submission of the Project Demobilization Plan in March 2014</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverable 5: Implemented Activities in the Gender Action Plan</b>	
Output 3.1 Report on Gender Activities included in the Quarterly Progress Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inclusion of a gender report in quarterly report</li> </ul>
Output 3.2 Report on the Gender Perspective in the Business Permitting System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of the report on gender perspective in business permitting system of partner cities</li> </ul>
<b>Unprogrammed Deliverable: Assistance to USAID in CDI Activities</b>	
Monitoring of CDI Action Plans' Implementation in Partner Cities (for Economic and Governance Session only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organization of and preparation for the conduct of monitoring visit of USAID and dialogue with city officials in Cagayan de Oro City and Iloilo City</li> </ul>

### III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY CITY

The 9<sup>th</sup> quarter accomplishments in the partner cities reflected their respective priorities in relation to the Project's workplan. In Batangas City, focus was mainly on the Business Forum. Towards the end of the quarter, however, the Project gave greater attention to the preparations for the renewal of business permits in 2014. In Iloilo City, the Project continued to assist in improving the BPLS in view of the observations during the 2013 assessment. Business forum related activities focused mainly on investment planning by sector and project identification. In Cagayan de Oro, the priority of the Project was to assist the Mayor in institutional strengthening and in enhancing the reforms in business permitting and investment planning implemented in previous years in line with his vision for the City.

#### A. BATANGAS CITY

In the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter, Batangas City implemented several key activities that would prepare the city government in hosting its very first business forum, at the same time pursuing more impressive reforms in business permitting. The most significant accomplishment for the city for the period was the conduct of the Batangas City Business Forum (BCBF) in December 2011. This is considered a key milestone for the city since this is the first time it had showcased itself as a potential investment hub to a wide audience. It was also a model of tripartite partnership, with the local government, the local business group and USAID jointly organizing the event. Equally important is the fact the BCBF triggered the organization of a new business club, which the Project has been trying to propose to the local businessmen in the city since day 1.

Given its impressive streamlining of business permit processing in 2013, the Project also provided technical assistance to the city in designing a more efficient procedure for processing permits in 2014, which includes a new lay-out for the BOSS. Parallel efforts were made in training the frontline personnel on the new procedures, including the operations of the PBR and in revising the Citizen's Charter of the City.

##### 1. Institutional Strengthening

Institutional building in the 9th quarter followed a "learning by doing" approach towards upgrading skills, particularly the staff of the Local Economic and Investment Promotion Office (LEIPO). Beyond LEIPO and Business Permits and Licensing Office (BPLO), the Project also supported the strengthening of the Office of the City Veterinary and Agricultural Services (OCVAS), since a number of the proposed projects for investors are in the agriculture sector and will be managed/or monitored by the office.

###### a. Key Accomplishments

Revision of the City's Citizen's Charter. The new procedures for securing a Mayor's Permit which were enforced in 2013 and which will be further fine-tuned in 2014 necessitated a revision of the Citizen's Charter. This is mandated in the Anti-Red Tape Act. The Project, in its Year 2 work plan, included support to the cities in revising the section in the charter pertaining to business permitting. In the case of Batangas City, however, the city government decided to revise completely their Citizen's Charter, which the Project has been closely monitoring and

supervising since Year 2. Since the Citizen's Charters of all departments in the city government were in the final stages of completion, the LEIPO, with the support of the Project, organized a Finalization Workshop on December 16-17, 2013. Prior to this, all technical staff of LEIPO conducted a two-week simulation and observation exercise for the frontline services of all departments, vis-à-vis their draft Citizen's Charter service standards.

With skills enhancement in mind, the Project intentionally instructed the LEIPO staff to take the lead in designing the simulation and observation exercises and in organizing the workshop (i.e., development of the program, drafting the memorandum inviting concerned departments to the workshop, and preparing and delivering presentations). While the LEIPO was made fully responsible for the event, the Project, thru the CPA, provided guidance and quality control and helped develop templates and standard steps. Even during the actual workshop, the LEIPO staff delivered the presentations with the Project only acting as facilitator/moderator. For some of the LEIPO staff, the workshop was their first time to have delivered presentations in public.

OCVAS Planning Workshop. OCVAS is an important department in Batangas City, since about half of the city's lands are agricultural in nature and many of its constituents outside the city proper depend on agriculture for livelihood. The Project also views agriculture as a key sector, which the city has comparative advantage in, especially if they can propel the sector into producing higher value-added products instead of basic crops and livestock.

The Project facilitated the evaluation and planning seminar/workshop of OCVAS on November 28, 2013 in Calamba, Laguna. It was an opportunity for the Project to impart good planning practices (e.g vision-mission-goals linkages) and the role of monitoring and evaluation in plan development. The workshop agreed that each department of OCVAS will develop initial plans based on a logical framework. A follow-up critiquing session is scheduled in January 2014.

PBR User's Training Organized by DTI and INVEST. Since the city government has agreed to be connected to PBR, the BPLO officer and two representatives from the Information Technology Systems Department (ITSD) participated in the training activity organized by DTI's PBR team on December 3, 2013. The Project assisted the city's participation in the one-day user's training in Valenzuela City for the PBR, in preparation for the partner cities' connectivity to the system.

*b. Planned Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter*

The LEIPO staff's skills will be further enhanced through the "learning by doing" approach. For January 2014, the Project will train and supervise the staff as they assess the streamlined BPLS. The assessment will cover three areas: (a) the conduct of exit interviews of business applicants; b) process tracking of new applications, renewals, and online renewals; and (c) assessment of the BOSS facility.

Based on availability of city funds, the Project will propose that the LEIPO staff undergo formal training on technical writing, a crucial skill to match the competency requirements of the LEIPO.

**2. Streamlining of BPLS**

Consistent with the Project's option year workplan which aims to assist the cities in implementing innovative measures in business permitting that will make use of modern technology, the Project encouraged the City to computerize its data base and to pilot an online

registration system. Coincidentally, the city government, during the period, hired an IT service provider, Lexys, which assisted the city to computerize the database for business permit processing. As described below, the city, on its own introduced measures aimed at easing the burden of business applicants in getting a Mayor's permit.

a. *Key Accomplishments*

*Improved BPLS Streamlining through Automation and Better Inter-Agency/ Inter-Office Coordination.* With the support of Project, the city government further made improvements in its streamlined BPLS processes, primarily through computerization of its operations related to business permitting. First, existing information of businesses were encoded and stored in a database for easy retrieval. Second, before the end of December 2013, the different city departments plus the staff of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) encoded businesses with positive findings in a central database. This will make the assessment of a business applicants' eligibility for renewal in 2014 faster. Third, with a central database, applicants for both new and renewal of business permits, beginning 2014, no longer need to fill up and submit an application form. Those applying for renewal of permits will only have to provide their tax identification number (TIN) (i.e. the system's unique identifier) together with requirements. For new business permit applicants, the different types of information needed are solicited through an interview process wherein each client is given the opportunity to validate encoded information. With the improved streamlining processes, the city expects the processing time in securing a Mayor's permit (both new and renewals) to take less than two hours. Fourth, the queuing system for business registration was improved, with the city providing separate lanes for clients with special needs, and ensuring adequate lanes for single transactions as against multiple transactions (e.g. bookkeepers).

*Piloted Online System for Renewal of Business Permits.* The city government, with support from the Project, developed in-house a pilot online business renewal system for deployment during the renewal period in January 2014. A randomly selected batch of 100 businesses with no outstanding non-compliances or positive findings will be able to use the online system, dubbed as *Electronic Boss na Dine!* These businesses were notified that they can register online and were provided with a brief manual to guide them in navigating the site. Existing business information is retrieved online and requirements (scanned copies of *barangay* clearance and Income Tax Returns) are transmitted through an intuitive web upload process. Once these have been sent, the Tax Order of Payment (TOP) is emailed within 24 hours. The applicants can then proceed to the BOSS to pay the taxes and fees due them and to get the permits.

*Institutionalization of the Revised BPLS Processes.* With support from Lexys and the Project, city government and BFP staff (in charge of frontline services and backroom operations) took a number of simulation and training exercises to ensure that both the systems and personnel would be ready for the business permit renewal period (January 2014). To complement the training sessions, the BPLS process manual developed for the 2013 renewal period was revised to take into account the new procedures for securing the Mayor's permit. Lexys, for its part, also developed a manual on the technical aspects of the BPLS system. An Executive Order will be issued beginning in January 2014 to institutionalize the processes described in these manuals.

*Information Campaign on BPLS Processes.* The City government embarked on a wide-scale communication campaign to disseminate information on its new business permitting procedures. Information and education campaign (IEC) materials (e.g. flyers in English and

illustrated comics in Tagalog), were printed and posters were visibly placed within the BOSS/ BPLO area as well as in key areas in the city. Meetings were also organized with business owners, city council members, and *barangay* officials as part of the information dissemination efforts of the city. The Project provided technical guidance on the content of the IEC materials as well as on the plans/strategies for boosting information dissemination.

*Design of the Pre-Registration (Building and Occupancy) Business One-Stop-Shop.* As a follow-up to previous workshops organized by the Project to improve the process for securing building and occupancy permits, the Project supported the BPLO and the City Engineer's Office (CEO) in convening a meeting among concerned departments and agencies (CEO, CPDO, CENRO, OCVAS, and BFP) to set up and design the Business and Occupancy Permits One-Stop Shop (BPOSS). The facility, which will house representatives of city departments and the BFP, will be operational in January 2014. Currently, the CEO, OCVAS, and BFP are all located outside the vicinity of the city hall; hence, locating them under one roof will definitely make the process more convenient to prospective business owners.

*b. Planned Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter*

For the 10<sup>th</sup> quarter, the new automated BPLS system will be operational for both new and renewing business applicants. The Project, thru the CPA, will continue to coach the city officials as they implement the new procedures, suggesting solutions to issues that will be encountered in the process. The city is also exploring with Land Bank of the Philippines the use of Point-of-Sale payment system as a temporary measure while the city works towards setting up an online payment system. The Project will also explore with USAID's Scaling Innovations in Mobile Money (SIMM) Project the use of mobile phones in business permitting.

As part of its monitoring and evaluation work, the Project will be coordinate the assessment of the automated BPLS system of the city. Similar to the previous two years, assessment will be undertaken through exit interviews, process tracking, and ocular BOSS assessment.

Beginning February 2014, the Project and the BPLO will also focus on implementing the other facets of the City's business-friendly joint inspection reforms initiated in 2013. There are three types of joint inspection teams that the city intends to set up: (1) the Compliance Inspection Team whose mandate is to check and verify the compliance of an applicant upon application for building and occupancy permit prior to operation of its business; (2) the Disclosure and Revenue Inspection Team which is tasked with verifying the information declared by the business operator/s in the application for business license and renewal of business permit, identifying unregistered businesses operating in the locality and monitoring changes and developments in business activities in the locality; and (3) the Safety Inspection Team which is tasked to check and validate the compliance of the registered business establishments to the regulatory offices of the Batangas City Government and concerned national line agencies (e.g. Building Code, Fire Code, Sanitation Code). To date, only the Disclosure and Revenue Inspection Team (DRIT) is fully operating. The City, with support from the Project, will finalize the Safety and Compliance Joint inspection system, which is planned to be institutionalized thru an Executive Order to be issued by the Mayor.

### **3. Enhancing Investment Planning and Promotion**

The Project successfully held the Business Forum in December 2013 and had immediately solicited interest from the Turkey Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines of the Philippines (TCCP).

a. *Key Accomplishments*

Conduct of the Batangas City Business Forum. The Project ended 2013 with a significant milestone for Batangas City. For the first time, the city government, together with the emerging Batangas City Business Club, held a business forum to showcase its potential as an investment hub in the region. The BCBF was significant in many respects. It proved that the city government can work with the business sector for a project that will benefit the city as a whole, despite differences of opinion on issues internal to the city. On the part of the business group, the success of the event strengthened their resolve to organize themselves into a formal business group or club. The BCBF was the first undertaking of the BBC but, despite lacking a formal structure, the individual members spent time to mount the event. The financial contribution of the city government to the event amounting to about half of the total cost of PhP1.2 million also signalled the city's seriousness in allocating a budget for investment promotion. On the part of USAID, the event was a collaboration among USAID projects - Higher Education Partnership Project implemented by the Philippine Business for Education, the four recipient banks under the Development Credit Authority, the American Chamber of Commerce, with INVEST taking the lead.

The BCBF produced project briefs that investors can use to guide them in reviewing the city's investment potentials. The list of projects with investment opportunity briefs include: (1) construction of Batangas Bay Road – STAR Toll Way Bypass Road; (2) development of an Ecozone for Manufacturing and Logistics Enterprises; (3) Eggplant Production and Marketing; (4) Integrated Organic Farming Community Project; (5) Certified Organic Free Range Chicken Dressing Plant; (6) Roving Packaging and Marketing Business for High Value and Specialty Organic Crops and Herbs (7) Yellow Corn Production; (8) Edna and Rebecca's Banana Chips and Coated Peanuts.

The forum yielded immediate success for Batangas City. Before the end of December 2013, a forum attendee from the TCCP made initial contacts with the City Mayor's Office requesting the city to host Turkish businessmen who are interested in exploring business opportunities in the City in early 2014.

b. *Planned Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter*

The priority for the 10<sup>th</sup> quarter is to organize the business matching event with the TCCP, which has been scheduled on January 21, 2014. This is another opportunity for the city government and the BBC to showcase continued partnership after the BCBF. Through this partnership and after the TCCP trade mission, Batangas City will be in a better position to actively promote its investment opportunities to other foreign chambers.

With the BCBF generating interest in Batangas City from investors, there is a need to design and establish an Investment Promotion Center (IPC) that will serve as an institutional mechanism that will assist investors. In planning for the IPC, it is important to specify the role of the private sector, the structure of the center, the services that it will provide as well as the timetable or phasing of these services given available financial and human resources. The city government has identified the physical location of the center and is targeting its establishment by the 10<sup>th</sup> quarter of the Project.

The Project will also assist in formalizing the BBC as a registered entity (with SEC). At the very least, the objective is to have a formal organizational workshop to set the group's vision,



management structure, activities, etc. The group, with the support of the Project, will explore the possibility of submitting a proposal to the USAID Phil-Am Fund (administered by the Gerry Roxas Foundation) to generate resources for its start-up/organizational activities.

Lastly, the Project will follow-up the City Government's plan in revising the Local Investment Incentives Code (LIIC), which can be a tool to attract investments. A draft has already been prepared based on the template developed by the Project. The Project will hold discussions with the City Planning and Development Officer (CPDO) and the concerned Chair of the Committee for Trade of the Sangguniang Panglunsod on the status of the draft Code.

#### **4. Building Partnerships**

In the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Project was a catalyst in creating significant partnerships between the city government and various sectors, in line with the objective of strengthening public-private sector partnerships.

##### *a. Key Accomplishments*

Partnership with DTI on PBR. The Project facilitated a MOA between DTI and the city government for the latter to connect to the Philippine Business Registry (featured during the Business Forum). Beginning 2014, single proprietors, which are mostly small-and-medium-scale enterprises wishing to apply for a business name from the DTI, need not go to Lipa City where the Provincial DTI office is located to register. Business name registration which needs DTI approval, together with the tax identification number, the SSS, PhilHealth and PagIBIG registration numbers can now be acquired in the PBR kiosk located in the City Hall. Once the business applicant is able to get his/her business name certificate, s/he can already apply for a Mayor's Permit at the BOSS.

Partnership with Batangas City Business Club. As discussed above, the Project has strengthened the partnership between the city government and the private sector (Batangas City Business Club), primarily through preparatory work for the Business Forum.

Partnership with other USAID Projects. The Project and the city government developed linkages with the Philippine Business for Education and the concerned staff implementing USAID's Higher Education Partnership Project (HEPP) while preparing the MOA between the BSU and AG&P. The BCBF exemplifies the convergence approach being pursued in CDI where the projects under the Partnership for Growth collaborate towards a common goal in a locality.

##### *b. Planned Activities for the Next Quarter*

The Project will pursue the city government's partnership with the BBC thru common activities aimed at promoting investments in the city. The project will also try to exploit synergies with other USAID-funded projects in the city, including Scaling Innovations in Mobile Money (SIMM) which may be convinced to design a mobile system for payment of business permits, perhaps targeting micro-enterprises, including market stall holders and *sari-sari* store owners.

## **5. CDI-Related Activities**

### *a. Key Accomplishments*

USAID-Batangas City CDI Monitoring Meeting. The Project coordinated the CDI Monitoring meeting between USAID Philippines led by Mr. John Avila and Batangas City officials, led by Batangas City Government (BCG) Chief-of-Staff Atty. Reginald Dimacuha, which was held on November 22, 2013 to discuss the city's progress on the implementation of the measures in the CDI action plan after more than a year of its formulation. The meeting identified accomplishments, issues, as well as a proposed mechanisms for regularly monitoring the said plan. Atty. Dimacuha proposed that the City INVEST Project Technical Working Group (CIP-TWG), created primarily to implement the INVEST project, be tasked to monitor the CDI Action Plan as well, extending its sector coverage to health and environment, which are part of the CDI Action Plan. He also proposed that the plan be monitored on a quarterly basis, using the matrix used in the report as the main monitoring instrument.

USAID and Batangas City Business Club Meeting. The Project also organized the meeting between USAID-Philippines and (emerging) Batangas City Business Club (BBC) Lead Coordinator Ms. Fely Ramos of the Pontefino Group, which was held on November 22, 2013. The meeting was an opportunity for USAID to meet the BBC members and the latter to explore funding support to the group. The meeting briefed USAID officials on the history of the group, priority sectors, and its activities, especially the BCBF which was the group's first major project in partnership with the city government. Ms. Ramos and the Project provided the background on the BBC, emphasizing the key priority sectors (e.g. (infrastructure, industry, agriculture, tourism, and human resource development), which the private sector will focus on in collaboration with the city government.

## **B. ILOILO CITY**

Iloilo City was a victim of natural calamities (i.e. earthquakes and two super typhoons – Santi and Yolanda) during the quarter. Thus, the city government had to focus its efforts on disaster preparedness and relief and rehabilitation support to the nearby municipalities and provinces. These intervening activities, however, did not hinder the city from completing the preparatory work that were needed for BPLS reforms and the Business Forum. The Project particularly focused its assistance to the city on the streamlining of business permits, given its disappointing performance in the 2013 BPLS assessment among the three cities.

### **1. Institutional Strengthening**

The Project assisted the City in establishing an effective monitoring system for the implementation of BPLS reforms, with the Mayor directly in charge.

#### *a. Key Accomplishments*

Organization of the BPLS Oversight and Management Committees. The 2013 assessment of the city's BPLS indicated some backsliding that resulted in city's non-compliance with some of the service standards set in the JMC. The Project, in its efforts to ensure that the city will be able to make up for its deficiencies, recommended measures aimed at putting in place an institutional structure that would champion BPLS reforms: (1) strengthening the CIP-TWG by assigning the LEIPO as the alter ego of the Mayor on matters related to BPLS; (2) formulation

of a new action plan for BPLS reforms to be implemented during the renewal period; (3) monthly reporting of progress to the Mayor; and (4) provision of a budget for BPLS automation. In response to these recommendations, the Mayor created an Oversight Committee for BPLS (OC-BPLS), which he heads, composed of city government representatives (LEIPO and BPLO), national line agencies (DTI-Province and DILG-City), business sector representatives from the Iloilo City Trade and Investment Promotions Board, the Iloilo Business Club and the Iloilo Local Economic Development Foundation, and members from the academic community (University of the Philippines - Visayas). The OC-BPLS was mandated, through an Executive Order to submit recommendations on how to further improve the BPLS of the City. .

Complementing the OC-BPLS is the Management Committee (MANCOM), composed of the LEIPO and the head of the BPLO, which, was tasked to ensure that the reforms included in the action plan are being followed by all offices and that issues are addressed effectively and in a timely manner. The Committee is also responsible for managing the BOSS especially during the renewal period.

As part of the remedial measures which the Project adopted to ensure that Iloilo City will be on track with the BPLS reforms by 2014, the COP requested for monthly meetings with the Mayor to discuss the progress of project activities. For his part, the Mayor set weekly meetings with the LEIPO, during which the Mayor stressed his expectations on the implementation of needed reforms and his desire that the City become a trailblazer in the area of BPLS. He also empowered the LEIPO to establish his leadership over the MANCOM.

Signed the Executive Order on New BPLS Procedures. The Mayor signed an Executive Order “Adopting the New Business Permits and Licensing System” on December 27, 2013. This was drafted with support from the Project. The EO, which included the implementing guidelines for the BPLS reforms, can be used by city officials in addressing implementation issues.

*b. Planned Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter*

In the 10<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Project will push for the issuance of the Executive Orders that will institutionalize the new procedures for processing new business applications and the reforms in business permit-related inspections. These Executive Orders are important in ensuring the implementation of the reforms.

**2. Streamlining of BPLS**

The 2013 assessment of the BPLS in Iloilo City indicated that the City took the longest time in processing business permits compared to the two other CDI cities. Specifically, processing time for new business applications took about 17 days to process, about 21 signatures or initials and 20 interfaces. Business renewals, on the other hand, took about 2-3 days to process and about 12 interfaces with city officials/staff. The objectives of the Project’s assistance to the city government, as agreed with the Mayor, were (1) to target a 3-step process for walk-in applicants; (2) to pilot an online registration system; and (3) to connect to the PBR of DTI. Close monitoring of these targets was done thru the CPA for the city.

*a. Key Accomplishments*

Exposure Trip to Valenzuela City. An analysis of why the city failed to implement significant reforms in BPLS was the lack of buy-in from the Mayor on the drastic reforms needed to be done in order to be compliant with the DTI-DILG service standards for business processing.

Unlike other partner cities, neither the Mayor nor his department heads participated in the local study tour organized by the Project in 2012 to showcase good practices in business permitting. Hence the Project organized an exposure trip on October 9, 2013 solely for the Mayor to visit Valenzuela City, which has extensively automated its business permit operations, including online payment. During the visit, the Mayor was given a briefing on the benefits of BPLS in terms of additional revenues and increased business applications. The exposure trip highlighted the need for the city to go into full computerization in the 2014 renewal period.

Meeting with DTI on the PBR. After the visit in Valenzuela City, a lunch meeting with Undersecretary Nora Terrado, who was recently designated by the DTI Secretary as the point person for the PBR, was organized also on October 9, 2013. The Mayor, USAID, the Project Team, and DTI discussed the benefits of the PBR. During the meeting, the Mayor agreed in principle that Iloilo City will be the first city in the Visayas to connect to the PBR. This commitment materialized into a Memorandum of Agreement between the City and DTI that was signed on December 11, 2013 during the Batangas Business Forum. Prior to the MOA signing, the Project supported the attendance of the city's IT staff to a one-day PBR training on December 4, 2013 aimed at exposing the cities connected to the PBR on how the system operates, using Valenzuela City as an example.

Streamlined 2014 Process for Business Renewals. With the support of the Mayor, the city government formulated an action plan, approved on November 16, 2013 that contains the following reforms applicable to walk-in applicants renewing their business permits in January 2014:

- 1) Simplification of registration requirements. The city government will not require business applicants renewing their Mayor's permit to fill up the unified form specified in the JMC. Instead the applicants will just have to fill up a declaration of gross receipt (DGR) (which is available online for downloading) that the city will use in updating the information currently in the city's database on the applicants.
- 2) Removal of unnecessary steps, which include: (1) removal of the payment step as pre-requisite for locational clearance; (2) issuance of locational clearance together with the tax order of payment (TOP); (3) removal of the requirement for multiple copies of documents; and (4) elimination of the need for more than one visit per office.
- 3) Expansion of backroom processing to cover more offices and signatories and to reduce the number of interfaces between front-line staff and the applicant.
- 4) One-time assessment and one-time payment were strictly followed with the BFP, CTO and BPLO assigning staff in the BOSS to handle the assessment and payment of fees during the renewal period. BPLO/CTO also did parallel printing and issuance of business permits upon payment.
- 5) Use of e-signature in business permit and reduced number of signatories/initials to only one (the digital signature of mayor in the business permit)
- 6) Use of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) I-view (SEC viewer card) to assess the SEC registration papers of applicants and check the declaration of gross income of business applicants. This will remove the requirement of having applicants bring a physical copy of such papers.
- 7) Elimination of the need for photocopies of documentary requirements, which includes the sharing of databases among city offices and with NGAs.
- 8) The Mayor and barangay chairmen agreed that business applicants do not need to secure/pay CTC at the barangay.

Piloted the Online Business Registration System. The city was able to set-up an online BPLS that will allow submission of applications, assessment of business taxes and fees, and processing of approvals using the city website. The payment of fees is the only step that the applicants must do at the city hall to get their permits.

New Lay-out for the BOSS . The lay-out of BOSS at the CTO was improved to make it conform to a three-step process and to make it truly a one-stop shop for business applicants. A bigger venue (City Gallery as the future site of the BOSS/IPC) is being designed, which includes locating the Zoning Office at the ground floor. An on-line kiosk was also made available at the ground floor. The BOSS was open from 8am to 9pm since January 2 and also hold office on weekends (Saturday and Sunday) from 8am to 5pm. Flowcharts and signages to guide the applicants were posted and flyers distributed.

Information Campaign on BPLS Processes. The information dissemination to the applicants was intensified in December 2013 using print, radio, television and facebook press releases. The new procedures were presented during the annual tax forum held on November 26, 2014.

Customer Friendly Training for City Staff. To address the results of 2013 exit interviews where some applicants lamented the unfriendly attitude of some city staff, a customer friendliness training was done by the city government. A Feedback System/Grievance Redress System to monitor and check service providers was also put in place to address grievances.

*b. Planned Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter*

The Project will closely monitor the City's implementation of the new BPLS to ensure that the new business permitting procedure will be compliant with the JMC. Similar to Batangas, the Project will be conducting its own assessment of the BPLS, using exit interviews of business applicants, process tracking and physical observation of the BOSS. The findings will be compared with similar assessments being conducted by DTI, DILG-CSC and UP Visayas. The findings of the CSC's Report Card Survey will be presented to the Mayor by the end of January 2014.

The Project will assist the city government in formulating the guidelines for processing new business applications for implementation in February 2014. Third party assessments will again be conducted during this period. The findings will be presented to the Mayor by the end of February 2014.

**3. Enhancing Investment Planning and Promotion**

*a. Key Accomplishments*

The Project held a series of meetings with the Local Organizing Committee of the Business Forum in preparation for the Business Forum scheduled on March 12, 2014. On November 5, 2013, the Project, the Event Manager, and the OC-BF discussed the program, materials, and budget for the forum. The group agreed to hold several investment planning workshops to determine priority projects and convert these into project briefs and sectoral profiles.

Several workshops were organized with technical support from the Project to generate the investment opportunities for the city, the province and the LGUs in the Metro-Iloilo Guimaras

Economic Development Council (MIGEDC). Investment planning workshops were conducted for the education sector (November 21, 2013), fisheries sector (November 22, 2013) and tourism sector (November 25, 2013). The Project, in coordination with the Iloilo City and Provincial Planning Departments and the Local Government Support Project for Local Economic Development (LGSP-LED), also assisted the province in designing the provincial planning and project brief writeshop (held on December 5-6, 2013). The MIGEDC also organized a Multi-Sectoral Planning Workshop on December 12, 2013. After these planning workshops, the Project assisted the City in visiting various stakeholders to get their project briefs.

The Project also assisted city officials in preparing the presentations for the PCCI Award and the DILG Excell Awards. Iloilo City was awarded by the PCCI as the best LGU in Local Economic Development. The City was also declared first in three DILG-Excell categories, one of which is in local economic development.

*c. Planned Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter*

Preparatory activities for the business forum are expected to accelerate in the next quarter. As an important first step, the Project will ensure that Local Organizing Committee identifies a Chair and a Co-chair who can be accountable to the decisions made in the Committee. The biggest challenge which the Project foresees is reconciling possible differences in perspectives between the Iloilo Economic Development Foundation (ILED), which is the lead private sector group financing the event, and the city government. More frequent meetings of the Local Organizing Committee are expected during the quarter as it firms up the final plans for the Business Forum on March 12, 2014.

**4. Building Partnerships**

*a. Key Accomplishments*

As the Project prepares for the business forum, it necessarily has to engage several groups in the process of organizing investment planning workshops. For instance, the Project engaged PBED which gave an overview of the prospects for education in the city, given the Mayor's plan to market the city as an education center. In the planning workshop for tourism and for MIGEDC, the Project closely coordinated with LGSP-LED, which is also supporting Iloilo City, following the principle of harmonization espoused in the Marrakesh and Paris Declarations on Aid Effectiveness.

Consistent with the Project's objective to strengthen public-private partnership in promoting investments in the partner cities, the Project and the Western Visayas State University informally established a partnership wherein on-the-job-trainees (OJTs) provided administrative support and served as researchers for the Project. For its part, the Project trained the OJTs to develop competencies to become future managers and leaders.

The Project also mobilized support the Iloilo Business Club (IBC) and the Central Philippine University (CPU) to conduct the Customer Service Friendly training of frontline personnel on Dec 17, 2013.

*b. Planned Activities for the Next Quarter*

As the city government prepares for the Business Forum in March, the Project expects more partnerships to be forged with private sector groups. ILED, which is the main business group that has partnered with the city government, will be seeking for sponsors for the event both from the city as well as from Manila-based businessmen. The Project, on the other hand, will be enjoining other USAID projects to participate in the Forum, similar to their involvement in the Batangas Business Forum.

In relation to the business permitting reforms, the Project will support select civil society groups in the conduct of the Report Card Survey for Iloilo City, which is one of the deliverables of the Project. The assessment of the city's business permitting process for 2014 will be done by the CPAs but with assistance from the business sector and academe, similar to the modality adopted in past assessments.

## **5. CDI-Related Activities**

In preparation for the upcoming monitoring visit of USAID to Iloilo City, the Project coordinated with the city government in updating the CDI action plan of the City. The Project also worked closely with PBED and Be Secure projects of the USAID.

## C. CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY

Unlike the two other CDI-supported cities, Cagayan de Oro is under new management, with a newly-elected Mayor and newly-appointed department heads. Fortunately for the Project, its CPA is part of the trusted group that is assisting the new Mayor. The Project, together with the Mayor, had to prioritize the setting up of committees and other institutional bodies that will be responsible for coordinating the activities of the Project pertaining to BPLS reforms and Business Forum activities.

For the quarter, some of the activities that the Project supported are the streamlining of the BPLS, and the piloting of the PBR in preparation for the 2014 renewal period and the preparatory work for the Business Forum which is scheduled on February 12, 2014.

### 1. Institutional Strengthening

#### a. Key Accomplishments

Reconstitution and Designation of the Joint Inspection Team The Project, since Year 2, has been pursuing inspection reforms in the three cities. CDO has been a forerunner in issuing a directive for the organization of a Joint Inspection Team (JIT) as early 2011. The JIT, however, has not really been operationalized. Hence, with the new administration, the JIT was reconstituted with the LEIPO as Chair, following the issuance of the Executive Order creating the Sub-Committee on the BPLS in the previous quarter.

Designation of the LEIPO as Chair of the CDO Business Forum Organizing Committee. Since the Business Forum has been set for February 2014, the Mayor issued a directive appointing the LEIPO as the Chair of the Organizing Committee for the Business Forum.

Designation of the City Treasurer as Chair of the Cagayan de Oro Incentives Code Drafting Committee. Following the issuance of the Executive Order on the creation of the LIIC Drafting Committee in late-September, the city government assigned key representatives of concerned departments to sit as members of the committee. The LIIC Drafting Committee conducted weekly meetings and writeshops to revise the existing LIIC of Cagayan de Oro and to consider the comments of the Project's STTA, Atty. Rachel Follosco, and the LIIC template provided by the Project.

Creation of the Management Information System – Information and Communications Technology (MIS-ICT) Office. The ISSP Workshop conducted during the previous quarter gave rise to the need for a separate office for Information Technology (IT) personnel of the city. The proposal submitted to the city government formalizes the creation of an ICT Office to take charge of service automation and IT concerns of the city government.

#### b. Planned Activities for the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter

In the next quarter, the Project will work with the City government for the submission of the following documents to the City Council for approval: (1) the revised Cagayan de Oro Incentives Code, which provides for the creation of the Local Incentives Board and formalizes the creation of the Investment Promotions Center; and (2) the City's ISSP.



## 2. BPLS Streamlining

Similar to the other cities, the activities for the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter focused on outlining the action plan for further streamlining the business permitting processes in the city, taking into account the assessment of the 2013 BPLS. Although the City did not have the resources to move towards online registration in the 2014 renewal period, it nevertheless planned to introduce innovative measures that will ease the burden of the business applicants during the renewal period. These measures are explained below.

### a. Key Accomplishments

Obtained Equipment Grant from the DOST. A grant of 1.1 million pesos from the DOST was facilitated by the Project to provide for the needed workstations, printers, software, and server for the operation of the BOSS, the automation of the inspection system of the city government, and the integration of the PBR module.

Simplified the Application Form for Renewing Business Permits. Applicants, who are renewing their business permits will no longer be required to fill up the Unified Application Form specified in the JMC; instead they will be asked to submit a piece of paper with the following information: their name, previous business permit number, and their signature. Thus, the required procedures needed to apply for or renew a mayor's permit will be four : (1) submission of the simplified form; (2) assessment, (2) payment, and (3) release of permit.

Submission of New Applications Online. The city government is adopting new procedures for business applications who are getting a Mayor's permit for the first time, which consists of the following steps:

- (1) New business registrants have the option to:
  - (a) Register their new businesses online via the city's official website, which enables: (i) online accomplishment and submission; or (ii) form downloading for physical accomplishment and personal submission;
  - (b) Personally obtain, accomplish, and submit the application at the Cagayan de Oro Business One-Stop Shop (CDO-BOSS).
- (2) Assessment follows submission, with the client then paying the tax due; and
- (3) Applicant claims Business Permit and Business Plate from the Releasing Section.

Transfer and Re-design of the BOSS. The 2013 assessment of the CDO BPLS indicated that the business applicants were inconvenienced by the lack of space in the BOSS area and by their exposure to inclement weather during the registration period. Hence, a decision was made to locate the permanent BOSS at the City Treasurer's Office to accommodate more applicants in the future. Since the CTO Office is currently under renovation, a temporary BOSS was set up at the City Tourism Hall, which has a space wide enough to comfortably sit the applicants even during peak periods. The lay-out of the BOSS was also re-designed to ensure that the four-step process is followed.

Integration of the BFP Assessment of Fees in the Tax Order of Payment. As advised by the Project, the BFP representative will sit with 2 cashiers to fulfill the one-payment step while the assessment of the fire safety fees is already done by the city. The BFP personnel is given a terminal where the assessment is already computed, with the BFP's task limited to issuing receipts for the BFP fees. This practice saves time for the BFP in computing the assessment

fee, which in other cities, is a bottleneck that lengthens the processing time for business permits.

PBR Operations at the City Hall BOSS. Following the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between DTI and the City Government on December 11, 2013, PBR workstations will be placed within the BOSS area to assist new business applicants in securing required documents from national government agencies, e.g. DTI, SSS, PhilHealth, BIR, among others. Being the first city in Mindanao to be connected to the PBR, this arrangement integrates the registration and the permitting process for new applicants within the BOSS area, saving time and resources for the businessman.

Creation of Satellite BOSS. The City government plans to set up satellite BOSS offices at the *Lingkod Pinoy* Centers of Robinson's Mall and SM City Mall to decongest the City Hall BOSS. This is the first time that satellite sites for business permitting has been set up in the mall, consistent with the move of other offices in Manila like the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Local Transport Office to be more accessible to the public. These sites may be considered more strategic than the DTI-NERBAC, which was used in the 2013 renewal period as a satellite BOSS, as the *LingkodPinoy* Centers also house counters for SSS, PhilHealth, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

*b. Planned Activities for the Next Quarter*

In the 10<sup>th</sup> quarter, the city government will be implementing new procedures for BPLS, which the Project will closely monitor, providing advice to ensure that the city is able to improve its 2014 performance. At the same time, the Project will supervise the conduct of the third-party assessment of the BPLS process, BOSS and a client satisfaction survey conducted thru exit interviews of business applicants which have gone thru the business permitting processes. The Project will also work with the City for the implementation of planned inspection reforms and supervising third-party assessments of the inspection system.

### **3. Enhancing Investment Planning and Promotion**

With the CBF scheduled in February 2014, the Project started the preparatory activities that would lead to the identification of investment priorities of the city.

*a. Key Accomplishments*

Conduct of the Local Stakeholders Forum. The city government conducted a Local Stakeholders Forum on October 11, 2013 to generate interest in the upcoming business forum among local entrepreneurs and heads of regional government agencies. The forum also served as a means to educate stakeholders on the key factors in measuring city competitiveness and to present the investment opportunities in the city for selected sectors, e.g. agriculture, tourism, and logistics. During the Forum, the city government, together with the DTI Provincial Office presented project briefs of investment priorities in the city.

Organization and Convening of the CDO Business Forum Organizing Committee. With the upcoming CBF, the city realized the need for an Organizing Committee to work on the needed activities prior to the conduct of the forum. The Organizing Committee is also tasked with the preparation of the business concept notes to present the investment opportunities in the locality. The committee is chaired by the LEIPO and composed of City Planning and

Development Office, City Information Office, City Agriculturists Office, Orochamber, Promote CDO, Inc., and DTI (Region and Province).

Drafting of the Investment Incentives Code. In preparation for the CBF, the city drafted its Local Investment Incentives Code, taking into consideration the knowledge materials provided by the Project. However, the *Sanggunian* approval of the Code was not realized within the quarter due to the protracted deliberation over the proposed 2014 City Budget.

*b. Planned Activities for the Next Quarter*

In the 10<sup>th</sup> Quarter, the Project will organize the Business Forum on February 12, 2014. This will entail finalizing the program, engaging local and national business groups as well as other USAID projects.

#### **4. Building Partnerships**

The two major activities of the city government under the Project – the CBF and the BPLS reforms - are generating a lot of interest and support among several groups in the city. The last quarter witnessed some significant agreements between the city government and different sectors in promoting a business-friendly environment in the city.

*a. Key Accomplishments*

Support for the City's BPLS Reforms. While Cagayan de Oro has been able to successfully streamline its BPLS, it recognizes the importance of using technology to achieve a more efficient system for the other areas where permits and licenses are required. Among the partnership agreements and initiatives generated during the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter along these lines include: (1) commitment of Mindanao University of Science and Technology to develop a software for document-tracking of construction permitting at the Office of the Building Official; (2) MOA between the City government and the DOST in the development of eBPLS which is aligned with the DOST's Smarter Cities program; and (3) MOA with the DTI on the city's connectivity with the PBR.

Partnerships Related to the City Business Forum. As early as the last quarter, the DTI Regional and Provincial Offices and the BOI Extension Office were actively involved in the investment promotion activities of the city, namely, the Local Stakeholder's Forum, the Business Forum Organizing Committee, and the LIIC Drafting Committee. The City also harnessed the advisory role of Dr. Bernardo Villegas of the University of Asia and the Pacific for the promotion of Cagayan de Oro. On the local front, both the Oro Chamber and Promote CDO are actively involved in organizing the CBF. The regional Department of Tourism (DOT) is also supporting the CBF through Promote CDO.

*b. Planned Activities for the Next Quarter*

The Project will continue to seek the cooperation of partner entities from the business sector and national government agencies in the holding of the Cagayan de Oro CBF, such as DTI/BOI for the networking session, DOT for the tourism profile and cultural aspect of the program, and business groups for the organization and participation at the out of town event.

The Project will also assist the City in the development of the terms of engagement of Xavier University in the city's solid waste management program, one of the city's projects under Public-Private Partnership.

## **5. CDI-Related Activities**

The Project will coordinate the USAID monitoring visit of CDI to Cagayan de Oro in the third week of February 2014.

## IV. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

As the Project promotes sustainable and inclusive economic growth by improving the business environment in the target cities, it consciously supports the advocacy to provide equal opportunities for both men and women to participate in formulating the development agenda for their localities. Realizing the need to incorporate gender perspectives in project activities, a gender and development action plan (GAP) was formulated initially in November 2011, which was revisited in January 2013 using the revised guidelines of the USAID. The plan aims to:

1. build the capacities of project personnel to promote gender equality and integrate GAD in their respective responsibilities and activities;
2. integrate gender equality concerns in the project workplan and monitoring and evaluation system; and
3. provide equal opportunities for men and women to avail of capacity development programs supported by the project.

### A. KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Given these objectives, the Project conducted the following activities::

1. Started the Business Profiling Study. An STTA was contracted to prepare the business profiling study, which will include a gender and development section., Data gathering for the study has been started with the classification of businesses in each of the partner city by gender using as basis, the names of the company President/Treasurer indicated in the business application form.
2. Ensuring that the business permitting processes are gender-sensitive. As the partner cities plan the lay-out of their Business One-Stop Shop, the Project ensured that the city government provides a special lane for pregnant women.
3. Monitoring female/male participation in the activities of the Project. During the quarter, the Project conducted seven (7) workshops/focused group discussions, which were attended by about 534 participants (Table 10). Majority of these are males (61.2 %) considering that four of the seven workshops dealt with the construction permitting systems in local government units, where personnel are in male-dominated professions like engineers (e.g. sanitary, electrical) and fire marshalls. Male dominance was also noted in the Batangas Business Forum which was attended by members of local and foreign chambers of commerce and business groups, which again are mostly composed of male members.

**Table 10. Participants to INVEST-supported Activities, by Gender**

Events / Workshops	Date	Venue	Participants				Total
			Female		Male		
			No.	%	No.	%	
<b>Component 1: Streamlining Business Registration Processes and Lowering Transaction Costs</b>							
Focus Group Discussion on the Review of the DTI-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, s. 2010 (Mindanao Leg)	3 October 2013	Dynasty Court Hotel, Cagayan De Oro City	14	77.8	4	22.2	18
Focus Group Discussion on the Review of the DTI-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, s. 2010	8 October 2013	Cocoon Boutique Hotel, Quezon City	10	45.5	12	54.5	22
Conference on Best Practices on Construction and Occupancy Permits	28 November 2013	Oakwood Premier-Joy Nostalg Center, Pasig City	7	19.4	29	80.6	36
Workshop on Building Construction and Occupancy Permitting Processes (Visayas Leg)	3 December 2013	Amigo Terrace Hotel, Iloilo City	22	37.9	36	62.1	58
Workshop on Building Construction and Occupancy Permitting Processes (Mindanao Leg)	5 December 2013	The VIP Hotel, Cagayan de Oro City	16	38.1	26	61.9	42
Workshop on Building Construction and Occupancy Permitting Processes (Luzon Leg)	18 December 2013	One Tagaytay Place Hotel, Tagaytay City	34	31.5	74	68.5	108
<b>Component 1 Total</b>			<b>103</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>Component 2: Improving Investment Planning and Promotion in Partner Cities</b>							
Batangas City Business Forum	11 December 2013	Intercontinental Hotel, Makati City	102	40.8	148	59.2	250
<b>Component 2 Total</b>			<b>102</b>	<b>40.8</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>59.2</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>205</b>	<b>38.4</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>534</b>

**B. PLANS FOR THE 10<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER**

For the next Quarter, the Project intends to undertake the following activities in relation to gender and development:

1. Prepare the first draft of the business profiling study, which include a gender profile of business applicants in the partner cities;
2. Ensure that pregnant women are given a special window/lane in the BOSS of each city;
3. Process the INVEST-sponsored customer satisfaction surveys from each city and include an analysis of responses by gender; and
4. Continue to monitor male/female participation in INVEST-sponsored activities

## Annex A.1. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release





## Annex A.2. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release



**Attracting investors.** A forum was held recently by the Batangas Business Club at the Hotel Intercon in Makati City joined by Francis Giles Puno, First Gen Corp. president and chief operating officer; Fely Ramos, Pontefino Hotel and Residences senior vice president and chief operating officer; Cecile Batalia, AG&P vice president; David Ebb Hinchliffe, American Chamber executive director; Agap Party-list Rep. Rico Geron; Sean Perez, Asian Terminals Inc. vice president, commercial and marketing; and lawyer Vicente Bernardo Mayo Jr., University of Batangas regent. **MANNY PALMERO**



## Annex A.3. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release

Thursday, December 12, 2013

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# Batangas aims to be invest hub in South Luzon

BATANGAS City is pursuing investments in infrastructure, industrial sites, agriculture and tourism as it promotes itself as investment hub in Southern Luzon, according to Victor Reginald Dimacuha, secretary to the mayor of Batangas City.

Dimacuha said at the Batangas City Forum at the Hotel Intercontinental yesterday said the city is pitching for the development of an ecozone for manufacturing and logistics enterprises.

Dimacuha said the city government is inviting interested developers to explore a joint venture agreement with private landowners for the development of the ecozone.

The location is within the designated port zone of the Philippine Ports Authority comprising approximately 5 to 7 hectares.

Dimacuha said the city government is also pushing for the construction of the Batangas bay-STAR tollway bypass road, a 7.23-kilometer road covering San Isidro, Libjo, Pallocan, Silangan, Gulod Itaas, Dalid and Tingga Labac within Batangas City.

The road project is proposed to have a width of 20 meters to accommodate four-lane traffic.

The Batangas city government is exploring public-private partnership arrangement with interested parties. The Department of Public Works and Highways is also being eyed as partner.

The road project will give easy access to 11 heavy industrial establishments operating in the city's designate heavy industrial zone which covers barangays Libjo, San Isidro, Tabangao Aplaya, Tabangao Ambulong, Pinamucan Proper, Pinamucan Ibaba, Simlong, Mabacong and Ilijan.

Toay, the zone is serviced by the existing Batangas Bay and the old highway to Manila.

The area requires another road network to accommodate large number of lorries and big cargo trucks transporting processed petroleum products and other chemicals to Metro Manila and the rest of the country.

With the new road, the city government hopes to decongest the existing highway.

Investment opportunities in agriculture

include yellow corn production through the Batangas City yellow Corn growers Association, eggplant production; banana chips and coated peanuts, organic free range chicken dressing plant, high-value and specialty organic crops and herbs and integrated organic farming.

Known as the "Industrial Port City of Calabarzon," Batangas City is one of the fastest urbanizing cities in the Philippines with an average annual growth rate of 2.13%. Rapid growth is largely due to improved employment and quality of life prospects, facilitated by excellent transportation networks, including an International Port as well as accessible roads that are well-connected to nearby markets.

Agriculture, which remains a significant sector of the city's economic output and activity, has tremendous potential to move from low-value farm and livestock production to high-value goods through agro-processing.

As a tourist destination, Batangas City's charm lies in its rich historical and cultural heritage with colonial churches, ancestral houses, colourful festivals, and local cuisine. It is also fast becoming a popular eco-tourism destination, serving as a jump-off point to the Verde Island Passage Marine Biodiversity Conservation Corridor. The meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) market is likewise an emerging segment with the newly built 1,800-seater state-of-the-art Batangas City Convention Center, an ideal location for national and local events.

Batangas City is also home to multi-national companies such as Pilipinas Shell, First Gen, AG&P, Kepco, and Keppel Shipyards. Prospects for further attracting locators are bright with the city's focus on development of economic zones, of which two are underway.

Batangas City boasts an extensive pool of skilled workers. As host of many recognized universities and other educational institutions, it has one of the highest literacy rates in the country. Because of this, the city is now gradually becoming a preferred location for IT-related enterprises.

Annex A.4. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release

**BANK COMPANY BANK**  
**THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS**  
**SINCE 1900**  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
 THE PHILIPPINES' LEADING NATIONAL NEWSPAPER  
 113 Years of Service to the Nation  
**BUSINESS BULLETIN**  
 CLASSIFIED ADS  
 SHIPPING  
 PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE DAILY QUOTATIONS  
 Thursday, December 12, 2013 <http://www.mb.com.ph>

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# Villegas Forecasts 7.5% GDP Growth As Yolanda Impact Seen Minimal

By **BERNIE CAHILES-MAQKILAT**

The country's gross domestic product is expected to reach a high of 7.5 percent this year as the impact of Yolanda is not going to affect the entire economy and the global outpouring of support from the international community would even be providential in creating more economic opportunities, economist Bernardo Villegas said.

In a speech Wednesday at the "Ba-

tangas City Investments Forum" in Makati City, the country's "prophet of boom" has once again painted bullish economic outlook of the Philippines in the aftermath of the devastation of typhoon Yolanda.

"Despite Yolanda we will still grow 7.5 percent this year," Villegas said.

Villegas, who earned the monicker "prophet of boom" for his optimistic economic outlook defended his projections. He stressed that the affected east-

ern Visayas only contributes 2 percent of the country's GDP.

In fact, he said, the generosity of the international community is going to trigger more economic opportunities that would further fuel economic growth in the country next year and the in the coming years.

"With the outpouring of relief efforts from all over the world, the rehabilitation efforts that will follow and the increasing **►B-12**

## Classified Ads

Thursday, December 12, 2013

### ◀B-1 Villegas...

remittances of the OFWs this Christmas, I don't see the GDP being affected by Yolanda after all," he said.

"There is something good coming out of this disaster," he stressed.

The OFWs are expected to send more this Christmas because of the Yolanda and remittances are expected to hit \$25 billion not \$21 billion that the central bank is projecting since about \$4 billion are passing through the informal money remittance system.

He also cited the continued boom in the BPO sector, which posted over \$13.2 billion in 2012 or 19 percent over 2011. The industry is expected to hit \$25 billion-level and 1.3 million direct jobs from the current 776,794 workers.

Another GDP contributor is the government's infrastructure spending, which is expected to hit 5 percent of GDP from 2 percent.

"Infrastructure is a fantastic generator of goods," he said.

In addition, Villegas noted the renaissance of the manufacturing sector in the country citing a report by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority of government running out of ecozone spaces for investors.

He said that foreign investors in China, particularly Japanese, are leav-

ing because of the rising cost of labor, which had gone up 15 percent annually in the past five years.

"There is no more cheap labor cost in China and companies are relocating to the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia."

Villegas also cited the country's industrial peace noting the country has learned its lesson by electing the radicals to Congress effectively plucking them out from agitators of the labor force.

Other positive GDP contributors are stable democracy, improved governance, strong macroeconomic fundamentals; educated, young and English-speaking labor force; strategic geographic location, high rate of savings, less dependence on imported petroleum. (BCM)



# Business forum set

THE LOCAL government and private sector of Batangas City, with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), urges foreign and local investors to explore opportunities into the capital city for potential investments in infrastructure, agriculture, tourism and industry/manufacturing.

A one-day Business Forum titled "Let's Talk Business: Invest in Batangas City" will be held on Dec. 11 at the Intercontinental Manila in order to present the city's business and investment opportunities for potential investors.

Known as the "Industrial Port City of Calabarzon," Batangas City is one of the fastest urbanizing cities in the Philippines with an average annual growth rate of 2.13%. Rapid growth is largely due to improved employment and quality of life prospects, facilitated by excellent transportation networks, including an International Port

as well as accessible roads that are well-connected to nearby markets.

Agriculture, which remains a significant sector of the city's economic output and activity, has tremendous potential to move from low-value farm and livestock production to high-value goods through agro-processing.

As a tourist destination, Batangas City's charm lies in its rich historical and cultural heritage with colonial churches, ancestral houses, colorful festivals, and local cuisine. It is also fast becoming a popular eco-tourism destination, serving as a jump-off point to the Verde Island Passage Marine Biodiversity Conservation Corridor.

The meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) market is likewise an emerging segment with the newly built 1,800-seater state-of-the-art Batangas City Convention Center, an ideal location for national and local events.

Batangas City is also home to multi-national companies such as Pilipinas Shell, First Gen, AG&P, Kepco, and Keppel Shipyards. Prospects for further attracting locators are bright with the city's focus on development of economic zones, of which two are underway.

Batangas City boasts an extensive pool of skilled workers. As host of many recognized universities and other educational institutions, it has one of the highest literacy rates in the country. Because of this, the city is now gradually becoming a preferred location for IT-related enterprises.

Batangas City is a USAID partner under the "Cities Development Initiative," which aims to empower secondary cities as engines of growth by strengthening and enhancing their competitive advantage.

For more information, call 926-0224, 514-5714 or 0917-827-4518.

## Annex A.6. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release

Bu

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### Forum on investment opportunities in Batangas City to be held on December 11

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Batangas City is also home to multinational companies, such as Pilipinas Shell, First Gen, AG&P, Kepco and Keppel Shipyards. Prospects for further attracting locators are bright with the city's focus on development of economic zones, of which two are under way. Moreover, Batangas City boasts of an extensive pool of skilled workers. As host to many recognized universities and other educational institutions, it has one of the highest literacy rates in the country. Because of this, the city is now gradually becoming a preferred location for information-technology-related enterprises.

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**Annex A.7. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release**



The image shows a newspaper clipping. At the top left, there is a blue box with white text that reads: "Tune in every Sat 9am-10am 'Education Radio' w/ Pia Morato & Bong Valerao". To the right of this box, the text "A-24 SATURDAY" is visible. Below the blue box, a line of text states: "Cular said classes will resume on Jan. 13." The main article is titled "ACROSS THE COUNTRY" in large, bold, black letters. Below the title is the sub-headline "Batangas City sets invest forum" in a slightly smaller bold font. The article text follows, starting with "The local government and private sector of Batangas City, with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), are urging foreign and local investors to explore opportunities in the city for potential investments in infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, and industry and manufacturing." The next paragraph begins with "A one-day business forum dubbed 'Let's Talk Business: Invest in Batangas City' will be held on Dec. 11 at the Intercontinental Manila in order to present the city's business and investment opportunities for potential investors." The third paragraph starts with "Known as the industrial port city of the Calabarzon region, Batangas City is one of the fastest urbanizing cities in the country with an average annual growth rate of 2.13 percent." The fourth paragraph begins with "The city's rapid growth is largely due to improved employment and quality of life prospects, facilitated by excellent transportation networks, including an international port and accessible roads well-connected to nearby markets." The final paragraph starts with "To register and to know more about the business forum, call the secretariat at 926-0224, 514-5714 or 0917-8274518."

Tune in every Sat 9am-10am  
**"Education Radio"**  
w/ Pia Morato & Bong Valerao

A-24 SATURDAY

Cular said classes will resume on Jan. 13.

## ACROSS THE COUNTRY

### Batangas City sets invest forum

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Annex A.8. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

# BUSINESS

## *Batangas opens up*

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# Annex A.9. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release

1/15/14 Villegas forecasts 7.5% GDP growth as Yolanda impact seen minimal | Manila Bulletin | Latest Breaking News | News Philippines

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

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Home » Business » Business News » Villegas forecasts 7.5% GDP growth as Yolanda impact seen minimal

## Villegas forecasts 7.5% GDP growth as Yolanda impact seen minimal

by **Bernie Magkilat**  
December 11, 2013

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## Annex A.10. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release

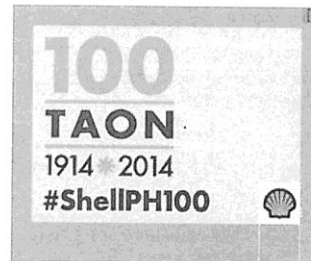
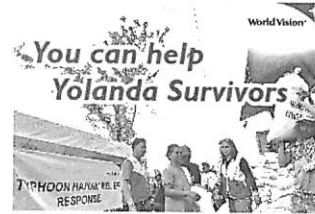
1/15/14 Villegas forecasts 7.5% GDP growth as Yolanda impact seen minimal | Manila Bulletin | Latest Breaking News | News Philippines

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# Annex A.11. Batangas City Business Forum Press Release






1/15/14

Batangas City sets invest forum | Nation, News, The Philippine Star | philstar.com

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## Batangas City sets invest forum

(The Philippine Star) | Updated November 23, 2013 - 12:00am

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MANILA, Philippines - The local government and private sector of Batangas City, with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), are urging foreign and local investors to explore opportunities in the city for potential investments in infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, and industry and manufacturing.

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[www.philstar.com/nation/2013/11/23/1259688/batangas-city-sets-invest-forum](http://www.philstar.com/nation/2013/11/23/1259688/batangas-city-sets-invest-forum)

1/2

## Annex B.1. Success Stories



**USAID | PHILIPPINES**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

### SUCCESS STORY

## Business Forum Showcases Batangas City as Investment Destination

USAID supports efforts of Philippine cities to enhance their competitiveness as investment destinations



Mr. Gregory Beck delivers the keynote address during the business forum.



Mr. Gregory Beck, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia, receives the "key to the City" as a symbol of the gratitude of the local government and people of Batangas City for the support given by USAID to its development efforts.

December 11, 2013. USAID through the Investment Enabling Environment (INVEST) Project assisted the Batangas City Government in organizing its first Business Forum which showcased the potential of the city as an investment hub in Southern Luzon. Mr. Gregory Beck, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia, delivered the keynote address where he commended the city government for the reforms that it initiated under the Cities Development Initiative, a program under the Partnership for Growth (PFG). He assured the city government of continued USAID assistance in accelerating the development of the city, especially in the areas of infrastructure, education, health and tourism under the new PFG projects, such as COMPETE, HEP and STRIDE.

The Batangas Business Forum is significant, being the first joint project of the Batangas City government with the newly-formed Batangas City Business Club. The Forum also highlighted the growing public-private partnerships being encouraged by the City Government, which forged an agreement with the Philippine Men's National Football Team (more popularly known as the "Azkals") on the use of the city's football field. An academe-industry agreement was also inked between the Batangas State University and Atlantic Gulf and Pacific, Inc., under USAID's Higher Education Project.

Around 250 high-level representatives from international and local businesses, trade associations, foreign chambers, trade missions, embassies, and government agencies learned about specific investment opportunities in Batangas City. Some of the prominent government officials and private sector representatives who graced the occasion include Undersecretary Nora Terrado of the Department of Trade and Industry, Undersecretary Austere Panadero of the Department of the Interior and Local Government and Deputy Director-General of the National Economic and Development Authority and former Congressman Hemilando Mandanas. Private sector testimonies of why they invested in Batangas City were given by officials of First Gen, Asian Terminals, Inc., Pontefino Hotel, Batangas University, American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (AmCham), AG & P and the Soro-Soro Ibaba Development Cooperative.

The Forum was organized in partnership with other recipients of USAID assistance under the PFG such as AmCham and four banks which are currently managing a guarantee program under the Development Credit Authority – Bank of Philippine Islands, Security Bank, Philippine Savings Bank and Philippine Business Bank.

U.S. Agency for International Development  
[www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

## Annex B.2. Success Stories



**USAID | PHILIPPINES**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

### SUCCESS STORY

## Three CDI Cities Connect to DTI's Philippine Business Registry

The Batangas Business Forum served as a venue to launch partnerships among key cities, and government agencies to advance reforms.



From left to right: Aileen San Juan (CDO), Felix Tiu (Iloilo), Reginald Dimacuha (Batangas), Mayor Oscar Moreno, Mayor Eddie Dimacuha, Usaid's Gregory Beck, Mayor Jed Mabilog, DTI Usec. Nora Terrado, Hernani Dionisio (DTI) and Junel Divinagracia (Iloilo) during the MOA-signing of DTI's PBR.

December 18, 2013. Undersecretary Nora Terrado representing the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement on December 11, 2013 that will connect Batangas, Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro cities to the Philippine Business Registry (PBR). The PBR is a web-based portal, being managed by the DTI, where applicants can register their businesses online with the DTI, Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Social Security System, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation and the Home Development Mutual Fund. These cities will be the first local governments to be connected to the PBR in Southern Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. The signing was made possible by USAID's Investment Enabling Environment Project (INVEST), which has been assisting the DTI in the implementation of the PBR in addition to providing technical support to the three cities in reforming their regulatory environment.

The MOA signing was one of the highlights of the Batangas City Business Forum "Let's Talk Business: Invest in Batangas City", held at Hotel Intercontinental on December 11, 2013. Present during the signing ceremonies were Mayor Eddie Dimacuha of Batangas City, Mayor Jed Patrick Mabilog of Iloilo City and Mayor Oscar Moreno of Cagayan De Oro City, with Mr. Gregory Beck, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia, witnessing the event.

In line with this, the three trailblazing cities, supported by USAID's INVEST Project, agreed to provide the necessary resources in setting up the software and hardware requirements for the PBR connectivity.