

# INVEST DIGEST

The Official Newsletter of the Central Luzon Growth Corridor Foundation, Inc.



## CLGCFI Invites Japanese Investors to Locate in Central Luzon

*The Central Luzon Growth Corridor Foundation, Inc. (CLGCFI), led by its President and Tarlac Governor Susan Yap, held an outbound investment mission to Japan on April 17-21, 2023, with itineraries in Osaka and Tokyo, to introduce Central Luzon to Japanese investors and to entice them to do business in the region.*

The mission was organized and conducted as part of CLGCFI's continuous efforts to promote the region as the logical destination for business and investment and to present its business opportunities to international business communities especially at this time of recovery from the pandemic.

The Central Luzon Outbound Investment Mission to Japan gave local government units (LGUs) and investment promotion agencies in the region the opportunity to establish linkages with Japanese companies and benchmark best practices from industry experts.

Congresswoman Maria Angela Garcia of the 3rd District of Bataan and Mayor Jocell Aimee Vistan-Casaje of Plaridel, Bulacan joined the mission. Other members of the delegation included representatives from the Provincial Governments of Aurora, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, and Tarlac, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan (AFAB), and the CLGCFI secretariat.

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# BOI and Pampanga LGUs Collaborate for Whole-of-Government Approach in Investments Promotion

Lubao Mayor Esmeralda Pineda met with the representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry - Board of Investments (DTI-BOI) on January 24, 2023 to present and discuss the various programs and services of BOI.

As the lead investments promotion agency (IPA) in the Philippines, BOI is tasked to boost investments for jobs generation and economic development as well as assist investors in setting up business. The meeting is one of the many strategies of DTI-BOI to aid potential and existing investors.

BOI's Investments Assistance Service (IAS) led the presentation of the agency's services which include investment counseling, issues and concerns facilitation, provision of investment briefing and counseling seminars, and networking with investment promotion units (IPUs), among others.

Late last year, representatives from DTI-BOI and DTI-Pampanga Provincial Office were also invited to attend the 4th Quarter Meeting of the Pampanga Mayors League (PML) for the same purpose. This was held at the Lubao Bamboo Hub and Eco-Park in Barangay Sta. Catalina, Lubao, Pampanga.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is currently being reviewed for signing by both parties to further strengthen the partnership and collaboration between the IPA and LGU-Lubao.

Present during the meeting are BOI Executive



Mayor Esmeralda G. Pineda of LGU-Lubao with DTI-BOI and DTI Pampanga representatives.

Director Ernesto Delos Reyes, Jr., IAS Acting Chief Lubin De Vera, Jr., and Investments Specialist Hershey Serrano. For the Pampanga side, in attendance were Mayor Pineda herself, Municipal Administrator Elizalde Bernal, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator Danilo Aquino, DTI-Pampanga Provincial Director Elenita Ordonio and Senior Trade-Industry Development Specialist Rhia Laxa.

The BOI-IAS, in coordination with DTI provincial offices, continues to strengthen the whole-of-government approach in promoting investments in the country. Local government units are being tapped to capitalize in the institutionalized partnership with national government agencies and local government units to achieve ease of doing business across all sectors. - Rhia C. Laxa, DTI-Pampanga





# Bulacan Looks into Japan's Advanced Technologies to Address Solid Waste Management Concerns

Bulacan Governor Daniel Fernando, former Presidential Special Envoy to Japan Reghis Romero II, and members of the League of Municipalities-Bulacan Chapter paid a courtesy visit to Osaka City Vice Mayor Takahashi Toru at the Osaka City Hall in Japan to benchmark the country's effective solutions to address lingering solid waste management concerns in the province of Bulacan.

During the meeting with Osaka City government officials on June 26, 2023, Fernando said that Bulacan will continue to step up towards its vision for an environmentally responsible province.

"By benchmarking Japan's advanced technologies and adapting them to suit local conditions, we are taking definitive steps in addressing our lingering solid waste management issues. We will continue to collaborate and consult with relevant stakeholders, such as government agencies, private enterprises, and the local communities for the successful adoption and

implementation of these technologies," the governor said.

Learning from Japan as a globally recognized nation in advanced waste management practices and innovative technologies, the delegation also met with the city's Waste Management Authority in Minami Eguchi, Higashi Yodogawa-ku, Osaka.

Together with the governor to represent the local government units were Angat Mayor Reynante Bautista, Plaridel Mayor Jocell Vistan Casaje, Santa Maria Mayor Bartolome Ramos, Pandi Mayor Enrico Roque, Paombong Mayor Maryanne Marcos, Marilao Mayor Henry Lutao, Pulilan Mayor Maria Rosario Montejo, Hagonoy Mayor Flordeliza Manlapaz, Obando Mayor Leonardo Valeda, City of Malolos Mayor Christian Natividad, Balagtas Mayor Eladio Gonzales, Jr., Norzagaray Mayor Ma. Elena Germar, and Board Member Romeo Castro, Jr. as the representative for the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. - *Bulacan Provincial Public Affairs Office*



**BENCHMARKING JAPAN'S LEADING TECH FOR SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT.** Governor Daniel R. Fernando together with the League of Municipalities of the Philippines Bulacan Chapter and (left, beside Fernando) Dr. Reghis M. Romero II, former Presidential Special Envoy to Japan, makes a courtesy call to Vice Mayor Takashi Toru (right, beside Fernando) with the City of Osaka Government officials at the Osaka City Hall in Japan recently to learn about the country's world-renowned technologies for waste disposal and recycling practices to address the province's solid waste management concerns.

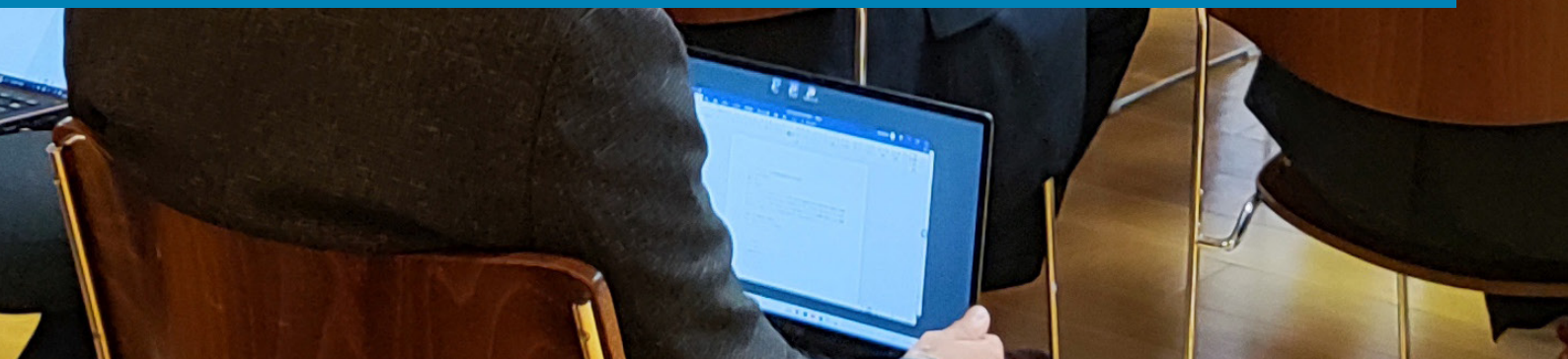


Governor Yap expresses pride in Central Luzon's significant contribution to the national development amidst the pandemic.



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## Investment Briefing

The mission was highlighted by the Investment Briefing organized in partnership with the Philippine Trade and Investment Center (PTIC)-Tokyo led by Commercial Counsellor Bernardita Angara-Mathay. The briefing aimed to introduce and present the investment opportunities in Central Luzon to the Japanese business community. Twenty-nine (29) representatives from twenty-one (21) Japanese companies attended the activity.

In her welcome remarks, Philippine Ambassador to Japan Mylene Garcia-Albano encouraged Japanese businesses to invest in the Philippines and contribute to its regional development. She acknowledged the vital role of local government units in ensuring that economic growth is both sustainable and inclusive, and recognized the need to promote and foster regional development to redistribute economic development even in far-flung areas of the Philippines.

She also addressed the Japanese business sector present during the briefing and assured them that the Philippines is indeed open for business. She cited the game-changing reforms in economic liberalization, tax policies and ease of doing business as proof of the government's determination to make the Philippines the logical investment destination of choice.

In her message, Governor Yap expressed pride that Central Luzon continues to contribute significantly to the national development amid the pandemic which she attributes to the region's distinct advantages such as its centrality of location, expanding infrastructure, available investment locations, economic and market spheres of influence and reliable manpower support.

Other representatives from Aurora, Bataan including AFAB, Bulacan, and Nueva Ecija provinces made pitches to prospective investors and presented about business and investment opportunities, including strategic advantages of investing in their respective areas.

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## Business to Business (B2B) Meetings

Several rounds of pre-arranged business-to-business meetings provided the Central Luzon delegates the opportunity to meet with potential Japanese partners based on their identified areas of interest. Prior to the conduct of the mission, twenty-three (23) business offers were prepared and these were presented to the Japanese counterparts during the B2B meetings. At end, eighteen (18) partnership meetings were arranged with five (5) Japanese firms signifying interest in doing business in Central Luzon.

## Company Visits and Business Meetings

In partnership with PTIC-Osaka Commercial Counsellor Michael Alfred Ignacio, the delegation had a couple of company visits and business meetings at Osaka.

The Central Luzon contingent had a round table meeting on startups and innovation with Osaka Landing Pad and GVH#5. Osaka Landing Pad is a free service that provides foreign startups with initial consultation and connection to the most appropriate programs, events, services, and resources to leverage to successfully enter the Japan market. On the other hand, GVH#5 supports startups in launching their new businesses by offering not only coworking spaces and rental offices but also provide various support services such as a common space for meeting new business partners who have also setup their bases in the same facility.

During the visit at GVH#5's office, the CLGCFI delegates met and discussed with the executives of the Osaka Landing Pad and GVH Select Start-Ups regarding potential business opportunities and possible collaboration with Central Luzon.

The CLGCFI delegation also visited the Osaka Prefectural Government Office and met with the officers of the Osaka World Expo Promotion Bureau to discuss business opportunities



for the Central Luzon provinces at the Osaka World Expo which will be held from April 13 to October 25, 2025 at the Yumeshima Island. They had the opportunity to view the site of the World Expo 2025 from the observatory.

While in Tokyo, the Central Luzon delegates also met with the officers and members of the International Friendship Exchange Council (FEC). The FEC is a non-profit international exchange organization that, on the private-sector level, promotes relationships of friendship and cooperation between Japan and other countries as well as fosters public understanding of international circumstances.

As Central Luzon bounced back from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, CLGCFI remains committed in its efforts to position the region as a top-of-mind choice for prospective investors. Follow through activities are in the pipeline to ensure that the investment leads generated during this mission will materialize. - Rona O. Dizon, CLGCFI



Ota Market



Oshino Hakkai



FEC Luncheon Meeting



B2B Meetings



Osaka Landing Pad



World Expo Briefing



# ROLL-IT Program Undergoes Reformulation, Focuses on Logistics and Food Security

The Roads Leveraging Linkages of Industry and Trade (ROLL IT) program underwent reformulation to focus on logistics efficiency and food security as part of the 8-point agenda for economic development of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. during his term.

The convergence program of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), commonly referred to as ROLL IT, was established in 2016 under the administration of former President Rodrigo Duterte to achieve the vision in the Ambisyon Natin 2040 and in support of the “Build, Build, Build” project aimed at addressing the huge infrastructure backlog in the country.

Initially slated to run only until 2022, the program was continued thru a renewed

signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the DTI and DPWH in December 2022. With the new MOA, the program’s focus shifted to ensuring food security and reduction of transport and logistics cost. It was also renamed ROLL IT 2.0 - LETS EAT or Logistics Efficiency and Transport Seamlessness to Enhance Agribusiness Trade.

Request for projects under ROLL IT 2.0 began in the first quarter of 2023 with the criteria focused on enhancing agribusiness trade and logistics, thereby incorporating the endorsement of transport association groups in the requirements. The following projects from Bataan amounting to ₱220 million were evaluated and proposed by the ROLL IT Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG) for funding in FY 2024:

Proposed Project (ROLL IT 2.0)	Length	Amount
Victoria Road Connecting Gov. JJ Linao Road to Bataan New Port City in support of Agribusiness/ Food Industry (mongo, rice, turnip, peanut, bread and pastries), Pilar, Bataan	1.936km	₱100 million
Road Connecting Roman Expressway to Bataan New Port City in support of Agribusiness/ Food Industry (mongo, rice, turnip, peanut, bread and pastries), Pilar, Bataan	2.2 km	₱100 million
Road Connecting Roman Expressway to Agri-Industrial Farms in support of Agribusiness/ Food Industry (poultry, piggery, veggie noodles, bread and pastries, cacao, coconut), Balanga City	0.7 km	₱20 million

source: DPWH-3

With the continuance of the convergence program in 2023, ten (10) projects for completion under the previous criteria were also revalidated and re-endorsed for funding in FY 2024, in addition to those enrolled

under ROLL IT 2.0. The re-endorsed projects from Aurora, Bataan and Pampanga amount to ₱940.377 million. A total of thirteen (13) projects in the region were proposed for FY 2024 amounting to ₱1.2 billion.



Project Name (Re-endorsed under ROLL IT 1.0)	Amount
Calabgan to Bianoan Road connecting to Aurora Pacific Economic Zone (APECO) and Baler-Casiguran National Road in support of APECO Locators and SSF Cooperator, SME & Beneficiaries, Casiguran, Aurora	₱120 million
Access Road from Hermosa Economic and Industrial Zone connecting Palihan-Mabiga-SBMA, Hermosa, Bataan	₱460.377 million
Brgy. San Simon to Brgy. Tucop Road Agro-industrial Area, Dinalupihan, Bataan	₱40 million
Brgy. Pita Road leading to Agro-industrial Area, Dinalupihan, Bataan	₱40 million
Brgy. Torres-New San Jose-Pagalangang Road to Agricultural Area, Dinalupihan, Bataan	₱40 million
Brgy. Tubo-Tubo Road leading to Agro-Tourism Area, Dinalupihan, Bataan	₱40 million
NLEX-SCTEX Connecting Road in support of Furniture, IT-BPM, Hotels, Garments and Textile Industries, Angeles City, Pampanga	₱30 million
Camachilles-Sapang-Biabas-Bical Road, Mabalacat, Pampanga	₱50 million
Sta. Ines-Atlu Bola Road, Mabalacat, Pampanga	₱20 million
East Circumferential Road connecting MacArthur Highway to Angeles-Magalang Road in support of Handicraft, Furniture and Garments, and Food Processing Industries, Angeles City, Pampanga	₱100 million

source: DPWH-3



For the last batch of projects proposed in 2022 prior to the program's reformulation, 12 projects from the region amounting to ₱353

million were approved under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for implementation in the fiscal year 2023, as follows:

Project Name	Total Amount	Implementing Office
<b>A U R O R A</b>		
1 Calabgan to Bianoan Road connecting to Aurora Pacific Economic Zone (APECO) and Baler-Casiguran National Road in support of APECO Locators and SSF Cooperator, SME & Beneficiaries, Casiguran, Aurora	₱5 million	Aurora DEO

source: DPWH-3

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## ROLL-IT Program Undergoes Reformulation, Focuses on Logistics and Food Security

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Project Name		Total Amount	Implementing Office
<b>BATAAN</b>			
2	Access Road from Hermosa Economic and Industrial Zone connecting Palihan-Mabiga-SBMA, Hermosa, Bataan	₱10 million	Regional Office
3	Brgy. San Simon to Brgy. Tucop Road Agro-industrial Area, Dinalupihan, Bataan	₱50 million	Bataan Sub DEO
4	Brgy. Pita Road leading to Agro-industrial Area, Dinalupihan, Bataan	₱50 million	Bataan Sub DEO
5	Brgy. Torres-New San Jose-Pagalang Road to Agricultural Area, Dinalupihan, Bataan	₱50 million	Bataan Sub DEO
6	Brgy. Tubo-Tubo Road leading to Agro-Tourism Area, Dinalupihan, Bataan	₱50 million	Bataan Sub DEO
<b>BULACAN</b>			
7	Brgy. Batia, Bocaue to Brgy. Malibong Matanda to Malibong Bata Road, Pandi, Bulacan	₱15 million	Bulacan 1 <sup>st</sup> DEO
8	Construction of Matungao-Guiguinto Provincial Road connecting McArthur Highway and Bantayan Road in support of Electronic Manufacturing, Chemicals, Furnitures and Garments and Agri Business Industries, Phase 2, Guiguinto, Bulacan	₱13 million	Bulacan 1 <sup>st</sup> DEO
<b>PAMPANGA</b>			
9	NLEX-SCTEX Connecting Road in support of Furniture, IT-BPM, Hotels, Garments and Textile Industries, Angeles City, Pampanga	₱40 million	Pampanga 3 <sup>rd</sup> DEO
10	Camachilles-Sapang-Biabias-Bical Road, Mabalacat, Pampanga	₱20 million	Pampanga 3 <sup>rd</sup> DEO
11	Sta. Ines-Atlu Bola Road, Mabalacat, Pampanga	₱25 million	Pampanga 3 <sup>rd</sup> DEO
<b>ZAMBALES</b>			
12	Brgy. Manglicmot to Brgy. Balincaguig Road, San Felipe, Zambales	₱25 million	Zambales 1 <sup>st</sup> DEO

source: DPWH-3

ROLL IT was originally launched to facilitate the identification and implementation of road access leading to industries and economic zones which in turn aimed to fuel the surge of domestic and foreign direct investments. Thru the program, a total of 19 infrastructure projects amounting to 1.1 billion were completed in the 5 provinces of Central Luzon in 2022. - Rya Bianca G. Artates, DTI-3 Regional Office





# ₱180M Modern Fish Port Breaks Ground in Orani

On April 20, 2023, Senator Cynthia Villar and Bataan officials led the groundbreaking of the ₱180.3 million Orani Fish Landing and Trading Facility in Pantalang Bago, Orani, Bataan.

The fish port, which is expected to be completed within 422 days, will have 60 stalls on a one-hectare area and will replace the old Orani fish port.

The funding of the project came as a grant to Orani from the Philippine Rural Development Program (PRDP) of the Department of Agriculture (DA). The facility was approved by the Regional Project Advisory Board (RPAB) and is funded by the World Bank.

Provincial Planning and Development Officer (PPDO) Alexander Baluyot said that both the national and provincial governments each provide 10% of the project cost as their counterpart.

According to PRDP Regional Project Coordination Office (RPCO) Region 3 Project Director Dr. Arthur Dayrit, the new fish port will be a catalyst for development, not only for the town of Orani but also for the province of Bataan.

Senator Villar added that the project will level up Orani as a world-class fish port serving fish traders and fishers in the area. Further, the modern fish port will open tourism opportunities for the municipality.

Bataan Governor Joet Garcia is positive that there will be a huge economic impact for local folks once the modern fish port is constructed.



In addition, Vice Governor Ma. Cristina Garcia said that the province is thankful to President Bongbong Marcos for the two PRDP projects in Bataan, which also includes the improvement of a farm-to-market road in Hermosa. Noting that other provinces get even bigger grants from PRDP, she urged municipalities to study the meticulous preparation of the requirements for approval of grant.

Orani Mayor Bonjong Pascual also shared that the new fish port will not only be primarily for sugpo and alimango, but for silinyasi as well. He also thanked Senator Villar and provincial leaders for their commitment to help the people of Orani.

Other personalities present during the event were Bataan 1st District Representative Geraldine Roman, Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (MFARMC) President Mr. Avelino Capuli, Board Members, Municipal Councilors, and Provincial and Municipal Department Heads. - <https://1bataan.com>



# Retail Outlets Expand Operations in Nueva Ecija

Nueva Ecija has recently seen an expansion of retail outlets with the opening of shopping malls and a minimart in the different towns of the province.

## Divimart Shopping Mall Expands Operations

Divimart Shopping Mall has expanded in two (2) cities and one (1) municipality in Nueva Ecija, namely, Gapan City, Cabanatuan City, and Aliaga.

In April 2021, amidst the pandemic, the Divimart Gapan Branch started bringing Divisoria-priced items to Gapan residents thru its 450-square meter store which generated 30 job opportunities for Novo Ecijanos and has a declared investment of ₱8,169,962.00.

In April 2023, another Divimart Shopping Mall was opened in the City of Cabanatuan. With an estimated land area of more than 13,000 square meters, it employed about more than 250 employees and recorded more than ₱30 million in terms of investments.

Another Divimart is set to open later this semester at the Municipality of Aliaga.

With more than 30 branches nationwide, Divimart is known for its low prices and wide selection of goods. It offers a variety of products, including fresh produce, meat, seafood, dairy, baked goods, frozen foods, snacks, beverages, household goods, and personal care items.

The idea behind Divimart is to bring

merchandise sold at Divisoria prices closer to Filipinos. Divimart has been expanding its presence in different areas to cater to the needs of people in mostly far-flung communities.

## Robinsons Easymart Opens in Guimba

Robinsons Easymart opens its 111th branch on May 19, 2023 at Saranay District, Guimba, Nueva Ecija. The store building occupies 608 square meters of its total land area of 732 square meters. It has a declared investment of ₱7 million and employment of ten people residing in the town.

Strategically located along the highway near National Food Authority and the Iglesia Ni Cristo Church, the Robinsons Easymart aims to improve access to good food and basic household items within the area.

Robinsons Easymart is a result of Robinsons Store Corp's constant development of the basic food item experience. Those looking for big savings on food items and commonly used products will find smart deals at the minimarts' extensive product selection.

The minimarts likewise guarantee customers unrivaled comfort, being an across-the-board center for new food and other family necessities, as well as different administrations, for example, a drug store, installment focus, and Telco loading stations.

Robinsons Easymart is a subsidiary of Robinsons Retail Holdings, Inc. - *Honeylen Marie P. Fernando, DTI-Nueva Ecija*



# Proprietors of Major Development Projects in Bulacan Vow to Prioritize Hiring Bulakenyos

Two of the major upcoming development projects in Bulacan, Northwin Global City of Megaworld Corporation and Crossroads of Ayala Land Estates, Inc., vowed to prioritize giving employment to Bulakenyos.

In a meet up with the press on June 30, 2023 dubbed as Talakayang Bulakenyo 2023 and facilitated by the Provincial Public Affairs Office, John Marcial Estacio, Estate Head of Ayala Land Estates, Inc., said that their workforce will definitely include Bulakenyos.

Estacio said that they will prioritize hiring of employees from Bulacan, particularly those who live in the nearby towns of Ayala Land Crossroads. The company's target is to hire 40% of its workforce within the area. The same commitment was also given by Ma. Kamille Andrea Quiniano, Senior Sales Manager of Megaworld Corporation.

"We have the vision to really help the improvement of Bulacan as a province as one of the most competitive. It will be our advantage to make use of the talents of Bulakenyos and definitely it's the main priority of Northwin Global City to employ people from Bulacan, from [the project's] development [until its establishment]," Quiniano said.



*TALAKAYANG BULAKENYO 2023: The major development projects in the province including the Northwin Global City of Megaworld Corp. and Crossroads Estate of Ayala Land Estates, Inc. were discussed at the VIP Lounge, Provincial Capitol Building, City of Malolos, Bulacan. INSET: Vice Governor Alexis Castro giving his opening statement during the forum.*

Meanwhile, Vice Governor Alexis Castro said that together with Governor Daniel Fernando and millions of Bulakenyos, the province is looking forward to the realization of these big projects and how it will benefit the Bulakenyos.

"This is the right time to invest in our province. We welcome all the businesses, all the opportunities, and the Provincial Government is thrilled because of all the development that's coming for us," Castro said.

Also present during the Talakayang Bulakenyo as panel members were Provincial Administrator Antonette Constantino, Provincial Planning and Development Officer Arlene Pascual, Provincial Legal Officer Gerard Nelson Manalo, and Chief of Staff Atty. Gerald Biscarra Baro, with Provincial Information Officer Katrina Anne Bernardo-Balingit as the moderator. - *Bulacan Provincial Public Affairs Office*





photos from: <https://www.facebook.com/smcitybataanofficial/>

## SM City Bataan Opens its Doors, Brings Prosperity and Sustainability

In a significant milestone for the province of Bataan, SM City Bataan, the 83rd SM supermall in the country and the first in the province, officially opened its doors to the public on May 19, 2023.

Bataan Vice Governor Cris Garcia, Bataan 2nd District Representative Albert Garcia, Bataan 3rd District Representative Maria Angela Garcia, and City Vice Mayor Vianca Venzon-Gozon were present during the blessing and inauguration of the mall on May 18, 2023. Also present were SM Engineering Design and Development Corp. President Hans Sy, Jr. and SM Supermall President Steven Tan.

According to Assistant Mall Manager Jhoana Gatdula, SM City Bataan aims to contribute to the province's robust economy by providing job opportunities to the local population. In fact, the employment at SM City Bataan can reach 1,500 to 2,000 workers for its full operation.

With its strategic location near the Bataan Terminal Complex, this two-level mall spanning over 46,000 square meters aims to cater to shoppers not only in the Bataan peninsula but also in nearby provinces.

The opening of SM City Bataan marks a new era for the province, renowned for being a history hub, a nature haven, and a thriving commercial zone. Bataan has long been famous for its involvement in World War II and its hospitality towards Indochinese refugees in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Now, the province adds a world-class shopping destination to its list of attractions, alongside Mount Samat Shrine of Valor (Dambana ng Kagitingan), Five Fingers Cove, and the Bataan World War II Museum.

Situated at the heart of Balanga City and surrounded by vibrant residential areas and a bustling university town, SM City Bataan symbolizes the harmonious fusion of urban



prosperity and countryside living.

Its design exudes a welcoming oasis vibe, with lush greenery, comfort zones, warm timber, and natural tones that create a serene shopping experience for visitors.

Inside the mall, a wide array of shops and restaurants await, offering a mix of local and international brands. Food enthusiasts will delight in the variety of dining options available. Homegrown brands like The Beanery, Papa Kebs, CHN Cafe, Chedeng's Snack Bar, and Makiramen showcase local flavors, while popular global and national food chains and specialty restaurants such as Mama Lou's Italian Kitchen, Starbucks, Breadtalk, Krispy Kreme, Mesa, and Botejyu cater to different palates.

The mall boasts a spacious and beautifully designed Food Court with nine choices of local and international cuisine, a health and wellness zone, banks, amusement centers for kids of all ages, two event screens, three regular cinemas, and an event center for exhibits and activities.

Moreover, SM City Bataan is a shining example of sustainability and environmental stewardship. As Green SM's first mall in Bataan, it was thoughtfully designed with the community in mind.

The energy-efficient mall maximizes natural lighting through the use of low emissivity (Low E) glass for its windows and skylights. It features a rainwater catchment facility, solar panels projected to generate 2.3 megawatts of electricity, a sewage treatment plant, and the use of LED light fixtures.

The mall serves as a cozy world-class gathering place for the community, fostering



social connections and creating a sense of belonging.

SM City Bataan also launched its first electronic vehicle (EV) charging station in the province. The SM management said owners of electronic vehicles can now travel worry-free as SM Supermalls brought its EV charging station at the newly-opened mall.

"This initiative aims to provide a beneficial infrastructure for EV owners, encouraging the adoption of clean transportation option and reducing carbon emissions," SM said.

The management said users of EV can just park, pop and plug free of charge at SM City Bataan's Wallbox Pulsar Plus AC charger that has a charging power of up to 7.4 kilowatts. It is available to EV brands of Audi, BMW, Fiat, Ford, GMC, Mercedes Benz, Porsche, Volkswagen and Hyundai, among others.

The charging stations are open from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M. daily. SM Supermalls is the first mall chain to establish in-mall EV charging sites in the Philippines, with multiple installed chargers in 27 malls. By opening more charging stations, SM has created the Philippines' biggest chain of EV charging stations nationwide. - <https://1bataan.com>



# Bulacan to House Largest Greenhouse Facility in the Country

Metro Pacific Agro Ventures (MPAV), the agribusiness subsidiary of Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC), in partnership with Israel-based LR Group, is building the largest vegetable greenhouse in the country on a 22-hectare facility in San Rafael, Bulacan.

During the groundbreaking ceremony of the Metro Pacific Fresh Farms (MPFF) held on February 20, 2023, MPAV President and Chief Executive Officer Jovy Hernandez said the company is investing close to ₱1 billion for the facility which aims to produce around 1,600 metric tons of high-quality vegetables all year round.

Seven hectares will be used to build greenhouses; one hectare will be allocated for hydroponics farming, seeding area, and nursery; six hectares will be dedicated to hot greenhouses with drip irrigation systems; while the remaining areas will be for the irrigation center, logistics warehouse, packing facility, water storage facility, and solar power plant.

Compared to other traditional farming methods, the nutrient film technique and drip irrigation system that will be utilized in MPFF will effectively use 90% less water, 90% less land, and 90% to 99% less fertilizer and pesticides while trimming crop cycle time.

Expected to be completed in 12 months, MPFF comprises a full value chain, including seedlings production, vegetable cultivation,



*From the right: seated: Founder and Chairman of LR Group Ami Lustig, Metro Pacific Investment Corp.'s Chairman, President, and CEO Manuel Pangilinan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Israel to the Republic of the Philippines His Excellency Ilan Fluss; standing: PLDT officer, DTI Asec. Leonila Baluyut and DTI-3 OIC-ARD and concurrent DTI-Bulacan Provincial Director Edna Dizon.*

sorting, packaging and marketing.

The initiative, according to MPIC Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer Manny Pangilinan, promotes the government's goal of food security. An independent Philippines in terms of agriculture is the goal of these investments, he claimed. "We want to help build a nation that's capable of feeding all of its people," he added.

Pangilinan hopes the investment will reduce inflation, as the facility's produce adds to the supply chain and reduces dependence on imports.

MPFF will supply farm-to-fork produce to Metro Manila and the surrounding provinces. Even with this infrastructure, just a small portion of the Metro Manila vegetable market can be served, according to Hernandez.

MPFF also aims to open opportunities in the agricultural sector, especially for local farmers, as it promotes training, advanced farming techniques and employment for surrounding communities. - Lota M. Yasa, DTI-Bulacan





# Japanese Businessman Keen on Investing in Bulacan

As an offshoot of the CLGCFI Outbound Trade and Investment Mission to Japan held on April 17-21, 2023, Mr. Allan Reyes, President of Amusetic Corporation and President of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)-Japan set an Investment Meeting with the Provincial Government of Bulacan (PGB) on May 19, 2023. This meeting was attended by Bulacan Governor Daniel Fernando, Bulacan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) President Cristina Tuzon and other department heads of the PGB from the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO), Provincial Cooperative and Enterprise Development Office (PCEDO) and Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO).

Governor Fernando discussed high-impact projects, such as the Bulacan Mega City and the Farmer's Productivity Center, among others. He also mentioned the projects initiated by the National Government Agencies (NGAs) and private sectors, such as the North-South Commuter Railway and the New Manila International Airport (Bulacan International Airport), that will provide major access and mobility to investors. He requested the support of Mr. Reyes to promote the investment opportunities of Bulacan to Japanese investors.

Mr. Reyes presented a waste-to-energy facility for consideration by the provincial government. He pledged his commitment to support the promotion of Bulacan to the PCCI-Japan community and shared that the members of the PCCI-Japan will visit the Philippines in October 2023.

Amusetic Corporation also showed a keen interest in the sources of mango puree in the

province. Atty. Jayric Amil, OIC of PCEDO, highlighted that mangoes are seasonal and can be sourced locally from small producers in San Ildefonso, Bulacan. He also presented the two (2) major export producers of mango purees in the province, the GEL Tropical Fruit Processing Corp. located in Sta. Rita, Guiguinto, Bulacan, and Tropical Fruit Asia Corporation, situated in Tikay, City of Malolos, Bulacan. These are worldwide exporters of high-quality mango purees and other fruit extracts from the country.

Included also in the presentation are the small-scale producers of mango puree in San Ildefonso, Bulacan, run and operated by the United Mango Producers Association (UMPA) headed by Mr. Bienvenido F. Gumapos. UMPA is a member of both the United Region III Mango Stakeholders Association and the United Luzon Mango Stakeholders Association.

UMPA showed great potential to become a major partner for a start-up partnership of locally-sourced mango purees. Mango producers in UMPA grow more than 2,000 trees in San Ildefonso and San Miguel alone. With their membership in the Regional Association and Northern Luzon provinces, they could have access to more than 50,000 mango trees for puree production.

The PGB continuously facilitates various initiatives to promote the province as an economic powerhouse of investment with an attractive and conducive environment for business. With vast developments and business opportunities in the province, now is the right time to invest in Bulacan. - Mary Grace E. Dela Cruz, PCEDO-Bulacan



# Northwin Global City: Bulacan's First Ever Central Business District

Vast opportunities abound in a globalizing province like Bulacan. While the construction of the New Manila International Airport (NMIA) is in the pipeline of development, several major infrastructure projects have started in the province, all set to offer immeasurable opportunities for Bulakenyos and fellow Filipinos.

One of the emerging township developments in the province is the Northwin Global City project, Bulacan's first-ever world-class central business district (CBD) nestled within Marilao and Bocaue municipalities. Megaworld Corp. formally broke ground on March 8, 2023, signaling the start of construction of the ₱98 billion project hub, a 28th township development featuring a vibrant and modern center that meets the needs of the 21st century lifestyle.

The 85-hectare township development along the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) will bring the 'global city' concept outside Metro Manila. It is envisioned to be the first metropolitan hub in the province, characterized by its own themed commercial district, high-rise residential condominiums, hotels, malls, mixed-use commercial buildings, educational institutions, and state-of-the-art office towers.

The Northwin Global City will have its very own lifestyle mall, educational institutions, and curated gardens and parks that make up about forty percent (40%) of the entire township. It will also carry green innovations and Megaworld's iTownship facilities, such as the storm water detention facility for flood prevention, solar-powered and LED

streetlights, an underground cabling system, fiber optic cabling, bike lanes, an intermodal transport terminal, and other sustainable infrastructure for mobility and connectivity.

The major key feature of this project is its accessibility, as it is strategically located near major highways and transportation hubs. It is just 20 kilometers north of Metro Manila, 20 minutes away from the proposed NMIA in Bulacan and five minutes away from the Philippine Arena. It can be accessed via the Marilao Exit of NLEX and the township is expected to host one of the stations in the Manila-Clark Railway Project. Once completed, Northwin Global City will have convenient access to three international airports, making it easily accessible to residents, workers, and visitors of the township.

"We are delighted to finally bring our vision for Bulacan's first-ever global business district to reality here in Northwin Global City. It is both a pleasure and an honor to work together with the Provincial Government of Bulacan, as well as the two progressive municipalities of Marilao and Bulacan. We hope to be able to add great value to them and their respective constituents by helping create jobs and opportunities as we continue developing Northwin Global City into Bulacan's very own world-class central business district," said Kevin L. Tan, Chief Strategy Officer of Megaworld.

Megaworld Corp. envisions housing huge multinational companies upon completion of the project. With the same vibrancy and dynamism that characterize Megaworld's

*continued on next page*



# Japanese Investor Visits Aurora for a Business Venture

On June 15, 2023, Mr. Yorihiro Numano, Managing Director of Uene Philippines, a local company into coconut products and with branches in Japan, visited Baler, Aurora to explore the prospects of the Integrated Coconut Processing Village (ICPV) Project of the provincial government.

The visit is an offshoot of the Central Luzon Outbound Investment Mission to Japan organized by the Central Luzon Growth Corridor Foundation, Inc. (CLGCFI) which was held on April 17-21, 2023. Mr. Numano was one of the Japanese investors who had a pre-arranged business-to-business meeting with Ms. Cecilia Marino, the Provincial Investment Promotion Officer of Aurora who represented the province during the said outbound mission. The ICPV project was the business offer prepared and presented by Ms. Marino in Japan.

During his visit in Baler, Mr. Numano was welcomed by Ms. Marino and Mr. Ricardo Bautista, the OIC-Provincial Administrator. The details and specific features of the ICPV as an economic enterprise open for public-private partnership or joint venture were presented and discussed during the meeting.



The ICPV project takes advantage of Aurora being regarded as the most important player in the region's coconut industry. It intends to use the entire coconut, including the shell and the water, to produce refined, bleached and deodorized oil, coco coir, coco peat, coco flour, coconut bread, coconut water vinegar, coco handicrafts and accessories. The village will be open to visitors who want to see how coconut by-products are produced with zero-waste utilization. There will also be a market outlet where tourists can buy coconut-based products.

Also discussed during the meeting is the possible production of jet fuel or biodiesel as Mr. Numano is also interested in renewable energy. By the end of the visit, Mr. Numano promised to visit Aurora again this July to further study the ICPV project. He intends to bring other Japanese companies who are into biomass and hydro-electric energy. - Cecilia B. Marino, Provincial Government of Aurora

## Northwin Global City: Bulacan's First Ever Central Business District

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other pioneering township developments like Eastwood City in Quezon City, Uptown Bonifacio and McKinley Hill in Taguig City, and Iloilo Business Park in Mandurriao, Iloilo, this will put the province of Bulacan on the global business map.

Indeed, Northwin Global City's full realization will help the province transform into a prime powerhouse of investment, leading and contributing significantly to the growth and progress of the country. - Mary Grace E. Dela Cruz, PCEDO-Bulacan / Provincial Public Affairs Office



# Bulacan Provincial Government Strengthens Support to the CMCI

The province of Bulacan is determined to become the nation's investment capital with Governor Daniel Fernando working to increase its competitiveness and support its viability. On January 31, 2023, he issued Executive Orders 01 and 02 creating the Provincial Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (CMCI) Technical Working Group (TWG) to raise the province's ranking on the CMCI, and to encourage the LGUs of the province to positively accept and actively participate in the CMCI's implementation in their respective localities.

The CMCI is an annual ranking of the cities and municipalities in the country to stimulate friendly competition among LGUs. The Index provides a picture of the Local Government Units' (LGU) performance in terms of the five (5) Competitiveness Pillars: Economic Dynamism; Government Efficiency; Infrastructure; Resiliency; and Innovation. The data gathered serve as a tool to evaluate the competitiveness level

of a locality to provide valuable inputs for the further improvement of a local government's performance in areas of investment promotion, innovation, resiliency and job generation, among others.

A CMCI Orientation was held in the province on February 27-28, 2023, with the aim of boosting local competitiveness and the standing of Bulacan LGUs in the national rankings. In particular, the activity aims to promote a thorough understanding and appreciation of the CMCI, including the significant roles and contributions made by LGUs in its implementation, identify common challenges and concerns of LGUs with regard to the CMCI, and provide inputs and strategies to effectively and efficiently implement the CMCI program.

Also present during the orientation was Vice Governor Alexis Castro who underscored the important role of the LGUs and encouraged the participants to actively work with the provincial government to improve local competitiveness.

The activity was also attended by Provincial Administrator Antonia Constantino, Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) Head Arlene Pascual, Chief of Staff and OIC Provincial Cooperative and Enterprise Development Office (PCEDO) Atty. Jayric Amil, OIC Assistant Regional Director of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) - Region 3 and Concurrent DTI-Bulacan Provincial Director Edna Dizon and Bulacan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) President Cristina Tuzon. - Lota M. Yasa, DTI-Bulacan





# Tarlac Province Gives All-Out Support to CMCI Program

With the goal of further elevating the provincial rank of Tarlac in the 2023 Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (CMCI), the Provincial Government continuously supports its local government units (LGUs) by providing them with all the tools needed to secure and complete the necessary data for the program.

Tarlac Province ranked 16th out of the 1,631 participating cities and municipalities in the 2022 CMCI.

For this year, the Provincial Government of Tarlac, through its Provincial Local Economic Development and Investment Promotion Officer (LEIPO) Frances Canlas, in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) -Tarlac Provincial Office, organized and conducted a Provincial CMCI-Technical Working Group (TWG) Orientation on March 28, 2023 at the Tarlac Capitol Center Building in order to have a common understanding on the data inputted in the CMCI Program Portal.

The CMCI-TWG was composed of Business Permit and Licensing Officers (BPLOs), Local Economic and Investment Promotions Officers (LEIPOs), Municipal Planning and Development Officers (MPDOs) and the CMCI focal persons of the 17 municipalities and 1 city in the province. DTI-3 Regional Office Senior Trade-Industry Development Specialist Barry Pangilinan facilitated the said workshop.

A Provincial CMCI Pre-Data Validation Workshop was also conducted on April 26-28, 2023 at Travelite Express Hotel in Baguio

City as a follow-through activity to ensure that the data inputted are valid and accepted in the CMCI portal. This was participated in by the assigned CMCI focal persons and data encoders of the different LGUs in Tarlac.

The strong support of the Provincial Government of Tarlac, the LGUs, and the DTI-Tarlac Provincial Office to the CMCI program has inspired Tarlac's constituents and other localities to improve and become more competitive. - *Maria Divina Gloria G. Ramos, DTI-Tarlac*





## PBBM Leads Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge Project Milestone Ceremony

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr. graced the milestone ceremony for the Detailed Engineering Design (DED) of Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge (BCIB) Project held on March 31, 2023 at the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific in Mariveles, Bataan.

The President led the ceremonial switching of BCIB geotechnical investigation drilling equipment that marked the official launching of the Department of Public Works and Highways’ (DPWH) biggest infrastructure project to be implemented under the Marcos administration.

“The Bataan Cavite Interlink Bridge is the solution to the supply-chain problem we are facing right now, which is connectivity. That is precisely what this major infrastructure development is going to address,” President Marcos said in his live interview with the media. While the construction of the bridge will generate 23,000 jobs for the next 5 years, he said that he is looking forward to the completion of the project as soon as possible.

In his briefing, DPWH Secretary Manuel M. Bonoan said that the 32-kilometer four-lane Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge aims to directly connect the provinces of Cavite and Bataan in just about 45 minutes from the current 5 to 12 hours, saving more than 4 hours of travel time and benefitting thousands of commuters.

The project that will further enhance inter-island linkages and connectivity and reduce transport logistics costs is included in the recently approved National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board’s list of infrastructure flagship projects that will continue the previous administration’s “Build, Build, Build” program into this administration’s “Build Better More” development agenda, Secretary Bonoan added.

The feasibility study for the BCIB Project started in March 2018 and funded under the Asian Development Bank’s (ADB’s) Infrastructure Preparation and Innovation



Facility Loan that set into motion plans and aspirations, not only to link Bataan and Cavite, but also to ease the traffic congestion in Metro Manila's busiest gateways—the South Luzon Expressway and the North Luzon Expressway.

The DPWH, thru its Unified Project Management Office (UPMO)-Roads Management Cluster 2 (Multilateral), together with the experts from the joint venture group of T.Y. Lin International, Pyunghwa Engineering Consultants, Renardet, and DCCD Engineering Corporation, are presently working on the final detailed engineering design that will ensure proper mitigating measures are in place to address the social and ecological concerns as the bridge will cross over Manila Bay. The detailed engineering design would also address environmental and security issues.

DPWH Senior Undersecretary Emil K. Sadain, in-charge of UPMO Operations, explained that coring and cone penetration test (CPT) onboard two (2) sea vessels, namely, Trinity Surveyor and Geo Sovereign are ongoing.

The Trinity Surveyor has been conducting CPTs and soil boring tests while Geo Sovereign will undertake CPTs which are all collectively known as geotechnical investigation – the last of the missing pieces to complete the foundation design of the BCIB and deliver the final DED bridging to the new milestones, the civil works.

Anchored on the 8-point agenda of President Marcos' administration and the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) that outlines the priority programs and strategies to improve the lives of every Filipino, the BCIB project will have positive effects on the economy by reducing logistics costs that can further lead

to lower prices of goods and services.

Both the ADB and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank have committed to co-finance the civil works construction of the project.

The loan negotiation for the civil works construction is expected to commence in the third quarter of 2023 and the 5-year construction is targeted to start during the first semester of 2024. The bridge project will be divided into seven (7) contract packages to accelerate completion.

The BCIB initially started as an undertaking of Bataan's Provincial Public-Private Partnership but was later picked up by the DPWH due to the immense impact of the project to the country. - <https://1bataan.com>



# Korean Investor Signifies Interest to Do Business in Zambales

Mr. Kevin Park, Consultant of Natural Gas Venture South East Asia (NGVSEA), visited the Zambales Provincial Government on February 20, 2023 to signify his interest to set up an office in Olongapo City.

The visit is an offshoot of the Central Luzon Growth Corridor Foundation, Inc.'s (CLGCFI) Outbound Trade and Investment Mission to South Korea held on November 7-11, 2023 which was participated in by the Provincial Government of Zambales with Provincial Planning and Development Officer (PPDO) Edwin Ebdane and Provincial Tourism and Investment Promotion Officer Maria Domitela Mora as representatives.

NGVSEA is among the companies which participated in CLGCFI's investment seminar in South Korea. The Korean company specializes in renewable natural gas and has expressed interest in developing and supplying clean RNGV (renewable natural gas vehicles) jeepney and fishing boats in Zambales using organic waste to produce the fuels.

During his visit to Zambales, Mr. Park met with Engr. Ebdane, Ms. Mora, and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Zambales Provincial Director Enrique Tacbad to discuss the investment prospects in the province.

The Provincial Government of Zambales is very optimistic that the investment leads generated during the CLGCFI outbound mission will come to fruition. - *Kevin L. Nacabuan, PTIPO Zambales*



# INVEST DIGEST

1<sup>st</sup> Semester  
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