

NIA vows to finish watershed program by April 2021

By Marilyn Galang December 27, 2020, 3:37 pm

CABANATUAN CITY, Nueva Ecija – The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has vowed to complete its PHP16.46-million watershed management program that includes a massive reforestation project for Pantabangan Dam in this province by April 2021.

Engineer Rosalinda Bote, department manager of the NIA-Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System (NIA-UPRIIS), said the agency's climate change project consists of the establishment and maintenance of a 220-hectare reforestation and agro-forest plantation of hardwood and fruit-bearing trees such as molave, narra, mimosa, duhat, langka, guyabano, cashew, bignay, and sampalok in Pantabangan watershed.

"As our country is highly vulnerable to the effects of the global climate change, including sea-level rise, increased frequency of extreme weather phenomena, rising temperatures and heavy rainfall, NIA established efforts to ensure that watershed areas managed by our agency continue to be protected and sustain the required quantity and quality of water in our reservoirs," Bote said in a statement on Sunday.

She said the project which started in March this year will help mitigate the "potential negative impact" of climate change in the facility that irrigates farm fields in Nueva Ecija and portions of Bulacan, Pampanga and Tarlac.

As of October, the climate change project has an overall physical accomplishment of 74.04 percent and financial accomplishment of 51.60 percent, the NIA said.

Furthermore, the PHP1.3-million maintenance and protection of 10,356 hectares NIA-watershed area as a capital outlay project started in July and will be completed within the end of this year.

NIA Administrator Ricardo Visaya maintained that the agency is committed to preserving the environment through efficient, effective and sustainable management of irrigation systems, especially where watersheds and reservoirs lie.

Aside from irrigation, Pantabangan Dam also provides electricity to the Luzon grid. **(PNA)**

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