

# DENR gets boost from P1.1-B project

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THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) P1.1-billion Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes (Sibol) project is seen boosting environmental protection and supporting economic activity in far-flung rural areas.

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAid), Sibol has elevated Philippines' appreciation for natural resources and biodiversity protection. The project has trained Filipino natural resource managers on how to properly account for environment-provided benefits.

A total of 275 government staff and researchers from Philippine public universities has completed a three-month training that will support the government's promotion of economic growth through the conservation of the country's ecosystems.

The training serves as a foundation for incorporating environmental valuation into the design of economic plans at the local level.

The Philippines' capability to quantify the economic value of its natural resources will be applied in natural capital accounting.

"When we have competent natural resource managers who are able to account for and monitor the economic value of ecosystem services, the country is in a better position to understand the drivers behind natural resource depletion. It's a necessary intervention that will preserve the country's biodiversity, oceans and landscapes," said USAid Philippines Environment Office Director John Edgar.

Natural resource managers and researchers from the DENR, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, National Economic and Development Authority, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development and six public universities learned various methods for measuring the value of benefits derived from the environment such as food, water and fuel, soil conservation and coastal protection.

"This [capability will help in] updating the country's asset accounts, or the value of resources found in Philippine forests, coral reefs and fisheries," said the DENR.

According to the World Conservation Monitoring Center, the Philippines is one of 17 megadiverse countries in the world, which

account for 70 percent of the entire planet's species of flora and fauna.

Sibol is a five-year natural resources management and biodiversity conservation project. It is among the biggest and most important initiatives in the country that could profoundly impact the environment in generations to come, according to USAid.

Launched in 2020, Sibol aims to work with the government to achieve its goals of improving natural resource governance, stimulating public and private sector investments, and reducing environmental crime.

Such goals will lead to greater ecosystem stability and inclusive green growth. Sibol has four sites in the following key protected areas in the Philippines: Masinloc-Oyon Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape; Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park and Cleopatra's Needle Forest Reserve; Mantalingahan Protected Landscape; and Siargao Island Protected Landscape and Seascape.