

Third Party Opinion on Rosario-Pugo-Baguio Road Rehabilitation Project

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Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Impact

The overall assessment of the Rosario-Pugo-Baguio Rehabilitation Road Project has been positive. When a major earthquake hit Baguio City, Philippines in 1991, the city was cut off from road traffic for weeks, its three major roads (Kennon, Maharlika, Rosario-Baguio) affected by landslides. The project's relevance is therefore utmost and is indispensable in the rehabilitation of Baguio City after the earthquake, the city being the prime city in the Cordillera Administrative Region and a major city in Northern Philippines. The project ensures that the city will have a "disaster free" road, open under all weather conditions.

The post evaluation results showed that project costs were lower (4,990 million Yen) than planned (6,177 million Yen). The output included (for the Rosario-Pugo Road) the construction of a 2.1 kilometer bypass and disaster prevention work (12.1 kilometers); output for the Pugo-Baguio Road included the repair of the 50 disaster damaged sections. Project costs were reduced due to more efficient contracting through competition. However, project completion time was 58% longer than planned due to various work program changes as well as work suspension during typhoon season. The project implementing agency, the DPWH is known for delays in projects completion and cost overruns, mostly due to unforeseen or overlooked project design problems.

Still, project objectives were achieved. Baguio City has now a "disaster free" road; open through the year under all weather conditions. Similarly, travel to Baguio City is now deemed safe; travel time reduced and increased traffic volume experienced. Even under unfavorable conditions, people now have access to a safe land route to Baguio City.

The project's impact to the region and its people has been commendable. Its contribution to the GRDP of the Cordillera Administrative Region has been considerable; specially since it is now the "disaster free" road to Baguio City. It is also critical to the tourism industry of the region. Baguio is the summer capital of the Philippines and experiences heavy tourism arrivals during the December holidays and the summer season. Tourism traffic is 1.1 million (2002), up from 230,000 in 1993. Residents along the road have also benefited. As road traffic increases so do increased business opportunities (restaurants, stores, lodging inns, auto mechanic shops); increase in property values and rentals; as well as improved access to public facilities, medical and educational institutions and markets. Because the road is critical to Baguio City, public expectations on the regular maintenance of the road will be high. This means that the government will ensure that regular budgetary sources will be identified for road maintenance.