

## Philippines joins forces with World Bank to boost agriculture finance, disbursement, and procurement

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The Department of Agriculture (DA) and the World Bank (WB) will conduct the 17th WB Implementation Support Mission (ISM) to the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) and the 2nd WB ISM to the PRDP Scale-Up from April 22 to May 9, 2024, to assess the overall implementation performance and progress of the two projects.

For this mission, the Bank will focus on reviewing the projects' compliance with the agreed actions from the previous mission and evaluate their financial management, disbursement, and procurement. It also aims to oversee the remaining investments under the Second Additional Financing with European Union Grant and assess the implementation of the Institutional Strengthening Action Plan.

Led by DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. and WB Country Manager Ndiame Diopé, the three-week-long mission will commence on April 22 with a kick-off meeting and opening of the DA-PRDP Exhibit at the DA Central Office in Quezon City. The exhibit will showcase the PRDP's 10-year evolution, major accomplishments, success stories, and the products of its supported rural enterprises.

A series of technical discussions between the WB and the components and units of the PRDP will also take place from April 23 to 26. The discussions will focus on key thematic areas, such as financial management, knowledge management and communication, monitoring and evaluation of subprojects, and mainstreaming of PRDP innovations.

On the second week of the mission, the DA-PRDP and WB will visit I-REAP and I-BUILD subprojects (SPs) in Visayas and Mindanao to inspect their implementation and progress and to engage with the implementing local government units and proponent groups. The team will visit a total of seven subprojects, four in Bohol and three from the Davao Region.

In line with the DA chief's digitization plans for the Department, a two-day agriculture digital solutions roundtable discussion with agri-tech and fintech companies will also be held on May 7-8. The activity aims to advance the digitization of the PRDP's enterprise investments and build a robust partnership with the private sector.

The 17th PRDP and 2nd PRDP Scale-Up WB ISM will conclude on May 9 with a wrap-up meeting where the World Bank will present its findings, recommendations, and overall performance rating of the projects.

The WB ISM is conducted semiannually to ensure that all Bank-assisted projects are efficiently implemented and on track to achieving their project development objectives