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Pangasinan towns to build artificial marsh for clean water

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ALAMINOS CITY ? The European Commission and the German government have partnered with local governments in western Pangasinan for the establishment of an artificial wetland to treat waste water in this city and six other towns.

Mayor Hernani Braganza said the project would benefit Alaminos and the towns of Anda, Bani, Sual, Mabini, Burgos and Agno, which have earlier been organized into the One Pangasinan Alliance of Local Government Units (Opal).

Braganza said Opal and the Local Government Development Foundation (LGDF) have tapped the Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in Southeast Asia (Delgosea) to replicate the experience of Udonthani City in Thailand.

Delgosea is a partnership for democratic local governance in Southeast Asia and is cofunded by European Commission and German Ministry for Development Cooperation.

A statement from the Alaminos government said Delgosea has identified 16 best practices in people's participation, institutional governance, urban environment and fiscal management from five participating countries ? Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Cresencio Doma, LGDF national coordinator, said Opal chose to replicate the ?constructed wetland? project that was first implemented in Udonthani.

?[The constructed wetland model] uses nature to improve waste water quality at a low cost,? Braganza said.

He said Opal selected the project because this would benefit residential and tourism areas in western Pangasinan.

?'We need waste water treatment for sanitation purposes for residents and for tourists because the towns are tourism sites,?' he said.

Doma and Mayors Braganza, Marcelo Navarro Jr. (Bani), Aldrin Cerdan (Anda), Jose Pajeta Jr. (Agno), John Arcinue (Sual), Carlitos Reyes (Mabini) and Alberto Guiang (Burgos) signed a memorandum of understanding for the project on September 2.

A project brief said a constructed wetland imitating natural ecosystems could be used alone or integrated with other water treatment systems to improve water capacity.

The project involves the construction of a series of ponds to treat waste water. Different types of plants would be grown in these ponds to help in cleansing water.

Braganza said the project would also include the restoration and improvement of waterways. He said local officials were hopeful that the project would boost the ecotourism industry in Pangasinan, the home of Hundred Islands National Park.

Yolanda Sotelo, Inquirer Northern Luzon