

# An Evaluation of the Coordinating Systems of the Rural Development Policies (RDP) in the Philippines

필리핀 농촌개발정책의 추진과정에 있어서 분산성과  
통합을 위한 조정시스템의 평가

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## 요약

농촌개발에 관한 정책영역이 농촌공간 단위의 농업정책과 비농업정책을 포괄하는 방향으로 진행됨에 따라 관련된 농촌개발주체는 분산, 다기화되어 있다. 필리핀의 경우 농촌개발과 관련된 중앙정부의 관련부처는 상대적으로 세분화되어 있으며, NGO 등의 관련기구도 많은 편이다. 또한 필리핀의 지방행정계층의 수도 다른 나라에 비하여 상대적으로 많다. 이는 중앙정부 부처간, 중앙부처와 NGO 및 중앙정부와 지방정부간의 조정을 어렵게 하는 요인으로 작용한다. 한편, 지방정부 레벨에 있어서는 농촌개발과 관련된 관련주체간의 조정시스템에 관하여 지방정부법(1991)에 상세한 규정을 두고 있으나, 실제적인 작동의 면에서 한계를 가지고 있다. 특히, 필리핀의 농촌개발과 관련된 지방단위의 관련주체의 역량은 충분히 함양되지 못하고 있는 상황에서 주민과 NGO의 농촌개발에 대한 참여(민주성)를 매우 중시하고 있다. 필리핀 농촌의 발전을 위해서는 관련주체들의 분산도를 감소시키고, 주체간의 통합성의 증진을 위한 노력이 필요하며, 관련 개별주체의 역량강화와 효율성에 입각한 조정체계의 정립과 전력이 절

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살히 요구되고 있다.

주요어(Key words) : 농촌개발정책(Rural Development Policy),  
조정시스템(Coordination System), 지방정부단위(Local  
Government Unit), 비정부기구(Non Government  
Organization), 분산(Dispersion)

## 1. Introduction

According to the OECD (2006:33), the phrase “rural development policies” is now used to cover a wide variety of state interventions, like aids to farm development, other farm interventions such as those concerning animal welfare or food safety and health, agri-environmental payment and regulation and aids to non-agricultural development in rural area. Rural development policies include both the agricultural and non-agricultural. Rural development policy are territorial and targeted to the needs of a specific area while, the agricultural policy is sectoral and horizontal (OECD, 2006:43).

This concept of rural development policies requires important changes in how policies are conceived and implemented to include a cross-cutting and multi level governance approach (OECD, 2006:106). The Herculean task of rural development cannot be achieved by one sector(GO/NGO) efficiently and

effectively with utilization of optimal resources and time. More so, one sector or single organization or institution, often does not have resources needed to solve such problems since many rural development problems are systems of self-reinforcing difficulties.

The concept of partnership has arisen out after key stakeholder in development have not been so successful in their respective endeavors. Partnership between or among organizations has also emerged due to the general notion that development should not only be the concern of one entity or one organization.

More and better coordination implies the political commitment to overcome sectoral tendencies and an over-all clarification of roles and responsibilities of different ministries in the field of rural development.

The Philippines was under severe dictatorship of former president Marcos. Due to this, after his regime, the Philippine government decided to transfer power to the local government and encouraged the active participation of the private sector. Aside from that, the Philippines has more administrative tiers compared to other nations. Furthermore, the actors in RDP are numerous and greatly dispersed. Thus, a coordination system among these actors is necessary.

Coordination strategy is essential and should be promoted socially and structurally recognizing its potential in pursuit of development. It should be promoted among institutions such as the government sector, private organizations, non-profit

or charitable organizations, community organizations and associations.

This study aims to present an evaluation of the coordinating system of the rural development policies in the Philippines. This study focuses on determining the dispersion as well as the coordination among actors in the central and local government level that are involved in RDP.

The evaluation of the coordination system in the Philippines was achieved through interviewing specialist, living in the Philippines from August 2007-March 2008 as a visiting professor at the Institute of Community Education, University of the Philippines, Los Banos, visiting research site and interviewing the people/residents. In addition, written researches were collected and analyzed in order to confirm theories related to coordinating system.

## **2. Dispersion of Key Actors in the Rural Development Policy**

### **2.1. Central government level**

The Philippine rural development policies are divided into 5 major categories namely, agricultural development, social services/infrastructure, people empowerment, non-agricultural development, and agri-environmental payment regulation.

The former three categories show the current problems and constraints while the latter two categories indicate the emerging tasks. If solutions could be provided for the three categories, the latter two will become more important. Thus, this means that the importance of the category is dependent on the Philippine economic development.

〈Table 1〉 National Organizations Most Important to Rural Development by Area of concern

Areas of Concern	Programs / Projects	DA	DE NR	DAR	DI LG	DOH	DS WD	DE CS
agricultural development	production based projects	●						
	market-oriented concern	●						
	reforestation programs		●					
	agrarian reform			●				
	poultry, livestock	●						
	food safety, health					●		
social service, infrastructure	upland access				●			
	local infrastructure				●			
	welfare development						●	
	nutrition, health					●		
	education services							●
	social justice, concern	●						
people empowerment	leadership development				●			
	institution-building	●						
	agrarian reform			●				

NOTE: DA: Department of Agriculture, DENR: Department of Environment and Natural Resources, DAR: Department of

Agrarian Reform, DILG: Department of Interior and Local Government, DOH: Department of Health, DSWD: Department of Social Welfare and Development, DECS: Department of Education, Culture and Sports

The Philippine RDP's involves many departments which have different roles and functions in the implementation of the policies. Among the said departments, the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) have the main roles in the conception and implementation of the RDP's. The DA is mainly concerned with the development of agriculture while the DILG is focused on the improvement of the infrastructures in the local and community level. Moreover, the two departments are together responsible for rural people empowerment. The other departments complement the main departments so that rural improvement will occur.

These departments implement programs independently of each other (UPLB, 1991: 209). Due to the numerous departments involved, problems may occur because of limited efficiency and coordination. Therefore, it is essential to set-up a governance strategy.

The involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGO) in the process of rural development has a long history. The first NGO, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) was established in 1950s and is presently still a

major part of rural development. Its role is to provide solutions to the problems of the rural poor specifically, reconstruction through health, education, livelihood and polity.

Another main NGO is the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) which was set up in 1970. The PBSP is a private, non-profit service organization created by the private enterprises. The main goal is to help people who need to help themselves. Moreover, it has extended to the rural areas' financial support for many social development projects like cooperatives, training in new skills, agricultural productivity, farmers' and consumers' cooperatives and involvement in community organization.

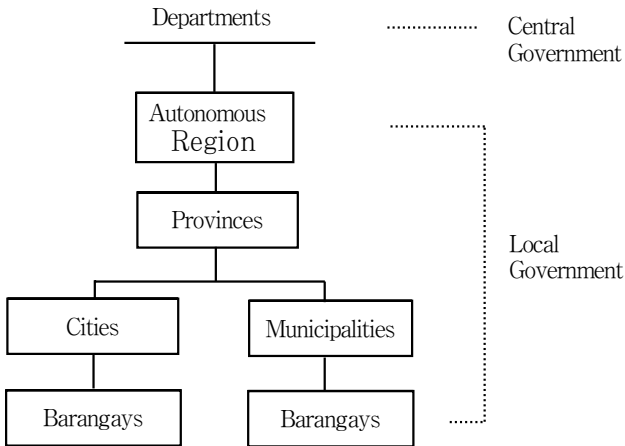
The PRRM, through the participation of its members, focus on the reconstruction of the rural area while the PBSP's main goal is to finance/fund the various projects relating to agricultural development.

The National Social Action Council (NASAC) is composed of Roman Catholic and Protestant agencies which are interested in helping the rural community. This organization is considered as semi-governmental since it receives some funds from the government.

## 2.2. Local government level

The constitution states that the various levels of local governments in the Philippines are provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays.

The Local Government Code (1991) has more detailed prescriptions about the administrative tiers and roles of local government units. According to the Local Government Code, the lowest level of the local government is the barangay. The intermediate level is the city and the municipality. The highest level under the central government is the province.



〈Figure 1〉 The flow chart of local government tiers

The region is still emerging as another level of the local government. The region is located in the middle stage between the national and the provincial level. All the regions are not classified as units of the local government but as administrative units. However, only one region namely, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao is considered as an autonomous region.



Thus, the tiers of the local government are different according to their location. Most of the local governments have three(3) tiers, while only Mindanao has 4 tiers. In general, the local government of the Philippines has one or two tiers more than that of other countries.

The Local Government is responsible for the RDP's in the rural areas. Only the cities are not included since they are not considered as a part of the rural region.

〈Table 2〉 The role of local government units

Region	Role
Province	the province, composed of a cluster of municipalities or municipalities and component cities, and as a political corporate unit of government, serves as a dynamic mechanism for developmental processes and effective governance of local government units within its territorial jurisdiction (SEC.459)
Municipality	the municipality, consisting of a group of barangays, serves primarily as a general purpose government for the coordination and delivery of basic, regular and direct services and effective governance of the inhabitants within its territorial jurisdiction (SEC. 440)
Barangay	as the basic political unit, the barangay serves as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs, projects and activities in the community, and as a forum where in the collective views of the people may be expressed, crystallized and considered, and where disputes may be amicably settled (SEC. 384)

According to the provisions of the Local Government Code(1991), the province, the municipality and the barangay are responsible for providing basic services and facilities related to the RDP (refer Table 3). The provinces and municipalities play a main role in RDP in the local government while, the

barangays play a minor role.

The provinces and municipalities have similar functions in RDP. The function of the province is broad compared to that of the municipality especially, that of rural industrialization and tourism.

<Table 3> Basic services and facilities of the local government units

Basic services and facilities	P	M	B
extensions and research services/facilities related to agriculture fishery activities	●	●	○
implementation of community-based forestry programs/projects	●	●	
health services	●	●	○
social welfare services	●	●	○
information services	●	●	○
solid waste disposal system or environmental management system and services or facilities		●	○
infrastructure facilities	●	●	○
public office buildings, cultural centers, public parks, sports facilities and similar facilities	●	●	
programs/projects for low cost housing and other mass dwellings	●		
public markets slaughterhouses and other enterprises		●	○
tourism facilities and development	●	●	
industrial research and development services	●		
investment support services	●		

NOTE: P: province, M: municipality, B: barangay,

●: extensive intervention ○: limited intervention

These local government units may group themselves, consolidate or coordinate their efforts, services and resources for purposes commonly beneficial to them (refer SEC 3).

These services related to the RDP in the local government are implemented independently, because the local governments do not have their own independent RDP, their role is to only to implement the RDP made by the central government.

### **3. Coordination system of RDP**

#### 3.1. Coordination system in the central government level

The constitution stipulates that the State shall encourage non-governmental, community-based or sectoral organizations that promote the welfare of the nation.

The Local Government Code of 1991 in section 34 mandates that the local government unit should promote the establishment and operation of PO's/NGO's (including cooperatives) to become active partners in the pursuit of local autonomy. Furthermore, Section 35 states that LGU may enter into joint ventures such as other cooperative arrangements with PO's/NGO's to engage in the following: delivery of basic services, capability building and livelihood projects and the development of local enterprise.

Executive Orders Nos. 95 and 96 issued by former President Ramos(1992-1998) state respectively, "designating the CDA as

the lead government agency on cooperative promotion, development, regulation and calling all government agencies with cooperative programs to coordinate with the CDA and the implementation of rules and regulations on the cooperative promotions, organizations and development and supervision by the local government units”(Talubnata, 2001: 14).

Government initiatives are directed to improve the living conditions of the poor or the general welfare of the state: private organizations are market driven and operate mainly to the gaining of profit, while non-government organizations are concerned with wholistic human development.

It is recognized that the government on its own, because of its limited resources and capacities, is unable to perform the gigantic task of local development. Hence, the private sector and the NGOs are encouraged to do their part and, where necessary, serve as alternative mechanisms for the delivery of basic services.

The Philippine solution to these problems is the creation of an inter-agency committee like NEDA, Coordinating Council on Philippine Assistance Program (CCPAP). However, this created more problems namely, overlapping of programs and functions, lack of coordination and funds and the like.

Another Philippine solution is the integration of programs related to rural development. These programs focused on agricultural development, social services and infrastructure and people empowerment. However, policies are tested in

parts of the country and these were not accepted as national or permanent ones (UPLB, 1991:211).

The first cited Philippine solution is parallel to the OECD that is inter-ministeral coordination via working groups and formal contracts solution (OECD, 2006: 110). This necessities that the different organizations from two different sectors (the government and the NGO's) come together with sustainable rural development as their focus. There is a growing realization and need to integrate the two sectors together. This intersectoral approach assesses resources unique to each organization or each sector to be productive and creates new options that neither sector / organization can develop on its own.

The Constitution states a provision of the importance and functions of the LGU. Thereby creating the Local Government Code. Furthermore, the Constitution also recognizes the importance of NGO's. But, more importantly, the Constitution stipulate the cooperation between LGU's and NGO's.

### 3.2. Coordination system in local government level

It is stipulated in Section 3 that "local government units may group themselves, consolidate or coordinate their efforts, services and resources for purposes commonly beneficial to them".

In addition, Article 1 of the same Section states that "the participation of the private sector in local governance, particularly

in delivery of basic services, shall be encouraged to ensure the viability of local autonomy as an alternative strategy for sustainable development”.

Section 34 of the Local Government Code(1991) provides the role of people's and non-governmental organizations in the local government; that is the local government unit shall promote the establishment and operation of people's and non-governmental organizations to become active partners in the pursuit of local autonomy.

Section 35 of the Code(1991) specifies the following ventures and cooperative arrangements where LGU's, NGO's, PO's and private sector can work together:

- Delivery of certain services
- Capacity building and livelihood projects
- Develop local enterprises designed to improve productivity and income
- Diversify agriculture
- Spur rural industrialization
- Promote ecological balance
- Enhance the economic and social well-being of the people

The NGOs, POs and private sector can participate in local governance through membership and direct involvement in local special bodies.

The Local Government Code(1991) also has provisions for

the local special bodies. These promote cooperation among LGU's, NGO's and the private sector. Among these special bodies, two or more are directly related to rural development namely Local Development Council (LDC) and Local Pre-Qualifications, Bids and Awards committee (PBAC).

All local government units in the provincial, city and municipal or barangay level are assisted by their local government councils. The Local Development Council in the provincial, city and municipal levels are responsible for formulating long and short term development plans and policies, formulating various public investment programs and coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of development programs and projects (Section 109). The Barangay Council has the same functions as the LDC. However, mobilizing people's participation in local development efforts is added to their responsibility. Thus, the Local Development Council is directly involved in rural planning, policy making and implementation.

The PBAC's main function is to the conduct of pre-qualification of contracters, evaluate bids and recommend local infrastructure projects. The involvement of PBAC in the local infrastructure projects is the reason why PBAC directly affect rural development and planning.

Both the LDC and PBAC are composed of representatives from the local government and NGO's. However, in the PBAC, a certified public accountant from the private sector is required.

An important agent of rural development is the planning and development coordinator. This person is responsible for formulating integrated developmental plans and policies to be considered by the LDC, integrating and coordinating the plans of different groups and agencies, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the LGU's development programs in accordance with the approved development plan and preparing comprehensive plan and other development planning documents that will be considered by the LDC.

An example of an existing Philippine coordination system is that of the Dampalit Watershed community in makiling forest reserve in LosBanos, Laguna. The provisions which emphasize the coordination among LGU's, NGO's and PO's encouraged the participation of UPLB (University of Philippine at LosBanos) in community development.

UPLB has been participating in solving community problems of the areas surrounding the UPLB campus, specifically those projects related to conservation, environmental integrity and agricultural productivity of Makiling Forest Reserve. One of the four major watersheds in the Makiling Forest Reserve is that of Dampalit.

The general objective of the project is to ensure the production and sustainable management of the Dampalit Watershed through empowerment of upland communities. The role of UPLB is to identify the watershed and community situation through research, provide livelihood projects and strengthen



the community organization through information dissemination, education and communication.

The people's organization (SAMALUP: Samahan ng Magsasaka sa Mataas ng Lupa ng Bundok Makiling) and UPLB signed a Memorandum of Agreement on October 16, 1993. This stated the role and responsibility of SAMALUP with regard to the protection and conversation of the Makiling Forest Reserve. The agreement also listed UPLB's roles and responsibilities in providing to the residents livelihood programs(Dizon, et al., 2007).

On the other hand, the Barangay(Lalakay) role is to coordinate and provide funding for the projects.



〈Figure 2〉 Dampalit watershed community in Barangay Lalakay

Generally speaking, the evaluation system related to the rural development policy is not yet implemented in the Philippine central and local government level.

However, Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) which aims to identify and monitor the poverty situation in the local government level was implemented province-wide in Palawan in 1999.

This enabled the local government to set up more realistic goals, targets and objectives aimed at improving the present situation through the collecting and analyzing of the information in the community. It also allows for the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of implemented programs and projects according to their objectives.

Thus, the information generated by the system lends itself the more effective governance at the local level (CBMS network coordinating team, 2005: 170).

It is in this regard that the department supports the adaption of the CBMS in helping the local government's planning and monitoring systems and in coming up with a set core indicators for measuring the welfare and development status of local communities (CBMS network coordinating team, 2005: 173).

But, there have been many attempts in the past to come up with CBMS. Some of them date back to 20 years ago. These initiatives, however, did not prosper. One important factor was that these were externally introduced to communit

ies(i.e., donor-driver). When the project finished, the CBMS also stopped. On the other hand, the monitoring system also showed the people what their problems were and as a result, their expectations also rose that these will be addressed fully and immediately by the government (CBMS network coordinating team, 2005: 173).

#### **4. Evaluation of dispersion and coordination system of the RDP**

##### **4.1. Overview of factors related to level of dispersion and coordination**

Consequently, the level of dispersion in the Philippine central and local government in RDP is relatively high. However, the level of coordination to overcome this dispersion is not sufficient. The indicators namely, the number of involved departments, NGO's working with the central and local government as well as the number of administrative tiers contributed to the level of dispersion.

With regards to the coordinating system, the level of indicators are varied. The provisions related to the coordination system in the Local Government Code are detailed and advanced. However, these provisions are not maximized because the other systems donot support them. Due to lack of

funds, the local government doesn't have the capacity to invest. Therefore, the central government provides the needed funding in the local government RDP projects. As a result, the projects are sometimes not aligned with the coordination system and the plans of the local government. Furthermore, the evaluation system in local government level is partially implemented. All of these factors have caused the weakening of the current coordinating system.

#### 4.2. The limitations of the Philippine Central Government in RDP

The world trend at present is the merging of the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in developing rural policies. However, in the Philippine setting, the opposite is happening. In addition, the Philippine departments are too specialized. For example, in agricultural matters, both the Department of Agricultural and Department of Agrarian Reform are responsible. Furthermore, non-agricultural programs are implemented by numerous departments.

Because of this, several problems arise. One is the duplication of roles of the different departments involved. Another is unclear roles in the RDP's. In addition, coordination among the numerous actors is quite difficult. Thus, it is essential to modify the roles and functions of the departments involved in the rural development policies.

<Table 4> Evaluation of dispersion and coordination factors of RDP

Dispersion and coordination factors of RDP	D ←-----→ C				
	2	1	0	1	2
How many departments are involved in the RDP program?	●				
How many NGO's are working with the central government in the RDP program?	●				
How many local government tiers does the Philippines have?	●				
Is there any coordinating system among the central government departments in the RDP program?				●	
Is there any coordinating system among the local government in the RDP program?					●
Is there any coordinating system between the central government departments and the NGO's in the RDP program?			●		
Is there any coordinating system between the local government and the NGO's in the RDP program?					●
Which department implements the integration program of the different department's involved with the RDP program?			●		
Which component of the department implements its integrated RDP program?				●	
Generally, does the Philippine local government have autonomy with the RDP program? What is the extent of this autonomy?	●				
Are the programs of central government of RDP implemented independently in the local government level?	●				
Is the RDP evaluation system implemented randomly and nationwide?			●		
Does the rural planning affect the efficiency of RDP implementation?				●	
What is the strength level of rural planning? Can rural planning force the implementation of the RDP program?				●	

#### 4.3. The limitations of the Philippine local government in RDP

The Philippine administrative tiers are relatively more compared to that of other nations. This system is useful in maximizing people participation and mobilization in RDP. This results to the slow implementation speed of the different RDP programs and projects. It is quite difficult to coordinate the different administrative tiers. For example, the coordinating system should involve the barangay, city and municipality and provinces. Nowadays, the region should also be a part of coordinating system. Although, the barangay is still vital component in coordinating system, it seems too small to be considered as an autonomous unit.

The focus is on people participation(democracy) rather than efficiency. The various administrative tiers maximize the active involvement of the people. However, this involvement lessens the efficiency of the coordinating system.

#### 4.4. The Philippine strategies for the simultaneous development of LGU's and NGO's

The Constitution and the Local Government Code(1991) recognize the LGU's and NGO's as the state's active partners in the attainment of national development. Until 1980's centralization was the predominant mode of administration. However, the national government has delegated to the LGU's

the responsibility of delivering basic services to the respective units. In addition, the central and local government transferred their powers to the NGO's and private sector.

Therefore, this means that transferring of power was done not gradually but radically and simultaneously according to the strong demand of democracy in that period. However, realistically it is difficult to attain the simultaneous development of both LGU's and NGO's. Furthermore, it is tedious to create a coordinating system between LGU's and NGO's that will be beneficial to both actors.

#### 4.5. The Philippine view of the importance of NGO's in development

Many observers have expressed their concern about the capacity of the state in fostering development. Many believe that NGO's are better instruments for a more equitable, less biased and more sustainable kind of agriculture than the government and its agencies (Susanita, 2001: 3).

NGO's are seen as more effective and efficient in the delivery of basic services to the rural area. As far as efficiency is concerned, NGO's are far better than government because they are more familiar with local conditions and are able to identify and articulate better the local needs and demands.

Although the government may have vast resources and

people at their disposal to accomplish its development activities, still they are being outdone by NGO's because of their more relative efficiency, flexibility, innovativeness, and responsiveness. This preposition has gained wide acceptance among development workers but has been also a subject of debate among others because of the lack of studies affirming or refuting the claim (Susanita, 2001: 10).

Among the agencies engaged in development endeavors, the government sector has the relative advantage because of its predominant capability within a society to command the collective allocation of a nation's available financial and physical resources to address needs and problems. As a key players in the development, the government cannot be ignored (Susanita, 2001: 4).

## 5. Conclusion

At present, there is an increase in the number of actors in rural development policies due to the current trend of merging the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

In the Philippine setting, the number of actors in the rural development policies are relatively numerous in comparison to other nations. The departments involved in rural development policies are highly specialized. Furthermore, there are more administrative tiers in the Philippines than that of other



countries. In addition, the NGO's in the Philippines are more developed and greatly affect RDP's.

Thus, the Philippine actors in RDP's are dispersed and therefore it is necessary to create a coordination or collaboration system in RDP. Although, there are provisions for a coordination system, there is no concrete or existing central government level coordination system for the RDP's in the Philippines. The National Economic and Development Authority or NEDA oversees national policies. Since these policies are general, there is a need for the creation of a coordinating system for RDP's.

On the other hand, the local government's coordinating system is relatively advanced and has detailed provisions. However, These provisions are advanced therefore, there is big gap between theory and practice. Furthermore, the actors in the coordinating system need more training to develop their skills and capabilities.

In the local government level, the focus is on the people's and NGO's participation rather than capacity building of the actors. In addition, the local government lacks sufficient funds for RDP's. Although there is a good coordinating system, it is wasted because of lack of funds. Because of this, the central government and some multi-national companies provide funding for some projects. However, the central government's and multinational companies' perspectives are not in line with that of the local government.

Thus, there is a need to reduce the level of dispersion of actors concerned with RDP and increase the degree of coordination or collaboration among actors. Since democracy has been established, it is now time to focus on increasing the level of efficiency as well as developing and improving the capacities of the actors involved in RDP's. Some points to be considered in order to have better coordinating system in RDP are as follows:

First, the merging of the agricultural department with other involved departments such as the development sector, the food safety sector and some environmental sectors which are directly related to RDP like that of England, Germany, Japan and Korea. Second, in the central government level, a coordinating committee which is involved in RDP's should be established. Third, there should be better coordination between the central government and local government programs and projects. Fourth, review and evaluate whether the number of administrative tiers affect efficiency and coordination.

Finally, the existing local government coordinating system should be strengthened through providing more investment funds including continuously evaluation the programs and projects which are related to RDP's.

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