

2017 has been a year of opportunities and challenges for our environment sector particularly the minerals industry. Therefore we have been responding to these challenges and building a strong foundation with broader perspective and relevant strategies. The Mines and Geosciences Bureau Region I highlights notable achievements and accomplishments for this year. We celebrate these achievements and continued progress in pursuit of improved programs and projects for the environment and improvement of the lives of the citizenry. Along with this, we stay true to the mission, vision and thrusts of MGB anchored on Responsible Mining to address poverty alleviation, environmental protection and inclusive economic growth.

Our Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu expressed his support to the mining sector as he wants it to integrate to biodiversity conservation as part of our adherence to responsible mining. Furthermore, Sec. Cimatu emphasized that responsible mining is our mandate at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as it benefits communities, protects the environment, doesn't trample on IP rights, contributes fair share to national income and transform itself into an efficient, effective and competitive industry.

Overall, we have accomplished so much this year.

We have achieved international recognition through the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). This in line with our continuous development in providing world-class services while ensuring quality, safety and efficiency of our plans and programs; we have attained certification for Quality Management System (ISO 9001:2015), Environmental Management System, (ISO 14001:2015) and Occupational Health and Safety Assessment (ISO 18001:2007).

We also have sustained our partnerships with different sectors in our society through our dialogues, fora and consultations. Definitely, we are exerting effort in reaching out to more people especially those in the grassroots. MGB-I has intensified its Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign which heightens awareness and promotes the advocacy and thrusts and programs of the bureau as well as to address mining-related activities in the Ilocos Region.

Vulnerability Risk Assessment was done in 12 municipalities in the region including Santa Lucia, Narvacan, Santiago, Santa Cruz, Tagudin, Agoo, Currimaao, Paoay, Pasuquin, Bangui and two (2) municipalities in the Province of Bohol in Region VII, Batuan and Sierra Bullones.

Karst Subsidence Mapping and Hazard Assessment were done in the Province of Pangasinan to identify and locate existing sinkholes as well as delineate areas of possible sinkholes and produce a sinkhole inventory and Karst susceptibility map. This assessment also aims to increase awareness of the public on sinkholes and other Karst subsidence hazards.

We were also able to partner and collaborate with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) once again in our “Training-Workshop on Understanding 1:10,000 Scale Geohazard Maps” which was conducted to a total of 1,042 barangays in the Province of Pangasinan and Ilocos Sur. This is to educate and help leaders and local government officials on the proper use of these maps which is a crucial component in disaster and risk reduction management. We have already completed our target of 2,342 barangays regionwide. The last leg of the series of our Training-Workshop concluded in San Carlos City, Pangasinan on September 27-28,2017.

Coastal Geohazard Assessment and Mapping was also done along the eastern borders of the Bicol Region which we have assisted. Twelve (12) target areas within the Provinces of Catanduanes and Albay were accomplished.

As for Hydrogeological Assessment, the Province of Ilocos Sur was the target area. The office also accomplished our TIER II-Province of Ilocos Norte. Groundwater Resource and Vulnerability Assessment was done to assist LGUs in delineating areas feasible for the development of groundwater resource.

For our Mining Regulation Services, our office has issued sixty eight (68) Ore Transport Permits, nineteen (19) certificates of accreditations, six (6) certificate of Environmental Management and Community Relations Record and Certificate of Exemption and one hundred thirty six (136) Mineral Ore Export Permits.

On our Monitoring of Approved Mining Contracts/Permits and SHES Programs, we have audited a total of twenty five (25) contracts and permits including 11 MPSA Contracts, 1 Exploration Permit, 4 Mineral Processing Permits, and 9 Industrial Sand and Gravel Permits.

Forty (40) contracts/mining permits were monitored for our Integrated Social, Health, Environment and Safety (SHES) Monitoring. While the semi-annual ISHES monitoring covered two (2) Exploration Permits, one (1) Financial and/or Technical Assistance Agreement, twelve (12) Mineral Production Sharing Agreements, four (4) Mineral Processing Permits and twenty one (21) Industrial Sand and Gravel permits.

We are also empowering everyone in our Gender and Development activities where we have actively participated and initiated events for women and children. These events include the celebration of Women's Month, IEC campaign, Gender Development and Sensitivity Training and Massage and Facial Make-up Training.

Much to our accomplishments this year, we are thankful to the mighty men and women of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau Region I. We acknowledge their on-going commitment and dedication. As we move on to a new year, we pledge to continue the quest for greater knowledge, improved programs and enhanced capacity for our environment and people's welfare.