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Headline: PH to get P700 M in climate change aid from Germany

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MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is to receive more than P700 million from the German government for the implementation of two projects for climate change mitigation and the protection of flora and fauna, officials said Tuesday.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and THE German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) inked the agreements on Wednesday at the DENR offices in Quezon City.

Environment Undersecretary Manuel Gerochi signed the deals on behalf of Secretary Ramon Paje, who was ill. The signing party on the German side was Robert Kressirer, GIZ Regional Director for the Philippines and the Pacific.

German Ambassador Joachim Heidorn was also in attendance.

Both projects, which are operational until 2017, will be funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety through the GIZ.

"This reflects Germany's priority to mitigate the effects of climate change on countries exposed very much to climate change," Heidorn said. The envoy said the German government was supporting a total of eight climate change projects in the Philippines costing P2 billion.

He said he was very optimistic that the implementation of the projects using the substantial fund would be smooth and fruitful.

In a statement, Paje said: "These projects are all designed towards the sustainable management of our forests, our seas and all the biologically diverse resources that abound in them."

The first of the two projects is the National REDD+ System Philippines, which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from natural and human causes. REDD+ stands for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation.

The project is seen to benefit people in upland communities dependent on forest products and other natural resources for livelihood, Gerochi said. The total grant for the project is P270 million and will be implemented until April 2017 in the Bicol and Eastern Visayas regions.

The second project is the Protected Area Management Enhancement (PAME) with a fund of P450 million.

To be implemented nationwide until March 2017, the project seeks to ensure the proper management of 60 existing protected areas by improving the technical competencies and capacities of staff of the DENR's Protected Area and Wildlife Bureau, Gerochi said.

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The PAME project will also seek the establishment of at least 100 new terrestrial and marine parks in selected key biodiversity areas or sites considered “internationally important” for biodiversity conservation by stakeholders.