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Bulacan firms, residents raise P16M to clean river

Philippine Daily Inquirer
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CITY OF MALOLOS—There is hope for Bulacan's dirtiest rivers.

Private firms and residents have pooled their resources and raised \$410,000 to revive the Marilao and Meycauayan rivers, named two of the 30 dirtiest rivers in the world by the New York-based environment group Blacksmith Institute.

The money came from the Japan International Cooperation Agency and foreign-based companies, like Nestle and Coca Cola, and pledges from local businessmen and residents.

Gov. Joselito Mendoza, vice chair of the Water Quality Management Area (WQMA) governing board, urged 300 businessmen who participated in the recent First Bulacan Business Conference to help generate funds for the rehabilitation of the rivers.

While nongovernment groups lead the rehabilitation, they are closely working with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, provincial and local governments to clear the rivers of debris, Mendoza said.

He said the provincial government would release another \$10,000 to help sustain the financial needs of the rehabilitation project.

Marlo Mendoza, Philippine coordinator of Blacksmith Institute, said the Asian Development Bank has also pledged \$50,000 for the project.

He said the aid from ADB would be used for the pilot testing of technologies for gold refineries in Meycauayan town.

He said they would also use the money to study gold refinery and tannery practices so they can protect the rivers.

Based on a Blacksmith study, gold refinery and tannery factories in Meycauayan that have been operating for over 100 years have contributed to the pollution of the rivers.
Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

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