

Philippines-Spain Development Cooperation

People, Prosperity, Our Planet and Peace

Rule of Law and Human Rights

Supporting Philippine policies on promotion and protection of Human Rights and institutional development with particular focus on resilience of the most vulnerable population and equal access to justice for all.

Context

Democracy, good governance of institutions and the guarantee of fundamental rights are at the base of human and sustainable development. The SDG 16 on Peace, justice and strong institutions highlights the interrelation and mutual dependence between the rule of law and development, as it aims to achieve access to justice for all and to build effective and accountable institutions at all levels of government. From this perspective, the strengthening of institutional, social and human capacities is linked to the respect, promotion and protection of human rights, as well as to the deepening of the democratic governance and national systems that guarantee the rule of law. In line with these principles, the strengthening of the rule of law and the system of protection of Human Rights is, therefore, a priority practice area for the Spanish Cooperation.



The Philippines has a **solid constitutional and legal framework for the protection and promotion of Human Rights**. The courts and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) are entrusted with the protection of the rights of individuals, as well as the exercise of holding the government and its officials accountable for any violation thereof. In addition, the Philippines is a signatory to the main conventions and international agreements on Human Rights. Congress has also enacted several laws that extend these constitutional rights or enforce the government's commitment under international law. **However, the work in promoting and protecting Human Rights in the country is still facing, as identified in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022.** There are also difficulties in some institutions supporting the rule of law to fully achieve their objectives. There is room for improvement in the enforcement of the quite advanced legal framework. Presently, the country is also facing new challenges on Human Rights protection under the current "war on drugs" and the recent developments in violent conflicts with the communist insurgency and radical violent Islamic fighters. The Marawi crisis that resulted in the complete destruction of the center of the city, is an example.

Pillar 1 of the PDP 2017-2022 indeed focuses on enhancing the social fabric and aims for greater trust in public institutions and across all sectors of society. It **envisions the Government to be people-centered, corruption-free and efficient where administration of justice will be swift, fair and independent.** Improved governance is sought by the PDP through a culture-sensitive perspective, gender-sensitive paradigm, and human rights-based approach in public service, thereby ensuring that the interests of vulnerable sectors such as indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, women, youth, and children are well considered. The PDP recognizes that a holistic approach is necessary to address social issues such as the problem on illegal drugs, and that respect for human rights should always be upheld and observed. Mechanisms for reporting and addressing human rights violations should also be strengthened to ensure that violators are prosecuted.

Strategic Approach

The **Philippine-Spain Country Partnership Framework** aims to increase the resilience of people in poverty and reduce their exposure to vulnerability to extreme events linked to disasters and social, economic, environmental and climate change crises.

More specifically, it endeavors to contribute to the **strengthening of policies, institutions and national and local capacities to protect human rights and peacebuilding under the rule of law**, through improving coordination and collaboration between public institutions and civil society organizations.

In this context, AECID gives priority to initiatives aimed at the promotion and protection of Human Rights in the country, mainly through several projects **supporting the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Regional Human Rights Commission in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (RHRC)** in strengthening their capacity to carry out their mandate, and in providing support to Civil Society Organizations (CSO) for reinforcing their role in the promotion and protection of human rights and fight against impunity of human rights violations.



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Main actions on Rule of Law and Human Rights

Relying on the Country Partnership Framework, on-going interventions on Rule of Law and Human Rights are guided by the following priority lines:

- Contributing to access to justice of the population in areas affected by conflict and normalization with transitional justice, culture of peace and human rights approaches.
- Supporting Philippine localized, inclusive and participatory peace and development policies in areas affected by conflict and violence with a focus on most vulnerable population resilience – specifically considering local governance, gender equality and indigenous population.
- Promoting partnerships among government institutions, civil society and other private sector organizations.
- Supporting the implementation of policies for socio-economic development, including infrastructure, with a resilience approach within the framework of the plans for normalization, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

In this regard, the Rule of Law and Human Rights portfolio includes the following on-going interventions:

Main Implementation partner	Intervention title	Total Grant	Location
Commission on Human Rights (CHR)	Governance in Justice – Human Rights Project (GOJUST – Human Rights)	5.526.215 €	National
Regional Human Rights Commission in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (RHRC)	Governance in Justice – Human Rights Project (GOJUST – Human Rights)	788.890 €	Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
Zabalketa Foundation	Promoting democratic values in Barangays of Alubijid	163.220 €	Misamis Oriental