

## TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING EITI IN PROVINCIAL MINING REGULATORY BOARDS

25 June 2018

Tryp Hotel, Pasay City

### Highlights of the Activity

To capacitate stakeholders in the small-scale mining (SSM) sector for the inclusion of *Minahang Bayan* among reporting entities in the 5th Country Report, and to mainstream the EITI process in the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) framework, the Philippine EITI organized, for the first time, a workshop called "Towards Mainstreaming EITI in Provincial Mining Regulatory Boards". The event gathered about 40 selected major PMRBs from across the country.

PMRBs regulate SSMs, and administer the application of *Minahang Bayan* in their respective areas. Approval of *Minahang Bayan* applications, however, has been suffering bottlenecks in recent years due to requirements that are deemed as stringent as the requirements for large scale mines.

PH-EITI advocates for the inclusion of *Minahang Bayan* in its annual country reports. As such, it also supports the streamlining of procedures for the approval of *Minahang Bayan* applications.

Aside from engaging in panel discussions, participants were required to do a workshop on an appropriate reporting template for SSMs.

It was also highlighted during the event that the MGB is open to receiving proposed amendments to the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 7076 or the Peoples' Small-scale Mining Act of 1991. Mines and Geosciences Bureau Region 11 Director Atty. Jasper Alberto Lascano made the statement before members of PMRBs nationwide. Lascano is the chairperson of the policy working group that deliberates on possible revisions in the said IRR, which provides for the creation and approval of peoples' small-scale mines or *Minahang Bayan*.

"We are not guaranteeing that the proposals will be part of the revised IRR, but we will make sure that they will be included in the discussions," Lascano explained during the open forum.

Other issues identified in the current process of formalizing small-scale mines include the difficulty of securing permits from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples as mining areas are usually located in ancestral domains. Likewise, seeking clearance from large scale mining operators is another requirement that artisanal miners of gold, silver, and chromite are disputing.

The formalization of small-scale miners is an essential process that would enable the government to properly monitor revenues generated by artisanal mining. Although small-scale mines are widely believed to be generating about half of the country's total revenues from mining, there are no official data yet on the sector's actual contribution to the economy.