

DENR, QC gov't ink deal for biodiversity park

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has signed a memorandum of agreement with the **Quezon City government** for the development of an urban biodiversity park in New Manila.



“While our focus is largely directed at managing natural ecosystems through the establishment of protected areas, we also need to address the importance of enhancing urban ecosystems to be able to provide a quality and livable environment for city dwellers,” Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna said in a statement.

Real estate developer Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) also signed the agreement.

Under the agreement, the local government of Quezon City and MPIC will be partners of the DENR in implementing the Urban Biodiversity Program (UBP) for the development and sustainable management of Madison Park, which will be known as Gabay Kalikasan Park, in New Manila.

The DENR said the project would serve as the pilot test of its “adopt-a-city” approach in implementing the UBP to encourage the business sector’s support in creating green urban communities in cities and barangays.

The department said the UBP, with the tagline “Building a biodiversity, friendly environment in Metro Manila,” also seeks to “increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of communities and other stakeholders on the importance of urban biodiversity and green spaces, and encourage individual actions on urban greening.”

DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau director Natividad Bernardino said the department’s vision for the UBP is to transform the city’s landscape with “rivers, streams, lakes, coastal areas, swamps, urban forest parks and green highways for wildlife.” Implemented in 2017, the UBP aims to promote the conservation of biodiversity as well as develop and maintain green spaces within cities, which in turn can provide benefits to the public through ecosystem services.

Sampulna said the DENR envisions an increase in the proportion of green spaces in the country’s five largest cities – Quezon City, Caloocan, Manila, Cebu and Davao – by at least five percent under the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan.