

## Wind turbines, electric scooters pump up Romblon Island



*The wind turbine is hoped to bring steady, efficient and reliable electricity service to Romblon*

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It was perhaps the magic of the moment on a Sunday morning of February 11, 2019 when the management and staff of the Romblon Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ROMELCO) collectively dreamt away to usher in the wind of change with their new environment-friendly power source.

We are talking about the 900-kilowatt (kW) wind turbines now spinning on the hills of Barangays Agnay, Bagacay and Lonos in Romblon to accommodate the increasing electricity demand of the island province and it's a big deal for all of us in the rural electrification sector.

After almost a year of construction, ROMELCO officially launched its P242-million wind farm project, which was made possible through its partnership with Japanese manufacturer Komaihaltec, Inc. and supported by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan.

NEA did not miss this highly anticipated event with Deputy Administrator for Technical Services Artis Nikki Tortola leading the charge to commend the co-op for going beyond what was expected of a small power utility.

*"For so long a time, we were conditioned to think that private companies can best operate and maintain power plants. However, ROMELCO defied those perceptions and proof of this are the many generation projects the cooperative has ventured into,"* Tortola said in his speech.

The success of the project only demonstrates that there was no challenge too big for a determined non-profit distribution utility to fuel tourism and other industries by powering communities without harming the environment, according to the NEA official.

*"Anything is possible and the electric cooperatives, if given the chance, are the most potent arm in the quest of the national government for total electrification all over the Philippines by providing stable and clean energy at the most reasonable rate compared to the private sector,"* Tortola said.

### Defying the odds

But getting the project off the ground was not a breeze. In fact, it faced a wide range of challenges from land acquisition, importation of construction equipment, to securing permits and service contracts from the Department of Energy (DOE) and other government regulators.

*"Realizing this project was not easy,"* ROMELCO General Manager Rene Fajilagutan told his fellow member-consumer-owners who gathered for the inauguration ceremony on February 10 at the site of the wind turbine in Barangay Agnay.

*"Armed with determination, courage and passion to serve our people and for the good of the environment, we were able to overcome these challenges,"* the GM Fajilagutan added.

Standing at 42 meters each, the three units of 300-kW wind turbines will have a combined capacity to generate 2,000,100 kilowatt hours of green energy, or equivalent to 25 percent of the total annual energy requirement of the island.

These facilities will be leased to the co-op per its agreement with Komaihaltec, Inc. *"ROMELCO will take full ownership of the facilities after four years of demonstration period,"* Fajilagutan said.