



Bridges across Oceans: Initial Impact Assessment of the Philippines Nautical Highway System and Lessons for Southeast Asia

From Asian Development Bank



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The foremost development challenge for archipelagic Southeast Asia is improved connectivity among the region's 24,000 islands. The success of the Strong Republic Nautical Highway in the Philippines, which uses an integrated system of roll-on/roll-off vessels to move people and cargo effectively, has proven to be a source of hope for the millions of poor in the region. Began in 2003, the roll-on/roll-off system has resulted in reduced transport costs and increased frequency of deliveries. As a result, businesses models have changed, farmers have gained market access, local government revenues have increased, and tourism has expanded. This timely report presents the findings of an initial Asian Development Bank impact study on the roll-on/roll-off system in the Philippines. It shows that relatively simple policy reforms in the area of sea transport can positively impact the lives of millions of poor who until now have lived in isolation, and it serves as an example of the benefits to be accrued by others in archipelagic Southeast Asia through the implementation of similar initiatives.

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