

Press release  
For immediate release  
22 April 2026

# Better access to government services for island communities in the Philippines

## New buildings in Basilan and Tawi-Tawi aim to improve public services for isolated populations

The European Union, in partnership with the Bangsamoro Government, has successfully handed over Office of the Chief Minister buildings in Basilan and Tawi-Tawi through the SUBATRA Programme, implemented by UNOPS.

The new facilities represent a key milestone in advancing decentralized and inclusive governance in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), particularly in geographically isolated and underserved island provinces.

“Through our infrastructure expertise, we are proud to support work to help bring the government closer to communities. Designed and implemented by a majority of women engineers, these [award-winning buildings](#) have been recognized as leading examples of sustainable and culturally sensitive development. And in the process, hundreds of local workers have learned new skills following world class standards”, said **Peter Browne, Country Representative of UNOPS in the Philippines.**

The new offices aim to strengthen the interface between the Bangsamoro Government and its constituents, and enhance government coordination, public engagement, and service delivery.

The turnover of these offices underscores a shared commitment among partners to ensure that governance is not only institutionalized, but also accessible and felt across all communities in BARMM.

**ENDS**

Notes to the editors:



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### **About UNOPS**

UNOPS offers practical solutions across peace and security, humanitarian and development operations. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners, such as the European Union and its Member States, to manage projects, and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement across the world. Read more: [www.unops.org](http://www.unops.org).

### **About SUBATRA**

Support to Bangsamoro Transition (SUBATRA) is a five-year programme funded by the European Union, with co-funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), through an agreement with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, with a value of EUR 26 million.

SUBATRA contributes to a smooth and timely undertaking of the transition through capacity building of the three branches of the Bangsamoro Government and civil society organizations. This will promote an enabling good governance environment and support the efficient implementation of policies set up by the transition plan, focusing on capacities critical for the sound functioning of interim institutions.

The Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace (OPAPP) are part of the project as partner agencies. AECID, UNOPS, and Particip, support SUBATRA as implementing agencies.

More information at: [subatra.org](http://subatra.org) .

**Pictures of the event:**



*From left to right: Peter Browne, UNOPS Country Representative and Director in the Philippines; Massimo Santoro, EU ambassador to the Philippines; and Cristina Elisse Capistrano, Program Manager of UNOPS-SUBATRA.*

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*From left to right: Jamel B. Macacua, Chief of Staff OCM; Mohd Asnin K. Pendatun, Cabinet Secretary; Engr. Mohajirin T. Ali, Project Director of SUBATRA; Hatimil E. Hassan, Deputy Chief Minister for Island Provinces; Abdulraof Macacua, Interim Chief Minister; Massimo Santoro, EU ambassador to the Philippines; Yshmael Sali, Governor of Tawi-Tawi; and Peter Browne, UNOPS Country Representative and Director in the Philippines.*

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*Exterior of Basilan Satellite Office*

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