

TRANSPORTATION

While transport and communication facilities are not as efficient and sophisticated as those of the advanced and newly industrialized countries, the Philippines has a network of transportation facilities covering the entire archipelago. The principal ports of entry into the Philippines are Manila {Ninoy Aquino International Airport}; Cebu City {Mactan International Airport}; Iloilo; Davao; Tacloban; Zamboanga; Cagayan de Oro; Surigao; Legaspi; Batangas; and San Fernando, La Union.

To improve transportation and communication, the Philippine government continuously embarks on projects of constructing interchanges; inter-island highways; local and national roads, and bridges; upgrading strategic airports and seaports; and, building more overseas and inter-island vessels.

Shipping

Because of its insular character, the Philippines is heavily dependent on marine transport as hundreds of shipping routes service both freight and passenger movements among the islands. The Philippines has a total of 470 ports, 80 of which are national ports, and the remainder municipal. Less than half of the national ports are open to international shipping. Manila is the busiest national port in the Philippines, and handles more than 60 percent of the country's imports and an additional 20 percent of Philippine exports.

Air Freight

The Philippines has 84 national airports {including two international ones, at Manila and Cebu}, but air transport is centred on Manila, which is served by all the principal world airlines. Air freight and air express shipments are becoming more economical for many imported items entering the Philippines. For domestic flights, Philippine Airlines (PAL) serves all major population centers. A number of other airline companies operate chartered flights to several destinations in the country.

Federal Express has announced plans to set up an air-freight trans-shipment center at Subic Bay. Initially handling freight from other areas, the facility will provide a useful international transport link for the nascent commercial and industrial center. The transportation value of the Federal Express center in Subic Bay will be directly linked to its regional position within Southeast Asia.

Railroads

Due to the fragmentation of land areas, and the large amount of investment needed to build railroads, rail transport is not a significant mode of transportation in the Philippines. Railroads carrying freight and passengers are largely operating within the islands of Luzon and Panay. One of the latest developments in transportation services is the construction of the light rail transit (LRT) system, stretching for 15 kilometres across Metro Manila.