

## Ports serving offshore wind industry eyed for upgrades

THE Department of Energy (DoE) said it is studying upgrades to ports that will service offshore wind projects, with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"We will be looking initially at nine identified possible ports that can support the development of offshore wind," Energy Assistant Secretary Mylene C. Capongcol said during a forum organized by the Nordic Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (NordCham).

Ms. Capongcol said the ports include those in Currimaog, Ilocos Norte, Iloilo City, Bacolod City,

Batangas City, Mindoro, as well as Port Irene in Sta. Ana, Cagayan.

According to Ms. Capongcol, no ports are currently suitable for the offshore wind industry, which will require new ports to be built or existing ports to be repurposed.

To date, the DoE has awarded 79 offshore wind contracts with a potential capacity of 61,931 gigawatts. All are currently under development.

"We have an increasing number of service contracts" for offshore wind, she said on the sidelines of the forum.

Ms. Capongcol said the screening process for the ports

is ongoing, with a series of meetings with the ADB set to determine the ports' readiness and upgrades needed to meet the standards of the industry.

The specific technical requirements include depth and spaciousness... because that (will determine) the size of the turbine that can be installed," she said.

The investment needed for port upgrades has not yet been determined, she said.

NordCham President Bo Lundqvist said Nordic countries "are on the forefront across alternative sources of energy"

such as wind, hydro, and solar, with the region having the highest electricity consumption per capita in the world.

"The secret source here is of course the conversion of traditional sources such as coal to sustainable options in water, biomass, wind. In particular, onshore and offshore wind farms are seen as a major accelerator towards meeting the carbon neutral targets from 2030," he said.

"The potential for offshore wind farms is exponential (considering) the geography of 7,107 islands," he said. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**



## Geothermal, hydro, wind projects attract 25 bids

THE fourth round of the Department of Energy's (DoE) open and competitive selection process (OCSP4) received 25 bids for geothermal, hydropower, and wind energy projects, the agency said.

In a statement, the DoE said the applications received involve 13 out of 20 pre-determined areas (PDAs).

The PDAs include three geothermal sites with an expected capacity of 160 megawatts (MW), 14 hydropower sites expected to generate 87.96 MW, and three wind sites.

"This is the first OCSP round to offer PDAs for wind projects, resulting from the recently completed resource assessment for wind energy in the Philippines," the DoE said.

The opening of bids and determination of completeness of bid submission with on-site and virtual attendance of the bidders took place on Sept. 28.

The hydropower projects attracting bids include the proposed Tinoc 4 (5 MW), Alilem (16.2 MW), Main Aklan (15 MW), Basak II (0.5 MW), Sawaga (4.5 MW), Carac-an (16.3 MW), Caturiran (Upper Cascade) (3.3 MW), and Langaran (3.6 MW).

Three submissions were judged "incomplete," including the applications from Regenerative Sustainable Projects, Inc. for Basak II; Paragon Green Energy Development Corp. for Carac-an; and King Energy Generation, Inc. for Langaran.

In the geothermal segment, Energy Development Corp. offered bids for the Buguias-Tinoc and Mt. Sembrano power proj-

ects with potential capacity of 100 MW and 20 MW, respectively.

Meanwhile, the proposed wind project in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija received applications from Mainstream Renewable Power Philippines and PacificWind Renewables Corp.

The Pantabangan Wind Power Project attracted eight companies, including Mainstream Renewable Power Philippines, First Gen Visayas Energy, Inc., GigaWind2, Inc., PacificWind Renewables Corp., and Freya Renewables, Inc.

Bagac Wind Power Project received applications from Mainstream Renewable Power Philippines and PacificWind Renewables.

Other firms that submitted applications for both the Pantabangan and Bagac wind projects were Philippines Onshore, L More 44 Construction OPC, South Luzon Sustainable Energy, which were judged to have filed "incomplete" applications.

According to the DoE, bidders were given an opportunity on Monday to appeal. The OCSP4 Review and Evaluation Committee is reviewing the motions for reconsideration from four bidders.

"Based on the prescribed timelines, the legal, technical, and financial evaluation of all bids is expected to be completed on Oct. 12, while the awarding of RE (renewable energy) contracts is targeted for Nov. 24," the DoE said.

PDAs that attracted no bids may be declared open for direct application, it said. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

# Ease of paying taxes bill, PPP changes seen boosting economy

THE Makati Business Club (MBC) said it expects major improvements in the business climate with the passage of the Ease of Paying Taxes bill and the issuance of a new set of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) for the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Act.

It also expressed hope for the passage of a measure regulating internet transactions to encourage the creation of new businesses serving the online segment.

The MBC said in a statement on Tuesday that "these reforms will be a boon for taxpayers, entrepreneurs, consumers, and all citizens, all of whom deserve better public services."

"We are confident they will help create a more attractive investment climate and generate more and better jobs," it added.

MBC said that the Ease of Paying Taxes bill will help businesses, especially micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, contribute their share of taxes.

"We encourage the Bureau of Internal Revenue to follow with the implementation of its e-invoicing and e-receipts system," the MBC said.

The MBC added that it hopes Congress will consider the business sector's input with regard to the implementing rules and regulations of the PPP bill.

The MBC said it hopes the changes "make it more attractive for businesses to partner



PHILIPPINE STAR/ RUSSELL A. PALMA

with the government at a time when gross domestic product growth is slowing, foreign direct investment remains weak, and government finances are under increasing pressure."

"This is especially important for the provisions on unsolicited proposals, which have a valuable, defined role in the PPP space," it added.

The internet transactions measure is needed to help drive entrepreneurship.

"This will allow technology to serve job-creating entrepreneurs as well consumers

seeking convenience and better deals, while giving consumers reasonable protections," the MBC said.

The MBC said that it is looking forward to other economic reforms once the Congress resumes session on Nov. 6.

"We continue to advocate for remaining economic reforms such as the apprenticeship bill, amendments to the Right of Way Act, and the enactment of an Enabling Law for Natural Gas Industry," it said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

## Chicken genetics company Aviagen considering setting up PHL operations

US POULTRY genetics company Aviagen said it is seeking to expand its footprint in the Philippines, adding that it is considering setting up operations here.

"We have established customers here that distribute our products, but sometimes the availability and the supply is not sufficient," Aviagen Asia-Pacific Business Manager Rafael Monleon said at a briefing organized by the US Embassy late Monday.

"(So) we are considering expanding our distribution network, with perhaps our own operations here," he added.

Mr. Monleon said the company wants to raise the availability of its poultry genetics and breeding products in the Philippines.

He said that the Aviagen is currently conducting feasibility studies on expanding its Philippine presence.

"We do not have a timeline; what we are doing is exploring the possibility of entering this market or continue with the status quo with our current distributors and customers," he added.

"The Philippines has a very vibrant poultry industry, and it is growing very well all these years. There is a demand for quality broiler breeding stock, which is what our company specializes in," he said.

Aviagen supplies broiler chicks to customers in more than 100 countries, through its Arbor Acres, Indian River, and Ross brands.

The company also offers specialty breeding stock aimed at meeting specific market requirements through its Rowan Range and Specialty Male brands. — **Adrian H. Halili**

## El Nido water supply PPP receives technical assistance from USAID

THE Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Center said it and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) are studying the possibility of a PPP water supply project in El Nido, Palawan.

The PPP Center said it is working with the municipality of El Nido on possible technical assistance "should

they proceed with the PPP option."

USAID also presented its own findings from a study as part of its capacity-building and technical assistance program, the PPP Center added.

"El Nido may explore tapping the Project Development Monitoring Fund (PDMF) for project preparation and transaction advisory ser-

vices, taking off from recommendations from the study," it added.

The PDMF is a revolving fund managed by the PPP Center to "enhance the investment environment for PPPs and develop a robust pipeline of viable and well-prepared PPP infrastructure projects." — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsos**

## Packworks seeks to link up retailer network of 270,000 with microlenders

PACKWORKS, a business-to-business consumer goods marketplace, has entered into a tie-up with microlenders seeking to reach its network of over 270,000 mom-and-pop retailers, which are known in the Philippines as *sari-sari* stores.

"Our objective is to enhance financial inclusion, tap into untapped growth potential, and fortify the foundation of our retail industry," Packworks Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer Bing Tan said in a statement on Tuesday.

"We are actively pursuing these goals through strategic partnerships aimed at providing accessible and affordable financial services to empower the *sari-sari* store sector," he said.

Packworks said its microlending partners are Cebuana Lhuillier and ISari Financing Corp.

"The lack of access to regulated credit and financing programs also forces them to live cash-in-hand, unable to get loans when they need them, which limits their growth potential," it added.

The micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise sector is considered highly underbanked, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"Enabling *sari-sari* stores to access essential financial services allows them to efficiently replenish their inventory, ensuring they are well-prepared to meet the heightened demand for various items during this festive period," it said.

Aside from partnerships with financial service providers, Packworks will also be partnering with Bayan Academy to provide *sari-sari* stores owners access to learning modules on micro-entrepreneurship.

In the next two years, the company is hoping to expand its network to 500,000 *sari-sari* stores. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**



## BFAR makes play for confidential funds, cites need to upgrade fishery surveillance

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) urged Congress to reallocate confidential funds towards fisheries surveillance projects.

"This initiative would empower our agency to strengthen and enhance our existing monitoring, control, and surveillance activities

in the WPS (West Philippine Sea) and other fishing grounds to ensure the sustainable use of our marine resources and safeguard the livelihoods of our fisherfolk," BFAR National Director Demosthenes R. Escoto said in a statement.

The BFAR is one of the 10 agencies affected by budget re-

alignment after the House of Representatives stripped the confidential and intelligence funds of the Office of the Vice-President and the Department of Education amounting to P650 million.

The House said that funds will be given to agencies tasked in protecting national security.

Legislators last week approved the National Government's P5.786-trillion budget for 2024, which is 9.5% larger than this year's budget.

"The BFAR respects the wisdom of our lawmakers in determining the need for budget augmentation," Mr. Escoto added.

BFAR is seeking to eradicate illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, a condition for the Philippines to access various trade agreements.

It added that it conducts resupply missions in collaboration with other government agencies, particularly the Philippine Coast

Guard, to Philippine outposts in disputed waters.

The BFAR launched an P80-million livelihood project aimed at providing essential equipment, gear, and post-harvest training for efficient fishing in the WPS and reduce post-harvest losses. — **Adrian H. Halili**