

Farm producers could target PHL after US tariffs

By Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza
Reporter

US FARM exporters locked out of markets by retaliatory tariffs could target the Philippines, crowding out domestic producers, industry officials said.

“If US producers face retaliatory tariffs, they might seek alternative markets, including smaller countries like the Philippines,” former Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar said via Viber.

“This could lead to an influx of cheap US agricultural products, undercutting domestic producers and harming local farmers’ livelihoods,” he added.

Former Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Q. Montemayor said the Philippines could also be targeted by producers that can no longer export to the US because the tariffs make their products less competitive, causing them to “dump” their excess produce here.

There is also a risk that US producers “will try to look for alternative markets and could end up selling their excess supply to us at very low prices,” he added.

“In the end, it might be our own farmers who will bear the brunt of the Trump tariffs.”

The US will charge Philippine exports a 17% tariff, which officials have noted will give the country an advantage over economies in the region that make similar products.

In Southeast Asia, Cambodia faces the steepest tariff at 49%, followed by Laos (48%), Vietnam (46%), Myanmar (45%), Thailand (37%), Indonesia (32%), Malaysia (24%) and Brunei (24%). Singapore, deemed by the US to be an open economy, is being charged a baseline tariff of 10%.

The Philippines had a trade surplus with the US of \$4.9 billion in 2024.

Mr. Dar said focusing solely on tariff differentials is “insufficient,” as other countries are likely to

double support for their agriculture industries to offset the tariff regime’s impacts and maintain their competitive advantage.

“The Philippines must consider broader competitive factors,” he said.

“If competing countries provide subsidies or other support to their exporters, they can offset the tariff impact, maintaining their price advantage,” he added.

“In our case, farmers and exporters are basically left to fend for themselves,” Mr. Montemayor said.

Mr. Dar noted that the level of agriculture resilience varies across Southeast Asian, with some having more diversified export markets and stronger agricultural infrastructure.

“Increasing the efficiency of the Philippines’ agricultural practices is essential in maintaining its market share in global trade,” he said.

“Any method that contributes to lowering the price of goods to consumers in foreign markets

will be heavily favored in the consideration of being chosen for admission to US markets,” he added.

Mr. Montemayor said among those highly vulnerable to the tariff regime are the Philippines’ 3.4 million coconut farmers, who may see a downturn in copra prices if foreign demand slows down.

In 2023, the Philippines exported nearly P22 billion worth of coconut products to the US.

Processed fruits and seafood are also among the Philippine products affected by the new tariffs, Mr. Dar said.

Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) spokesman Jayson H. Cainglet said the Philippine products that will be most affected by the new tariff rate are semi-processed goods like coconut oil, desiccated coconut, canned pineapple, and coconut water.

Philippine agricultural exports in January rose to \$715.25 million from \$538.68 million a year earlier, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Agricultural exports accounted for only 29.4% of two-way agricultural trade, which was valued at \$2.43 billion for the month. Exports of farm goods accounted for 11.2% of total exports.

The PSA said exports of animal, vegetable, or microbial fats and oils and their cleavage products, prepared edible fats, and animal or vegetable waxes accounted for 36.9% or \$263.87 million of all agricultural exports.

In 2024, the Philippines imported about two and a half times more agricultural products than it exported both to the US and the world, according to the Federation of Free Farmers.

The US market accounted for around 17% of total Philippine agricultural trade.

Ateneo de Manila economics professor Leonardo A. Lanzona said the Philippines should see the tariff regime as an “opportunity to develop its manufacturing.”

“Whatever export earnings we have gotten from microchips are

now going to diminish. So, if food prices rise globally, agriculture products are the best option we have in terms of replacing microchips as our top export,” he said in an e-mail.

Top Philippine exports to the US are integrated circuits, office machine parts, and semiconductors.

Retired agriculture professor Roy S. Kempis, who now heads a business center at the Angeles University Foundation, said in discussing trade differentials, the Philippines should also see how the new tariff rates will increase the prices of supplies and materials that go into the production and sale of exportable goods.

He said the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Science and Technology will play key roles in boosting the competitiveness of Philippine agriculture products.

He cited the need for improvements in the areas of phytosanitary compliance, vacuum-packing, and labeling.



Agri dep’t pushes BSP for continued use of abaca fiber in PHL banknotes

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Sunday that it will seek to reverse a central bank decision halting the use of abaca fiber in Philippine banknotes.

“We will request that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) reconsider its decision to remove abaca fiber from Philippine banknotes, given the impact this decision has on the livelihoods of millions who rely on the abaca industry,” Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. said in a statement

“We will also urge the Department of Foreign Affairs to incorporate abaca fiber into Philippine passports and ask other government agencies to consider its use in official documents,” he added.

The BSP in December said polymer banknotes help in “significantly reducing replacement costs.”

Polymer notes have a lifespan of 7.5 years compared with the 1.5 years for paper banknotes, it said.

Abaca, also known as Manila hemp, is indigenous to the Philippines, accounting for 86% of the global supply in 2023.

The abaca industry generated an average annual export revenue of \$139.2 million between 2013 and 2024, with 18% derived from raw fiber and 82% from manufactured products, primarily pulp.

“Nearly all abaca pulp produced in the Philippines is exported,” the DA said.

Abaca production fell to about 40,000 metric tons (MT) in 2024, from 61,100 MT in 2023. In 2022, production fell by 5.7% year on year to 63,640 MT.

“As the world’s largest supplier of abaca, we have a responsibility to ensure that more of this valuable resource is available to support both the environment and local farmers,” Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority Executive Director Arnold I. Atienza said.

He said the 120,145 farmers engaged in abaca cultivation are among the poorest in the country, earning an estimated annual gross income of less than P40,000. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

Career Opportunity in ENVISION ENERGY PHILIPPINES CORPORATION

ACCOUNT MANAGER

Job Description:

Act as the project delivery and service interface of company in local country and responsible for connecting with senior management of owners/customers. Responsible for tracking and promotion of the owner's payment collection timely by working closely with owner's /customers.

Qualification:

Bachelor's Degree. More than 10 years of experience in project delivery management. Excellent interpersonal communication and coordination skills. Fluent in English and Chinese Mandarin.

Applications may be sent to:

Criselda Balatbat
EnvisionPhilippines@gmail.com

Company/Employer:

Name of Foreign national intending to apply for the position

Company Name: ENVISION ENERGY PHILIPPINES CORPORATION
Address: 20th Floor Picadilly Star Building, 4th Avenue Corner 27th Street, Bonifacio Global City, Fort Bonifacio, City of Taguig
Nature of business: Develop, supply and trade in renewable energy systems, battery energy storage systems, equipment, materials, supplies, implements, components and accessories for power generation.

Name: DAI XIAOPING
Address: The Luxe Residences BGC, Taguig City
Nationality: Chinese
Intended Period of Employment: Three (3) Years

ENVISION ENERGY PHILIPPINES CORPORATION hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment – National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate Manila.

Power generators to be subject to quotas for minimum use of indigenous natural gas

THE Department of Energy (DoE) said it will set quotas for the use of indigenous natural gas by power generators, to comply with the requirements of the natural gas law.

In implementing rules and regulations (IRR) released last week, the DoE said it will prescribe “a mandated minimum percentage of the electricity demand of generation companies and/or distribution utilities to be sourced from indigenous natural gas.”

“Such minimum percentage shall be reviewed and adjusted by the DoE as may be necessary,” according to the IRR.

In January, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. signed into law Republic Act No. 12120 or the Philippine Natural Gas Industry Development Act, which seeks to promote natural gas as “a cost-effective source of

energy and an indispensable contributor to energy security.”

The IRR calls for the priority utilization of indigenous natural gas over imported natural gas and other conventional energy sources.

“(The) procurement and utilization of indigenous natural gas, including without limitation, by gas-fired power plants, shall be prioritized over imported natural gas provided that it is consistent with the State’s policy of ensuring energy security and consumer welfare,” the DoE said.

“An indigenous natural gas supplier and aggregator shall provide fair and open access to its natural gas supply in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner through physical supply, administrative or financial contracts, or any other arrangements allowed by the DoE,” it added.

Aside from establishing the Philippine Downstream Natural Gas Industry (PDN-GI), the IRR contains a plan to develop the Philippines as a liquefied natural gas (LNG) trading and transshipment hub within the Asia-Pacific.

The DoE was tasked to prepare the PDNG Development Plan based on modeling, considering forecasted demand, supply, and uses of natural gas, taking into account the plans submitted by PDNGI permit holders and participants.

The plan must be reviewed and updated every three years after its adoption.

Under the IRR, an entity may hold an interest in upstream and downstream natural gas facilities, as well as the supply and aggregation of natural gas, but will be subject to competition law. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Career Opportunity in MAP ACTIVE PHILIPPINES INC.

Position Title: COUNTRY MANAGER

JOB DESCRIPTION:

The position of Country Manager is responsible for overseeing and managing the overall business operations of the company brands by aligning strategies with brand principals and ensuring maximum profitability; Develop and implement business strategies to increase market share and profitability in the country; Establish and maintain productive relationships with key personnel in customer accounts and stakeholders; Ensure the company operates within legal boundaries and complies with local and international regulations; Analyze market trends, competitor activities, and identify business opportunities; Manage budgets, financial plans, and control expenditure; Boost brand awareness and achieve sales targets through effective marketing strategies; Ensure the company's products or services meet customer needs and handle customer complaints effectively; Monitor the performance of the branch and report to senior management

QUALIFICATION (Education, Experience, Professional License, Skills Certification, Specialized Training):

- Bachelor's degree in management or a related field
- Extensive managerial experience, preferably in fashion and sports retail
- Strong expertise in retail operations, merchandising, and business development
- International experience or prior work abroad is considered an advantage
- Proven leadership capabilities with a track record of motivating and leading high-performing teams
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and customer service skills
- Strong financial acumen and analytical ability, including handling business partners (brand principal, landlords, etc.)

Applications may be sent to:

MAP ACTIVE PHILIPPINES INC.
20/F Proscenium Rockwell Center, Estrella Drive, Makati City
EMAIL: rizza.casino@mapactive.ph
Phone No.: +639178964219

COMPANY / EMPLOYER

NAME OF FOREIGN NATIONAL INTENDING TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION

Company Name: MAP ACTIVE PHILIPPINES INC.
Complete address: 20/F Proscenium Rockwell Center, Estrella Drive, Makati City
Nature of business: Buying, selling, distributing, marketing and trading at wholesale basis, including franchising.

Name: Anil Devendra Kumar Malhotra
Address: Makati City
Nationality: Indian
Intended period of employment: Three (3) years

MAP ACTIVE PHILIPPINES INC. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila.

Cybercrime complaints up 72% in Q1

CYBERCRIME complaints increased 71.9% year on year in the first quarter to 3,251, driven by better information available on where to report incidents, according to the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC).

According to a CICC presentation at the Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines-San Miguel Corp. Business Journalism Seminar, there were only 1,891 complaints in the first quarter of 2024.

“The CICC, in partnership with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), has organized roadshows... to spread our 1326 complaint platform,” CICC Agent Marco S. Reyes said.

“If everyone knows there is a central platform to complain, naturally the frequency of complaints will get higher,” he added.

He said that the increasing number of complaints cannot serve as an indicator for whether cybercrimes are increasing or not.

“We’re still studying that because we don’t have the whole data yet. We’re still trying to

reach everyone in the Philippines,” he said.

“Once we have that data, then we are confident enough to disclose that the behavior of these perpetrators is proliferating or going down. But as of now, (the evaluation is) still in progress,” he added.

In the first quarter, he said that most of the complaints involve smishing, or cybercrime that involves deceptive text messages, and vishing, or cybercrime that involves phone calls.

Anti-scam application Whoscall reported that it detected 648,239 short message service (SMS) scams and 351,699 scam calls in the first quarter.

According to Whoscall, loan avoidance schemes were the most prevalent for SMS scams. It was followed by VIP rewards scams and collection-related scams.

Meanwhile, Mr. Reyes said that perpetrators are now shifting to online platforms.

“They are now trying to shift to, say, for example, Viber and WhatsApp. Because these platforms offer privacy and you cannot see the number,” he added.

To address this, he said that the CICC and DICT are currently trying to work with the platforms to better regulate scams.

Scam Watch Pilipinas co-founder Jocel de Guzman said the regulation of social media companies is on the table.

“The problem is we cannot regulate them because they do not have offices here,” he added.

Last year, the CICC received 10,004 cybercrime complaints. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Career Opportunity in BDO Unibank, Inc.

Consultant

No. of Vacancy: 1

Job Description:

Provide consultancy services for Information Technology Group focusing on Product Delivery / Payments

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Provide strategic direction and oversight in Product Delivery/ Payments
- Manage Product Delivery/ Payments projects and assist in building capabilities
- Plan for overall Product Delivery / Payments roadmap and strategy and recommend initiatives to improve service
- Drive training and competency development to the team

Qualifications:

Education	Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Information Technology or related experience
Work Experience	- At least 15 years of IT Product Delivery experience in Banking or other Financial Institutions - Demonstrate ability of managing complex projects involving integration of multiple Technology solutions - Experience in building and delivering solutions related to Payments and Remittance products
Technical Skills	- Outstanding and collaborative communication and sound interpersonal competencies - Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills with strong strategic and business mindset - Strong knowledge on technologies, trends, concepts, and best practices of respective architecture and business domain

Location(s) of Workplace: To be assigned to BDO Towers Valero

Applications may be sent to:

Francisca Jopia, HR Officer
jopia.franciscaemily@bdo.com.ph
+632 8840 7000

Company / Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
BDO Unibank, Inc. Unit 31-A to 31-D 31/F & 32-A to 32-D 32/F BDO Towers Valero, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Bel-Air, Makati City +632 8840 70000	Name: Jitender Gupta City of Residence: Mandaluyong City Nationality: Indian Intended period of employment: 1 year

Company hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment – National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila.