

Green-lane agency to start 2026 with projects worth P2.95 trillion

THE Board of Investments’ (BoI) One-Stop Action Center for Strategic Investments (OSACSI) said it ended 2025 with about P2.95 trillion worth of projects not yet registered with investment promotion agencies (IPAs) whose permits it will fast-track under the green lane system.

The OSACSI has reported that 232 projects were endorsed for green lane treatment in 2025. These are expected to generate 398,567 jobs nationwide.

Of the total, 110 projects are registered with the BoI, while a manufacturing project is registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA). These account for P3.16 trillion of prospective investment.

“For 2025, 34 green-lane projects were registered with the BoI, highlighting the role of the green lane in helping investors navigate regulatory processes and move their projects forward more efficiently,” the BoI said.

Last year, BoI greenlit P1.56 trillion in investment pledges, reflecting a 3.7% dip in investment approvals from 2024.

For 2026, the BoI is hoping to shift the focus of its investment promotion efforts to mining, mineral processing, and digital infrastructure.

“The Philippines is now prioritizing faster project implementation of renewable energy (RE) projects while also promoting investments across various sectors such as infrastructure and manufacturing,” OSACSI Director Ernesto C. Delos Reyes, Jr. said in a statement on Thursday.

“Local government units are essential in simplifying business procedures to facilitate this growth,” he added.

The majority of the projects endorsed for green lane treatment were still in the RE industry, comprising 179 projects worth P5.206 trillion. These are expected to generate 249,801 jobs.

Meanwhile, nine digital infrastructure projects and five public-private partnership, infrastructure, and water projects received green lane status worth P401.69 billion and P416.08 billion, respectively.

The remaining investments were food security projects (P18.7 billion), manufacturing projects (P67.04 billion), and a pharmaceutical project (P45 million).

“The green lane initiative reflects President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.’s administration’s strong commitment to creating an environment conducive to investments,” Trade Secretary and BoI Chairman Ma. Cristina A. Roque said.

“It is a critical step in enhancing the Philippines’ position as an investment hub in Asia, which will ultimately benefit our people by generating jobs and fostering sustainable economic growth,” she added.

According to OSACSI, it estimated an average processing-

time reduction of 49% for permits and licenses handled by the green lane system, which helped expedite the completion of strategic investments.

“Further, through the green lane initiatives, resolution of issues and concerns encountered by project proponents in the implementation of the strategic investments were facilitated,” it added.

Of the green-lane projects, 16 are already operational worth a combined P257.98 billion, while six projects worth P5.03 billion are in the pre-operational stages.

Some 163 projects worth P5.48 trillion are in the pre-development stages, while 47 worth P362.91 billion are under construction.

Established through Executive Order No. 18, the green lane initiative aims to strengthen the government’s ability to translate investment commitments into actual, operational projects. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Central Luzon irrigation disruptions seen resolved as early as January

THE National Irrigation Administration (NIA) said repairs at the Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System are expected to be completed within the month at the earliest.

NIA Administrator Eddie G. Guillen told *BusinessWorld* that the timetable has been accelerated from the previous estimate of repairs completed and water flow resuming by March.

The repairs involve the Talavera River Phase 1 siphon barrel, part of the CASEC-NAN Super Diversion Canal, which supplies irrigation to thousands of farmers in Nueva Ecija and Tarlac.

Irrigation in the affected areas was suspended in November due to damage caused by quarrying activities. Mr. Guillen said repairs will cost P53 million.

“The original target was the first week of March, but we are fast-tracking the work,” Mr. Guillen said by phone. “We may finish by mid-January, and if the test run goes well, we can release water by late January or the first week of February.”

Mr. Guillen said a test run will be conducted between Jan. 15 and 20 to ensure leak-free performance before irrigation water is released.

The NIA said the siphon barrel sustained severe damage. Mr. Guillen added that

another siphon and a nearby bridge were also affected, also by quarrying.

“The siphon used to be submerged under the riverbed, but because gravel was extracted, it was exposed. Once exposed, it was hit by water and debris, and eventually water passed underneath it, causing serious damage,” he said.

Mr. Guillen said the NIA has filed complaints that led to the suspension of quarrying operations in the area.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas has warned that the delay in irrigation could affect nearly 40,000 hectares planted to rice and about 25,000 farmers who had already prepared seedlings for the December cropping season.

Despite the setback, Mr. Guillen said the earlier-than-expected resumption of irrigation could allow farmers to adopt a double dry cropping calendar, which he said could boost rice production.

“If we can release water by late January or early February, farmers can still plant and move toward double dry cropping,” he said.

Mr. Guillen said NIA has been pushing for changes in the crop calendar to avoid overlap with the rainy season, which could help increase output. — **Vonn Andrei E. Villamiel**

Auctions announced for Tacloban, Camiguin, Virac airport projects

THE Department of Transportation (DoTr) said it invited interested parties to participate in three airport upgrade projects budgeted for up to P895.12 million combined.

In bid notices issued on Thursday, the DoTr invited potential bidders for the P455.90-million Tacloban Airport development project, the P174.60-million

Camiguin Airport development project, and the rebidding of P264.62-million Virac Airport development project.

Proposals will be accepted until Jan. 29, the DoTr said. A pre-bid conference is scheduled for Jan. 16.

The winning contractor for the Tacloban airport project will be given 600 calendar days to com-

plete the works, while the contractors for Camiguin and Virac airports will have 180 and 720 days, respectively.

The Tacloban project covers the construction and upgrade of landside and airside facilities, according to the bid documents. The Camiguin project covers the construction of an initial runway centerline. The Virac project cov-

ers the site development as well as the construction of a control tower.

The DoTr has said that the Tacloban airport is due for upgrading, with a new terminal expected to be operational by September, and the runway expansion and reclamation expected to be ready by the second quarter. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Aurora ecozone hoping to bring in US defense-logistics locator within the quarter

THE Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority (APECO) said it hopes to bring in a key US defense-logistics locator within the first quarter following a key meeting scheduled soon in the US.

“I really want more defense manufacturing in APECO. That’s why we’re going back to Washington, DC and Virginia,” APECO President Gil G. Taway IV told reporters in a briefing.

The meeting in the DC area will involve Anglicotech LLC, which optimizes supply chains for defense-industry contractors.

APECO first met with defense-focused companies in the US through an Economic and Security Forum in 2024, during which it met around 30 companies.

“That is where we met Anglicotech. So we want to go back to Virginia and Washington so we can talk with them again,” he said.

“We are actually planning an anchor event in Washington, DC, and Virginia where we will

gather defense companies big and small,” he added.

“In March, we are also planning to go to... Los Angeles *kasi gusto namin ligawan ‘yong mga nasa Burbank, ‘yong mga film studios (we would like to pitch to the Hollywood movie companies in Burbank),*” he said.

“We are also going to Texas for follow-up discussions,” he added.

According to Mr. Taway, APECO is hoping to benefit from a government initiative to make the Philippines more self-reliant on defense.

“The demand is basically (stemming from) our SRDP, or Self-Reliant Defense Posture. And I think Anglicotech also sees other markets that they can supply to in Asia and even Europe,” he added.

APECO is also meeting with retirement companies in Japan, including Long Life Corp., which specializes in retirement communities. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

CARS firms deserve perks after boosting PHL — CAMPI

THE Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc. (CAMPI) said participants in the Comprehensive Automotive Resource Strategy (CARS) program should receive their incentives after having delivered results that have boosted the economy.

“Recent developments have raised serious concerns on the funding for the financial incentive commitments granted under the CARS Program,” CAMPI said in a statement on Thursday.

“The participants should be able to receive their incentives based on their actual performance that already generated economic benefits,” it added.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. vetoed unprogrammed appro-

priations worth P92.5 billion on Monday, which included fiscal support for the CARS program worth P4.32 billion.

The vetoed CARS budget items were meant to fulfill government commitments under the program, including a still-being-evaluated application from one of the participants.

Mr. Marcos also vetoed P250,000 in funding for the Revitalizing the Automotive Industry for Competitiveness Enhancement (RACE) program.

According to CAMPI, the government should implement the RACE program soon.

“Both CARS and RACE are fundamental programs that contribute to overall industrial development. We fully trust and support efforts

of key government agencies in urgently resolving these important matters,” it added.

Immediately after the veto, Trade Undersecretary and Board of Investments Managing Head Ceferino S. Rodolfo said that the agency is actively working with other government agencies to ensure payment of CARS participants.

“CAMPI believes in the importance of collaboration between government and industry in securing the future viability of the Philippine automotive manufacturing sector,” it said.

“Such is crucial in creating a positive environment for future investments and help develop a more robust local automotive parts manufacturing industry,” it added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Bol touts PHL prospects as herbal-medicine hub

THE GOVERNMENT is hoping to position the Philippines as an emerging hub for herbal medicine manufacturing in response to burgeoning global demand, the Board of Investments (BoI) said.

BoI Supervising Investments Specialist Morinaella Jeusine M. Torgo said the developing natural and sustainable health solutions market presents a strategic opportunity for the Philippines.

“With its rich biodiversity and long-standing herbal medicine practices, the country is well-positioned to lead in the rapidly growing natural health products markets,” she said.

“However, challenges such as low production capacity and inconsistent quality standards persist,” she added.

The BoI and partner agencies organized a three-day training session in Antipolo last month to introduce methods for transforming herbal

products into high-value items, thereby helping participants diversify livelihoods and raise incomes.

The natural health products and herbal medicine industry is among BoI’s strategic priorities for promotion and development.

“The timing couldn’t be better. The investment window for herbal medicine and natural health products in the Philippines is wide open,” she said.

“Backed by the Philippine Herbal Medicine Development Plan and strong government support, we are ready to drive health innovation, create rural jobs, and deliver inclusive growth,” she added.

BoI Resource-Based Industries Service Acting Director Francis M. Peñaflor said that developing the industry requires multi-sectoral and multi-agency collaboration.

“Although the training in Rizal province is only a pilot, participants expressed a strong commitment to work closely with anchor firms such as Pascual Laboratories and other herbal processing companies from the Chamber of Herbal Industries of the Philippines, Inc. to increase the supply of high-quality herbal raw materials,” he said.

According to the roadmap, the government aims to integrate herbal medicine into universal healthcare, strengthen value chains, and promote sustainable livelihoods.

BoI-registered herbal medicine manufacturing projects are eligible for income tax holidays, special corporate income tax rates, enhanced deductions for research and development, training and domestic inputs, and value-added tax and duty exemptions. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Portal to make farm road projects trackable

A PORTAL will be launched in February to facilitate the monitoring of farm-to-market road (FMR) projects, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

The platform, known as FMR Watch, was developed by the DA’s Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering (BAFE) and will allow the public to track the status, progress, and timelines of FMR projects.

BAFE Director Cristy Cecilia P. Polido told reporters at a briefing that the portal will provide detailed

information on each project, including budget, exact location, technical specifications and contractors. Geotagged photos documenting construction progress will also be uploaded.

“The portal can be accessed by all stakeholders: the public, our citizens, local government units (LGUs) and everybody interested in knowing the progress of our implementation of FMRs,” Ms. Polido said.

She said the platform will also feature data on completed projects, the total

length of roads constructed, the number of farmers reached, and the volume of agricultural produce transported.

The DA added that it is planning to integrate livestreams of project auctions into the portal and upload all procurement and bid-related documents.

FMR Watch will also allow the public to submit complaints related to FMR projects. Users will be allowed to submit photos and videos to support their reports. — **Vonn Andrei E. Villamiel**

Meralco conducts wire-clearing operations in Manila ahead of Traslacion 2026



Manuel V Pangilinan-led Manila Electric Company (Meralco) conducted wire-clearing operations in Quiapo, Manila in preparation for the Feast of Jesus Nazareno on January 9, 2026, which is expected to draw millions of devotees.

In photo are Meralco personnel clearing sagging cables along Arlegui Street on January 7, 2026. The company also inspected utility poles and power lines along the Traslacion route to help ensure a safe, peaceful, and orderly procession of the image of Jesus Nazareno.

“Meralco worked closely with the Manila local government unit and telco and cable service providers to conduct these operations in line with our efforts to put utmost importance to public safety,” said Meralco Vice President and Head of Corporate Communications Joe R. Zaldarriaga.

Meralco regularly undertakes wire-clearing activities across its franchise area as part of its commitment to public safety while continuing to deliver reliable and stable electricity service to its millions of customers.