

Special safeguard measures loom for more farm imports

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is seeking price-based special safeguard (SSG) measures on additional imported agricultural products, including frozen bovine meat, chicken cuts, coffee products, sausages, processed pork items, and onions.

Department Order No. 15, Series of 2026, signed by Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. on April 20, requested that the Bureau of Customs apply additional duties on such products.

A price-based special safeguard measure allows the government to temporarily raise duties on specific imported products when their prices fall below set thresholds, to protect domestic industries from cheap imports.

Republic Act No. 8800 or the Safeguard Measures Act, authorizes the DA to impose SSG duties on agricultural products without a formal investigation once a trigger price is breached on a cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) basis.

The DA said monitoring by its Trade Remedies Office, an arm of the Policy Research Service, found that CIF prices of several products breached their respec-



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tive trigger levels, prompting the request for safeguard duties.

Among the products covered were frozen chicken meat, edible offal, wings, and cuts, all assigned a trigger price of P93.96 per kilo, as well as frozen chicken livers with a trigger price of P423.55 per kilo.

The order also covers the frozen meat of bovine animals, which includes beef, at a trigger price of P89.22 per kilo.

Hams, shoulders, and cuts of swine, salted, dried, or smoked, were assigned a trigger price of P79.63 per kilo. Similar products prepared or preserved in airtight containers for retail sale were assigned a trigger price of P305.73 per kilo.

Several coffee products were likewise included in the order, such as roasted coffee other than Arabica and Robusta with a trigger price of P134.11 per kilo, and

instant coffee and coffee preparations, which were assigned a trigger price of P203.74 per kilo.

Sausages and similar meat products in airtight containers for retail sale were assigned a trigger price of P65.03 per kilo, while preserved chicken meat products in airtight containers were assigned a trigger price of P259.22 per kilo.

The order also covered other meat and edible meat offal salted, dried, or smoked, excluding freeze-dried diced chicken and dried pork skin, with a trigger price of P70.50 per kilo.

Other prepared and preserved meat products, including turkey-based and non-turkey or chicken meat products, were assigned trigger prices ranging from P259.22 to P298.55 per kilo.

Meanwhile, fresh and chilled onions were assigned a trigger price of P74.21 per kilo.

The SSG duties will be imposed on a per-shipment basis and will be determined by the difference between the actual CIF price at the time of import lodgment and the applicable trigger price. — **Vonn Andrei E. Villamiel**



\$300-million ADB loan to support DoE rooftop solar, efficiency programs

ERIC SALES/ADB

THE Department of Energy (DoE) said it is hoping to tap a \$300-million loan package from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) this year to launch a program supporting the use of rooftop solar energy and efficient appliances in public schools and government hospitals.

Patrick T. Aquino, director at the Energy Utilization Management Bureau, said the loan facility is still awaiting approval by the Investment Coordination Committee of the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development.

“Optimistically, (the program) can start by the fourth quarter of 2026. Realistically, 2027 already,” Mr. Aquino told *BusinessWorld*, referring to the target launch of the program.

Once approved, the program will run for five years, with the capacity generated from the projects expected to help achieve

the targets set by the National Renewable Energy Program.

The first phase will cover about 100 buildings from 2026 to 2028 and the second about 300 buildings from 2028 to 2031, according to a project document published by the ADB.

The program also seeks to accelerate the Government Energy Management Program (GEMP), which requires all government buildings to reduce their monthly energy consumption by at least 10%.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. signed Administrative Order No. 15 in January 2024, which directs the accelerated implementation of the GEMP.

As the Middle East war disrupts the global oil market, the government has moved to more closely monitor consumption fuel and electricity generation by 10-20% by year's end. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Regulator lifts toll collection freeze for final segment of C5-Cavitex link

THE Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) said it lifted the temporary postponement of toll collection for Segment 3B of the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway (Cavitex) C5 Link, allowing the operator to implement the adjusted toll matrix.

In an advisory, the regulator said the updated toll rate matrix for the Cavitex C5 Link Expressway, which also covers Segment 3B, will be in force on May 9.

The TRB deferred the collection of tolls at Segment 3B, which were originally scheduled to take effect on May 5.

The project is a joint venture of Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC) subsidiary Cavitex Infrastructure Corp. and the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA). It is operated by PRA wholly owned subsidiary PEA Tollway Corp. (PEATC).

The PRA has said the toll collection deferment was due to the ongoing fuel crisis, adding that the timing of the TRB's notice to start collection will hinge on the project committee's deliberations.

According to the toll operating agreement, PEATC is responsible for inspecting the entire length of the toll road following the issuance of the certificate of substan-

tial completion, and to address complaints from motorists once the operators start to collect tolls.

According to the TRB, it authorized tolls of P59 for Class 1, P117 for Class 2, and P176 for Class 3 vehicles traveling between Dr. A. Santos Avenue (Sucat Road) in Parañaque City and Taguig City starting on Tuesday.

Motorists traveling between Taguig and Roxas Boulevard or

Zapote will pay P97 for Class 1, P194 for Class 2, and P291 for Class 3 vehicles.

Segment 3B is the final segment of the two-kilometer segment of the 7.7-kilometer Cavitex-C5 link expressway.

Earlier phases of the project were Segment 3A-1 (C5 Flyover to Merville), Segment 3A-2, and Segment 2 (Sucat Interchange to R-1 Expressway),

which were completed between 2019 and 2024.

The toll road is expected to cut travel time between Parañaque City and Taguig City to about 15 minutes from as long as 90 minutes previously.

Since opening on March 30, the segment has been toll-free, serving about 9,000 motorists daily, the TRB said. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

OPINION

Reimagining the finance function: Turning risk foresight into strategic insight

IN BRIEF:

- Finance must evolve from a compliance-drive function into a strategic partner that translates risk into value.
- Organizations need a risk strategist mindset to navigate a non-linear, accelerated, volatile, and interconnected (NAVI) environment.
- Targeted transformation across accounting excellence, finance operations, the financial statement close process, and the financial planning and analysis (FP&A) will enable the finance function to drive sustainable growth.

SUITS THE C-SUITE ARIS C. MALANTIC

In a world where multiple challenges must be addressed simultaneously, those who succeed will not be those who manage risk the best, but those who understand it deeply enough to use it as a catalyst for growth.

C-suite leaders are now navigating what can best be described as the “Age of And,” a period in which organizations must address multiple, simultaneous challenges while still delivering growth. This convergence of demands is driven by rapid, non-linear changes in the business environment, creating overlapping and interconnected risks that require agile response in parallel.

At the center of this complexity sits the finance function. Traditionally viewed as a steward of financial reporting and compliance, finance is now uniquely positioned to become a strategic nerve center — capturing, processing, analyzing, and interpreting enterprise-wide data. The critical question for today's leadership is no longer whether finance should transform, but how it can transform risk foresight into meaningful financial insight.

NAVIGATING A NAVI RISK ENVIRONMENT

C-suite leaders are increasingly operating in what can be described as a NAVI risk environment — non-linear, accelerated, volatile, and interconnected. Risks are no longer isolated; they cascade across functions, geographies, and value chains.

Philippine C-suite leaders were made aware of the urgency of this shift through insights shared at the recent SGV thought leadership forum titled “Transforming Risk into Strategic Advantage,” held on May 6. Regulatory compliance risk emerged as the top concern (24%), followed by market risk (18%) and third-party risk (17%). These priorities reflect a business environment where regulatory pressures con-

tinue to intensify, market conditions remain unpredictable, and reliance on extended ecosystems introduces new vulnerabilities.

At the same time, emerging external forces are reshaping strategic agendas. Advances in quantum computing are expected to introduce more complex cybersecurity and data privacy challenges (37%), while regulatory fragmentation across jurisdictions (31%) complicates compliance strategies. Additionally, the increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disruptions (25%) underscore the growing importance of sustainability and resilience in financial decision-making.

For Philippine organizations — many of which are deeply integrated into global value chains — these risks are amplified by regional regulatory diversity, evolving digital infrastructure, and heightened exposure to climate events.

FROM RISK MANAGEMENT TO RISK STRATEGY

Despite the growing complexity, many organizations continue to approach risk management with traditional, compliance-driven mindsets. These legacy approaches are characterized by “check-the-box” practices, static frameworks, and limited innovation. While such methods may ensure baseline compliance, they are insufficient to address the dynamic and interconnected risks of today's environment.

A shift toward a risk strategist mindset is therefore imperative.

Risk strategists go beyond mitigation. They align risk management with overall business strategy to ensure that risk considerations inform key decisions at the highest levels. They leverage

risk insights to unlock value, rather than simply prevent loss.

Moreover, they embed a culture of innovation and accountability within the risk function, incentivizing teams based on business outcomes rather than compliance metrics alone.

This transformation places finance in a pivotal role. As a function with end-to-end visibility across financial and operational data, finance is uniquely positioned to integrate risk considerations into strategic planning, performance management, and capital allocation.

REIMAGINING THE FINANCE FUNCTION

To thrive in this evolving risk landscape, finance leaders must reimagine their function across four critical transformation areas:

Accounting Excellence. Accounting remains the foundation of financial integrity, but it must evolve to reflect emerging risks and complexities. Finance teams should proactively assess the potential impact of new financial reporting standards, such as PFRS 18, and ensure that their chart of accounts accurately captures evolving business realities. System and reporting updates must also be carefully coordinated to ensure consistency, transparency, and compliance across the organization. In a fragmented regulatory environment, the ability to adapt reporting frameworks quickly is a key competitive advantage.

Finance Operations. Operational efficiency is no longer sufficient; finance operations must be strategically aligned with business needs. This requires a clear understanding of which elements of the operating model require immediate attention — whether it be process standardization, organizational structure, or technology enablement. Leaders must strike a balance between complexity and proximity, ensuring that finance remains close enough to the business to provide actionable insights while maintaining standardized processes that drive efficiency. Initiatives should be prioritized based on their alignment with strategic objectives, rather than isolated operational improvements.

Financial statement close process. The financial close process is often

an area ripe for transformation. Many organizations continue to rely on manual processes, fragmented systems, and spreadsheet-driven workflows, which limit speed, accuracy, and scalability. A structured diagnostic approach is essential. Finance teams should assess their close processes across five foundational pillars: people, process, technology, data, and control. By mapping dependencies and identifying bottlenecks, organizations can uncover opportunities for improvement.

Benchmarking against industry peers can further highlight gaps and best practices. More importantly, technology must be leveraged not merely to automate existing processes, but to fundamentally redesign them. Eliminating spreadsheets and integrating systems can significantly enhance efficiency and reduce risk.

Financial planning and analysis (FP&A). FP&A is rapidly becoming the strategic core of the finance function. In a volatile environment, static planning cycles are no longer sufficient. Organizations must adopt integrated business planning approaches that enable real-time performance analysis. This requires a holistic assessment of processes, people, and data. Finance teams must enhance their capabilities in scenario planning, forecasting, and integrated reporting. At the same time, investment in talent development and governance structures is critical to ensure that teams can effectively interpret and act on insights.

Data integration is particularly important. The ability to combine financial and non-financial data — from operations, supply chains, and external sources — enables more accurate forecasting and more informed decision-making.

TURNING FINANCIAL RISKS INTO STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE

Ultimately, the goal of finance transformation is not simply to manage risk, but to harness it as a source of strategic advantage. For C-suite leaders, this requires a concerted focus on three key priorities.

First, organizations must transform finance culture and capability. This involves embedding agile mindsets, upskilling talent, and building a future-ready workforce. In the Philip-

pine context, where talent competition remains strong, targeted development and succession planning are essential to sustaining long-term capability.

Second, leaders must drive value-led strategies. This means aligning long-term vision with clear, measurable objectives across the short and medium term. Data-driven insights should reinforce decision-making, supported by strong collaboration between finance and other executive functions.

Finally, leadership impact must be strengthened through robust executive dialogue and continuous learning. As risks evolve, so too must leadership approaches. Developing next-generation leaders and fostering a culture of curiosity and adaptability will be critical to staying ahead of disruption.

THE WAY FORWARD

The “Age of And” presents both challenges and opportunities. For finance leaders, it is a defining moment — an opportunity to redefine the role of finance from a function focused on reporting the past to one that actively shapes the future with confidence.

By embracing a risk strategist mindset and investing in targeted transformation initiatives, finance can move beyond traditional boundaries. It can become a strategic partner to the business, turning risk foresight into financial insight, and ultimately, into sustainable value creation.

In a world where multiple challenges must be addressed simultaneously, those who succeed will not be those who manage risk the best, but those who understand it deeply enough to use it as a catalyst for growth.

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