



EUROPEAN UNION

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the Philippines

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Press Release

EU Philippine trade project closing after four successful years

Today the EU-Philippines Trade Related Technical Assistance Programme 2 comes to a closure after four successful years of implementation. With a budget of 7,5 Million Euro (or 435 Million Pesos) the project supported the areas of trade policy and export development, standards conformity, food safety conformity and trade facilitation. The National Economic Development Authority implemented the project with the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Customs as well as related agencies and the private sector as main beneficiaries. TRTA 2 supported sustainable poverty reduction in the Philippines through further integration into the international trade system by enhancing the capacity of Government agencies for deeper integration.

Key Achievements

- **Plan to double exports:** the crafting of the Philippine Export Development Plan, (PEDP) 2011-2013 that President Aquino approved in 2011; PEDP is organised along the country's international trade strategy that sees the doubling of its export by 2016;
- **Better equipped to negotiate:** Through a two-part training module on Trade Policy Analysis, 50 career officers (senior, intermediate, and junior government officials) from government agencies involved in trade-related matters were equipped with a deeper knowledge and better understanding on trade policy analysis relevant to negotiate Free Trade Agreements
- **Following international electronics standards to better tap export markets:** In the course of the project the over 230 international standards in the field of electronics were adopted as Philippine standards, following consultations with industry groups.
- **First medical labs up to international standards:** The project supported training and mentoring which contributed to the accreditation of the first 5 medical laboratories to the international standard ISO 15189. This can also be seen as a boost to Philippines efforts to become a top medical tourism destination.
- **EU remains open for PH fish exports:** targeted training and mentoring to strengthen the food safety and inspection system at the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources helped pass the EU inspection. This ensures continues fish exports to the EU market of 500 million consumers.

- **Blueprint for new food safety:** Expert assistance was given in drafting a Food Safety Act which has been submitted to the Department of Agriculture and has been submitted the House of Representatives.
- ***Lower costs and a more efficient and effective cargo transit system:*** Expert support was provided to enable the Bureau of Customs develop GPS-enabled transit system saving an estimated 50% of costs for industry and increasing security.
- **National Single Window to ease imports/exports:** The projects supported analysis on how to best connect the 40 relevant agencies. To-date, the National Single Window connects 37 out of 40 agencies. Moreover, 8 agencies have reached their target of ½ to 2 days issue of import licences (from previously 3 to 5 days) and another 9 have improved cutting the time by more than half on average.

Building on the success of the current project a follow up project Trade Related Technical Assistance Programme 3 will be launched later this year. It will be implemented by the Department of Trade and Industry, go over a 4 year period with a budget of 8,9 Million Euro. While building on the success of its predecessor it will also include competition policy as an area of support.