

BUSINESS

Bamboo offensive goes nationwide

Bamboo planting can provide a sustainable source of livelihood to people in the countryside.



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The government is targeting to convert at least 19,000 hectares (ha) of land nationwide into bamboo plantations starting this year to boost the indigenous tree as alternative income source for Filipinos in the countryside.

Majority of the plantations, or about 13,000 ha of land, will be in Western Visayas, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said on Wednesday.

The project will be lead by the Philippine Bamboo Industry Council (PBIC), an interagency group comprised of national and local government representatives chaired by the DTI chief.

“Bamboo planting can provide a sustainable source of livelihood to people in the countryside. Since the plant grows quickly and is weather-resilient, it is an ideal business for farmers who are looking for alternative sources of income,” DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez said in a statement.

Perks for planters

Investors in the industry are entitled to tax incentives as agri-business ventures such as bamboo production and processing are part of the DTI’s strategic investment priorities plan.

Lopez said the trade department will provide shared service facilities for individuals planning to venture into bamboo processing.

He added that the bamboo plantations will also be included in the DTI’s Roads Leveraging Linkages of Industry and Trade program.

The program, which DTI administers with the Department of Works and Highways since 2016, aims to establish plant-to-market roads to easing the delivery of products, particularly from remote areas.

Spreading its cover

The DTI said among those which have shown interest for planting bamboo in their properties include the Department of National Defense and some state universities and colleges.

Bamboo is known for the variety of its uses as well as rapid growth. It can be used as construction materials, furniture and paper. The PBIC is mandated to spread the use of bamboo to account for 25 percent of desk and furniture and public schools.

To boost the manufacturing of products from bamboo, the DTI said PBIC will be launching an official campaign in March 2020 to promote the industry.

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