

Philippines to boost agriculture infrastructure projects explicitly in rice and corn production

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Philippines Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. has created three (3) teams to prepare and finalize the feasibility studies of priority infrastructure projects of the Department of Agriculture (DA) that will boost food production, particularly of rice and corn.

The agri chief designated Undersecretary for Special Concerns and for Official Development Assistance Jerome Oliveros as a chairperson across all three project-preparation teams which would draft the framework and plans for the proposed post-harvest program for rice and corn, the solar-powered cold storages, and proposed solar-powered irrigation systems.

Undersecretary for Operations Roger Navarro will be Oliveros's co-chairman for the team that will prepare the feasibility study on the post-harvest program for rice and corn while Undersecretary for High Value Crops Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero will be the co-chairperson of the team in-charge of the proposed solar-powered irrigation system project. Meanwhile, the Department's spokesperson and Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa will be the vice chairman of the team that will prepare the solar-powered cold storage project.

As a special instruction to the team preparing the solar-powered irrigation system project, the agri chief stressed that they should ensure consistency on the proposed sites in the database of the National Irrigation Administration and with Bureau of Soil and Water Management irrigation masterplan.

Earlier this year, Sec. Tiu Laurel estimated that the government will have to shell out around P93 billion in the next couple of years to build post-harvest facilities for rice and corn to minimize losses while P1 billion is needed to build cold storage facilities to extend the shelf life of vegetables