



INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP  
**FOR ANTICIPATORY AND FORWARD PLANNING**

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AS ONE



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# Part I

## Introduction

The threat of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) first came to the attention of the country's health officials on December 31, 2019 as a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown origin in the city of Wuhan in China. The first human-to-human transmission was confirmed three weeks afterward. On January 30, 2020, the country had its first confirmed case of COVID-19.

On March 16, the government imposed an enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) over the entire Luzon. The primary objective of the ECQ is to flatten the curve, corresponding to the daily trend of cumulative cases. Prior to the ECQ, the number of cases was doubling almost every three days. Other provinces and cities outside Luzon also started to impose a lockdown following these developments.

As of April 14, two-and-a half months from the occurrence of the first case, the country has recorded 5,223 cases and 355 deaths. Current numbers would show that the curve has been flattening; the latest tally puts the doubling time at more than seven days. However, even as the government prepares to lift the ECQ, there is the realization that things will never be the same again.

## The Technical Working Group for Anticipatory and Forward Planning

During the 17th Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases meeting held on March 27 via online video conference, Resolution No. 16 was passed creating the IATF Technical Working Group (TWG) for Anticipatory and Forward Planning (AFP) to be chaired by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). The TWG is expected to provide recommendations on rebuilding confidence and adjusting to the “new normal.”

Rebuilding confidence requires addressing the factors that led to the loss in confidence. Unfortunately, an effective treatment protocol and vaccine have yet to be found, at least, not until about a year. This means that the main factor that resulted in the loss of confidence cannot be directly addressed and recommendations should then focus on the other factors.

The main objective of the TWG-AFP is broken down into three specific objectives:

1. To reduce uncertainty by making information available to answer some of the pressing questions of various stakeholders;
2. To recommend programs and strategies to mitigate the losses experienced by consumers and businesses; and
3. To recommend policies and programs to adapt to a “new normal” state of economic activities.

The three specific objectives roughly correspond to the three phases of the government's action against the COVID-19 threat: response, mitigation, and transition to the new normal.

- In the response phase, the strategies focus on medical and non-medical measures to limit transmission of the virus and provide health care to those who need them. Since COVID-19 is a novel virus, there is yet no effective treatment protocol, let alone a vaccine, that is available. This means that we are left with non-medical measures to limit the transmission of the virus, so-called flattening the curve – travel ban, ban on crowded gatherings, school closures, and later on, social distancing rules, and then, the imposition of the ECQ. At the same time, the capacity of the health system to respond needs to be increased, including testing, contact tracing, quarantine, hospital beds, and equipment, etc.
- The mitigation phase is intended to address some of the adverse impacts of the threat of COVID-19 and of the measures being implemented to limit transmission. Strategies to be implemented during this phase aim to: ensure food security, particularly of the poor and vulnerable, and reduce financial losses experienced to arrest a possible domino effect of adverse consequences.
- Health experts predict that the threat of COVID-19 will be with us for some time, at least until a vaccine or treatment is found. We then need to find the set of conditions that will allow social and economic activities to proceed, while still observing rules to limit transmission of the virus.

A whole-of-nation approach is crucial, especially since cooperation of business and the general public is needed to make this work. This three-pronged strategy needs to be cascaded to the regions, even down to the local development councils, but properly nuanced to consider regional and local conditions.

## Plan of the paper

The next three sections provide a summary of the findings and recommendations corresponding to each of the specific objectives listed above. The detailed reports are provided separately.

The last part recommends the next steps for government, hopefully, to be completed before the ECQ is lifted.

# Part II

## Providing the right information

The basic framework is that these two events (COVID-19 and ECQ), when accompanied by a lack of information, results in so much uncertainty that then leads to a feeling of insecurity. This feeling of insecurity, if left unresolved, then translates to a loss in consumer confidence and bearish investor sentiments.

One important strategy to reduce uncertainty is to improve the capability of the health sector so that individuals are confident that, should they contract the virus, they know that they have good chances at full recovery. However, since COVID-19 is caused by a novel virus, there is as yet no proven treatment, much less a vaccine. The next best strategy is to contain the spread of the virus, by limiting the movement of people. This means slowing down the economy, but effectively, buying time to increase health systems capacity. Of course, this second strategy has its own brand of uncertainty.

The TWG-AFP takes another tack at reducing uncertainty, which is by harnessing the power of right information, where right information is defined by the users themselves. The first task, therefore, is to determine the information needs of the general public. Correspondingly, the second task is to design a prototype dashboard to meet these needs.

## Assessment of the current state of official COVID-19 data dissemination

The imposition of ECQ in Luzon caught many sectors of the society unprepared. While most welcomed the primary objective of the ECQ of protecting individuals, families, and communities from the virus outbreak, the imposed duration and guidelines of the ECQ brought some uncertainty due to confusing information on COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 health concerns, provision of basic needs such as food and education, protection of health care providers and other front liners, access to social and economic measures, business continuity, transportation and logistics, among others. Following are some of the questions raised:

### *Concerns on survival*

- What are the first aid measures/immediate response if symptoms arise?
- Will the government pay for my medical expenses?
- How do I know who has the virus?
- How do I make sure that I will not be infected if I go out to buy food, etc?
- *Kailan ang mass testing? Libre ba ito?* (When will mass testing be done? Will it be free?)

### *Concerns on governance*

- *Ano ang parameters na gagamitin para masabi kung dapat na bang i-lift ang ECQ?* (What parameters will be used to determine whether ECQ should be lifted?)
- *Meron bang website para makita ang data on cases (confirmed, recovered, deaths, etc.)?* (Is there a website to access data on cases?)
- *Ano ang assistance na maibibigay ng gobyerno sa mga sektor na apektado ng ECQ?* (What assistance will the government provide to sectors affected by the ECQ?)
- *Ano na ang status ng PHP275 bilyon na inilaan para sa pagsugpo ng COVID-19?* (What is the status of the PHP275 billion allotted to address COVID-19?)

### *Concerns on post-ECQ state*

- *Kung ili-lift na ang ECQ, ano ang plano ng gobyerno para di na muli kumalat ang virus? Makakapasok na ba sa trabaho at eskwelahan? (When will ECQ be lifted? What are the plans of the government to contain the spread of the virus? Can people go to work or school?)*
- *Maisusulong na ba ang pandemic bill? (Will the pandemic bill be pursued?)*
- *Ano ang post-quarantine rehabilitation plan natin? (What is our post-quarantine rehabilitation plan?)*
- *Ano ang plano para maka-recover ang ekonomiya? (What is the plan for economic recovery?)*

Results of the media analytics revealed that there have been numerous efforts to provide information on COVID-19 taken by different government agencies, local government units (LGUs), academe, and media but sometimes, the disseminated information were inconsistent, contradictory, vague, or incomplete, which led to confusion and anxiety among the public and even among implementing units.

Many people, including local officials, lack information or worse, are misinformed about the disease and how it spreads, and are even unaware of the risks. The imposition of the ECQ gave rise to immediate issues and concerns such as: (a) how the policy is supposed to be enforced; (b) various LGU initiatives to mitigate the impact of the ECQ; and (c) government assistance, in particular, the fund disbursement under the *Bayanihan* Act. Apart from these, other issues raised include how hospitals charge COVID-19 patients, given that patients and/or hospitals and healthcare providers are not aware of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) package for COVID-19 and/or how claims are processed. It is also evident from traditional and social media analytics that people are very much worried about their income, livelihood, or employment while the ECQ is in force; and are concerned of the arrangements or “new normal” after the ECQ.

## Conveying the right information to the public to gain public trust and confidence

A whole-of-society cooperation is of utmost importance in handling the COVID-19 pandemic, containing the spread of the disease, and mitigating its impact. Such cooperation is only possible if people have (a) full understanding and appreciation of the problem in its entirety; and (b) confidence in public institutions. As the country strives to manage the crisis, mitigate its impact, and hasten the recovery, the government needs to build peoples’ confidence by providing them access to accurate, timely, relevant, and understandable information; and listening to and addressing the needs and demands of the citizens. Information to be provided should cover health, social, economic, security, and governance aspects (*refer to Figure 2.1*). At the same time, it is also important for the government to listen and be receptive to feedback to determine where the needs and gaps are and to have a better, more holistic understanding of and handling of the crisis.

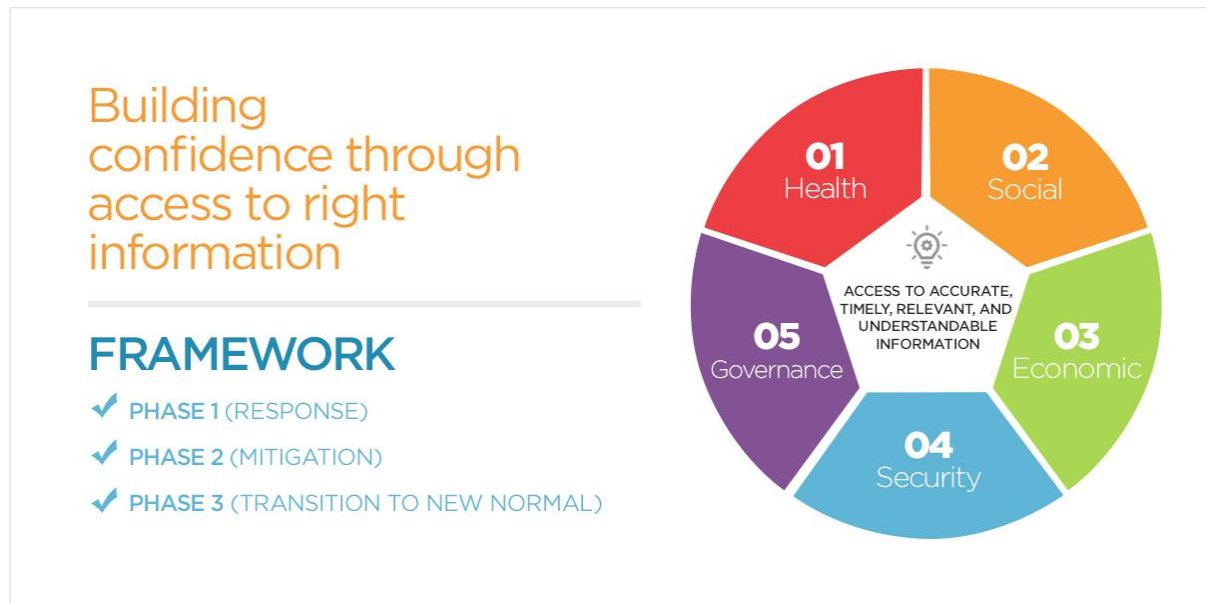
### Framework

Given risks and the remaining unknowns about COVID-19, the government needs to have a phased approach in its responses and interventions, guided by analysis of data. It is crucial that the government’s information, communication, and education efforts are in sync with such an evidence-based and phased approach, i.e., response, mitigation, and transition to new normal.

With the current state of health emergency necessitating efficient and appropriate medical response, it is important that people are given the right information to ease their feeling of uncertainty and build their confidence in the country’s health system.

To attain this goal, the public should be apprised of pertinent health, social, economic, public safety/security, and governance information. Information available should be geared towards COVID-19 response, mitigation, and transition to new normal.

**Figure 2.1. Framework for COVID-19 Information**



## Determining information needs

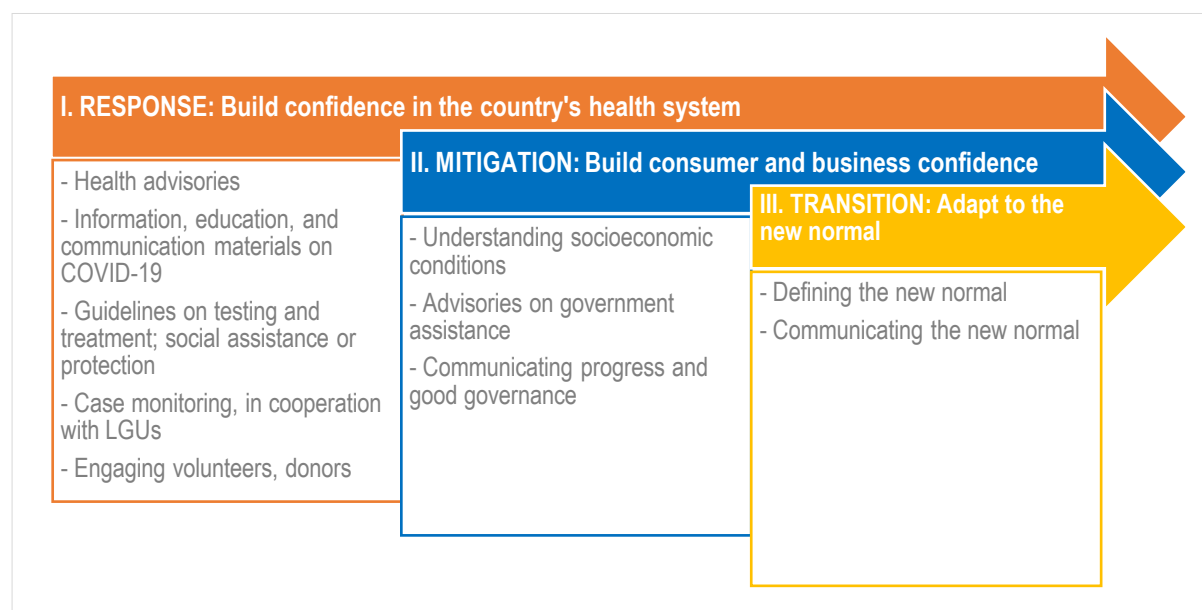
While most of the information sought by the public are already available, these are largely fragmented. Means of disseminating information used such as virtual pressers, government agencies’ websites, or social media pages also have limited reach and effectiveness. For some, it is still unclear if data are already available or will be made available during this crisis period. Moreover, there is no effort to consolidate or track response efforts of LGUs that would promote transparency and allow for complementation of local and national efforts.

Results of the social media analysis conducted by the TWG-AFP showed the data and information gaps that need to be addressed by the government. Responses also showed that information needs vary depending on the type of stakeholder. Thus, data needs are grouped by type of stakeholder: (a) general public; (b) policy makers or researchers; (c) LGUs or local chief executives; (d) health institutions or health workers; and (e) business owners or micro, small, and medium enterprises.

Based on the results of the crowdsourcing and media analysis, the most important information that must be provided immediately are *Response* measures, namely: (a) general COVID-19 situation, spread, and treatment; and (b) ongoing social protection and support measures or interventions. More than the basic information and general statements on these topics, people need to know the details of how they can access treatment and avail of social protection measures. More specific information on these two topics will vary depending on the aforementioned stakeholder groupings. Next, series of information needed are *Mitigation* measures to reduce losses and arrest the transition to the rest of the economy, along with provisions on transparency and governance (i.e., reports on fund disbursement and parameters on lifting the ECQ, among others). Finally, information on how the government plans to build back better and *Transition to the new normal* also needs to be underscored. Information on what the “new normal” across each sector needs to be shared so that there will be better social and market practices (*refer to Figure 2.2*).



**Figure 2.2. Communication Phases to Build Confidence and Adapt to the New Normal**



Based on the analysis, the table below contains the priority information needs of the general public<sup>1</sup> in the immediate term, covering Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Parameters	Information needs	Description
<b>Health</b> <i>Epidemiology of COVID-19</i>	General Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and profile (age group) of confirmed cases categorized as asymptomatic, mild, or severe</li> <li>• Number of probable and suspected cases</li> <li>• Number and dates of recoveries and deaths (to include deaths under investigation) <i>*total and per day change</i></li> <li>• Area-specific COVID-19 situation; if possible, show on map <i>*data disaggregation down to municipal or barangay level</i></li> </ul>
	Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people tested and to be tested per day (disaggregated to positive and negative results)</li> <li>• Philippine testing facilities and capacity</li> </ul>
	COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 disease characteristics and FAQs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are the symptoms?</li> <li>○ How does the virus spread or how is it transmitted?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• FAQs for the public                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What to do when you think you're infected?</li> <li>○ What to do if you're a probable or suspected case?</li> <li>○ When and how to seek medical attention?</li> <li>○ Is it safe to self-medicate?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Health</b> <i>Health Systems Capacity</i>	Public health measures to weaken or stop the contagion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity of health services to positive cases</li> <li>• Quarantine areas per LGU</li> <li>• Guidelines on transmission prevention</li> <li>• Purpose of social distancing and proper hygiene</li> <li>• Purpose of ECQ and importance of public cooperation to the whole COVID-19 response</li> <li>• Confirm if and how mass testing will be implemented. If it will be implemented, provide background of what it is.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Information needs of the general public refer to the basic information needed by ALL citizens.

Parameters	Information needs	Description
	Guidelines on testing and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-quarantine guidelines for suspect, probable, and confirmed cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is online or phone consultation advisable for those with mild symptoms?</li> <li>Are there Department of Health (DOH)-accredited facilities offering online consultation?</li> </ul> </li> <li>Importance of providing honest information to health workers for appropriate treatment and precautions</li> <li>Testing guidelines and procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do I need to get tested? How do I get tested?</li> <li>Directory of facilities catering to suspect, probable, and confirmed cases (status and capacity)</li> <li>Directory of facilities conducting testing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support services and guidelines in transporting patients (probable or suspected cases and other emergencies)</li> <li>Support services and guidelines in handling the dead</li> <li>Accessibility of personal protective equipment (PPEs) (i.e., mask, etc.) for public use (since current donations are intended for frontliners)</li> <li>Location of regional logistics centers (c/o the Office of Civil Defense or OCD)</li> <li>Distribution of PPEs and medical equipment procured by the government or donated officially to the government (c/o OCD)</li> <li>Current inventory and projected need for PPEs per facility</li> </ul>
	Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directory of facilities catering to non-COVID or respiratory-related cases</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	Social protection services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grievance or information mechanism where people can report or a hotline that citizens can call if they have queries or grievance</li> <li>Support on utilities: availability of water, electricity, gas</li> </ul>
	Education services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance on where they can avail education services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>basic education (online and offline services)</li> <li>higher education (online and offline services)</li> <li>technical vocational training (online and offline services)</li> </ul> </li> <li>School calendar adjustments for school year (SY) 2019-2020 and SY 2020-2021, promotion or moving up of students</li> <li>Adjusted deadlines for filing of pertinent documents such as the Educational Service Contracting, Senior High School-Voucher Program, Joint Delivery Voucher Program Technical-Vocational-Livelihood, etc.</li> </ul>
	Housing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulletins from housing agencies on their support services such as moratorium on housing loan payments amortization</li> </ul>
	Volunteerism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities to donate and/or volunteer</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	Social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available social services (both national and subnational) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the eligible beneficiaries?</li> <li>How to avail of the services, i.e., Social Amelioration Program [SAP] (DSWD); <i>Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating</i> Disadvantaged/ Displaced workers [TUPAD] (DOLE); COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program [CAMP] (DOLE); or PhilHealth coverage and packages</li> </ul> </li> <li>Registry of recipients of government assistance during the ECQ</li> <li>Support for daily wage earners or those laid-off temporarily</li> <li>Extension of tax payments, tax incentives, exemption from customs duties</li> </ul>
	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rapid Pass information on who are qualified and how to avail</li> <li>Schedule and routes of free shuttle services and pickup points with proper social distancing instructions</li> </ul>

Parameters	Information needs	Description
	Operations of establishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clearer guidelines and information on establishments that remain open (i.e., grocery or pharmacy operating hours, social distancing instructions)</li> <li>• Suggested retail prices of basic necessities</li> <li>• Banking and other credit services by lending institutions: availability of credit services; location of banks that are open during ECQ; suspension of payments; available loans; new loan terms</li> </ul>
<b>Security</b>	Safety precaution protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checkpoint locations</li> <li>• Processes in checkpoints</li> <li>• Bulletins on ECQ implementation such as curfews, Dos and Don'ts</li> </ul>
	Security threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines on how to deal with fake news</li> <li>• Information about leftist propaganda or destabilization efforts, if any</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	ECQ details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines on the ECQ: What is it? How long? Possible extension again? (Why? Why not?)</li> <li>• Prevailing ordinances and rules or regulations on ECQ in the area</li> </ul>
	Program implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National government assistance with an itemized breakdown of total fund disbursement of the national government to different agencies and LGUs vis-à-vis actual accomplishments (reports from line agencies and LGUs)</li> <li>• Clear explanation on the role of the national government and the LGUs in providing guidance, relief, and assistance to the public</li> <li>• Which agency to go to for the different programs</li> <li>• Specific programs or initiatives provided by the LGUs</li> </ul>
	Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeline of national government policy actions relative to COVID-19 response (i.e., those issued by the President or executive agencies with brief summary)</li> </ul>

## Protocols for information management and reporting

As established in previous parts of this report, provision of timely and accurate data is crucial in building public confidence. Apart from this is the government's implementation of transparency measures, which calls for establishing protocols for information management and reporting. These will have to be put in place to address current gaps and challenges such as: fragmented information sourced on COVID-19 (disease, support programs, etc.); and existing protocols and safeguards on data that each agency adheres to. To facilitate sharing of right information, the following strategies are recommended:

**Designate an official platform for all COVID-19 related matters.** A lot of information from different sources can confuse the public. Thus, there is a need to harmonize all of these in one platform to ease access for the public. This will also lessen, if not totally eliminate, the “credibility” of fake news, given that all relevant information are already consolidated in one place. It is recommended that the [covid19.gov.ph](https://covid19.gov.ph) website currently being managed by the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) and supported by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) be utilized as the designated “go to” website for this purpose. Another option is to construct a new website altogether, which can adopt the taglines or slogans of the government (i.e., *WeHealAsOne.gov.ph* or *WeWillRiseAsOne.gov.ph*). Whichever platform will be used should contain the pre-determined priority information needs of the general public. Links that direct stakeholders to specific or more detailed information needs will have to be provided or included in this platform.

**Formulate a data sharing agreement across all government agencies that will provide data for the portal.** To facilitate data sharing and updating while considering data security and privacy, it is recommended that all agencies with data for COVID-19 response, mitigation, and transition to the new normal enter into a blanket data sharing agreement, with the PCOO or DICT as the lead. The body may also seek assistance from PCOO or the National Privacy Commission in ensuring that data submissions are accurate, clear, and in accordance with Data Privacy Act and other disclosure policies. Transparency must be observed with regard to data sharing and processing (e.g., disclose the data shared to the public and purpose for sharing). However, as more specific data may be sourced from some agency websites, it is recommended that these agencies enforce their own data sharing protocols for certain stakeholder groups (e.g., researchers and health workers or institutions).

**Create or utilize an inter-agency body that will manage the platform and ensure proper linkage to the respective agencies' websites.** With the data sharing agreement in place, an inter-agency body, with PCOO as the lead, should be established or utilized to serve as the oversight team in charge of managing and providing content for the platform. The National Task Force for COVID-19 Task Group in charge of strategic communications may be utilized and expanded for this undertaking.

The body should consist of all agencies with COVID-19 data, usually information or communication officers who can ensure timely and regular provision of content in the platform and their own agency's websites (i.e., COVID-19 cases are announced daily at 4:00 p.m.; the DOH designated Information Officer who has access to the platform will ensure that the COVID-19 cases will also be released through the platform at the same time). Representatives should also ensure that all uploaded information are validated and cleared by their respective agencies. Moreover, the inter-agency team should also regularly coordinate with DICT to ensure seamless linkage between websites (i.e., when users want to know more about the COVID-19 cases, they can click a link which directly transfers them to the DOH website or the COVID-19 tracker page).

**Create a standard template for all communications.** To harmonize all communication efforts of the government, it is recommended that a standard template for all communications coming from the government be used down to the regional or provincial level. PCOO may lead the crafting of a template for all COVID-19 related announcements and bulletins. Private sector or academe experts in strategic communications may be tapped for this initiative.

**Set timelines for addressing data gaps.** In the immediate term, the government must provide complete information on health or the COVID-19 situation to the public, health workers, and health institutions. This includes not only the number of cases but also the government response and availability of resources.

Currently, the DOH has gaps in (a) data availability: backlogs in processing data on laboratory tests and patient information and community level monitoring of suspected, probable, and confirmed cases; and on health supply-side availability—human resources for health, bed capacity, and supplies and equipment; (b) data compilation and presentation: lack of epidemiological characteristics in the database and complicated data source input on the dashboard; (c) data analysis: determination of actual resource requirements and the effects of the infection on other sectors.

**Include a COVID-19 Corner or create a portal for line agencies.** As the portal may not be able to provide a complete picture of all government assistance, line agencies may also explore the creation of a COVID-19 corner or portal in their official websites or social media pages. The official platform or main portal can contain links to these agencies and direct people to websites or platforms where support programs during this period will be spelled out. These agencies' websites may also provide a link, which directs the public to the main website for COVID-19. Regional counterparts of agencies can likewise have the same corner or portal, aligned with that of their national offices.

**Ensure the availability of data from LGUs.** To ensure the complementation of efforts and also inform their constituency of their programs, the portal should also include information from LGUs at the regional, and if possible, down to the city or municipal level. This may be done through the inclusion of links to the websites of line agencies' regional or provincial offices in the main portal. The provincial website may designate a page to act as the province's main platform for information on COVID-19 in their locality. It is also suggested that provinces consolidate information from cities and municipalities within their geographic coverage, and, if possible, include a map showing the location of COVID-19 positive cases and the available facilities in the area (e.g., quarantine areas, hospitals, testing laboratories, number of doctors, nurses, etc.). Format for the regions' platforms or websites should be uniform, but information highlighted in each region will be decided by the regional IATF, recognizing the different situation and needs per region.

Regions should also practice the national protocol for clearing and releasing documents through a designated inter-agency body. The information cleared at the provincial level will be reported to the region and serve as input to the national statistics and updates (e.g., regional clearing house receives data at 8:00 a.m. and provides the data to the national government at 9:00 a.m.; national and regional or provincial simultaneously release data at 12:00 noon). To ensure accuracy of local data, it is also recommended that LGUs are capacitated and mobilized to conduct a mapping or house-to-house survey of probable and suspected cases in communities to establish the contamination level.

Furthermore, recognizing that some Filipinos do not have access to the internet or smartphones, barangay officials should be in close coordination with the municipal or city government so as to provide all necessary, real-time information to their constituents, as well as to gather information from their constituents on how they are feeling (health-wise) to provide immediate and appropriate medical response.

**Ensure the functionality of communication lines at all times.** Aside from ensuring sound infrastructure to support the internet requirements of the country, strengthening and utilizing radio, television, and print media should also be done, since majority of Filipinos patronize these platforms. Partnerships with media companies can be explored to be able to provide a unified COVID-19 campaign across different channels. Other forms of communication such as hotlines and short message service (SMS or text messages) at the national, regional, and local levels (down to barangay) can be used. When employed, it should be ensured that these are functioning well to provide announcements and to accommodate and monitor COVID-19 concerns. Hotline numbers should be widely disseminated to all households through various media and the people answering these hotlines should be equipped and trained in providing accurate information and ultimately, handling the concerns of the callers. For SMS, agencies may coordinate with the National Telecommunications Commission through DICT to utilize their text blast facility that can cater to or cover nationwide or specific areas.

It was also noted that aside from news from television, radio, and print media, web-based platforms such as social media and websites are used by regional line agencies (RLAs) and LGUs to convey information and updates on the COVID-19 situation in their respective areas. Since most RLAs and LGUs reach the general public and their constituents through social media sites such as Facebook, links to official/verified Facebook pages of regional DOH offices, other RLAs, and LGUs (if available) can also be incorporated in the proposed platform.

**Ensure effective dissemination and unified messaging of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials.** With various government agencies producing numerous IEC materials, there is a need to ensure consistency and unified messaging among these agencies and the IEC materials they disseminate. To do this, a general format or template should be created and made available to agencies. This format can mimic the format of IEC materials being released regularly by the DOH. Partnership with local chief executives through the agencies' regional offices may also be explored to ensure consistent information dissemination at the sub-national level. Moreover, there is also a need to capacitate frontline workers (e.g., barangay officials, village health workers, public school

teachers, volunteers, religious leaders, etc.) on proper and effective information dissemination at the grassroots level.

**Set up a system to manage or receive reports on fake news.** To address incidences of fake news and misinformation circulating in different media platforms, the *Security* segment of the portal may contain links, hotlines, or e-mail addresses on where cases of fake news can be reported. Increasing confidence on the authority and reliability of the envisioned official platform will eventually make it as the choice of information source.

## Sample dashboard and available data

From the social media analysis and mapping of available data, the following indicators should be in the dashboard or portal clustered under the different themes corresponding to the three phases of Response, Mitigation, and Transition to the new normal. As there will be too much data to host and maintain in one portal, it is recommended that information needs be categorized into what will be directly available in the portal and those that will have links to partner agencies' COVID-19 corners or portals.

### Response

Platform	Health	Social	Economic	Security	Governance
<b>In the portal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total number of cases (disaggregated by sex, age, region, or province)</li> <li>Total number of deaths, recoveries, suspected and probable cases</li> <li>Total number of tests conducted (disaggregated by suspected and probable cases tested and confirmatory tests)</li> <li>Basic FAQs and Dos and Don'ts to prevent spread of disease (infographics, videos)</li> <li>Hotline for ambulatory services</li> <li>Personal stories of recovered patients on their journey to recovery</li> <li>Hotspot areas reported in a form of heat maps for better visualization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of, eligibility and process of receiving assistance from government interventions during ECQ i.e., SAP, TUPAD, CAMP, PhilHealth Packages (updated guidelines on availment and coverage)</li> <li>Opportunities to donate and/or volunteer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support services, programs, initiatives to aid small and medium enterprises and industries under difficult situations (classified per sector), especially for micro and small enterprises</li> <li>Practical information for producers and consumers (e.g., DA's Kadiwa centers, trading posts)</li> <li>Businesses and services allowed to operate (during and after lockdown)</li> <li>List of cooperatives with savings and lending services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety precautions and protocols during ECQ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAQs on the ECQ</li> <li>Government hotlines (health, report grievances, etc.)</li> <li>Social media hub</li> <li>Best practices/stories of cooperation</li> </ul>
<b>Partner agency websites or social media pages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of referral hospitals for COVID-19 (DOH) and capacities of each hospital</li> <li>List of testing centers (DOH)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status of disbursement of national and local government interventions i.e., SAP (DSWD); TUPAD (DOLE); CAMP (DOLE); PhilHealth Packages (PhilHealth);</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protocols or guidelines that need to be implemented during ECQ (PNP/AFP)</li> <li>Recognizing and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issuances made during the ECQ (PCOO)</li> <li>Local ordinances/rules/regulations</li> </ul>

Platform	Health	Social	Economic	Security	Governance
(with links from the main portal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures on getting treatment care (DOH and LGUs)</li> <li>Where to get health resources i.e., PPEs, ventilators; or available stock of equipment (DOH)*</li> <li>Online consultation for COVID and non-COVID health concerns (Lung Center, National Center for Mental Health, etc.)</li> <li>Other epidemiological or health information on confirmed patients i.e., hospitalization, intensive care unit admissions (DOH)*</li> <li>Forecasts on disease or infection spread per area or LGU (FASTERR/ UPR)*</li> <li>Inventory or mapping of human resources for health (DOH)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGU interventions (DILG)</li> <li>Available education programs per level, online or offline (DepEd, CHED, TESDA)</li> <li>Guidelines on the moratorium of payment on housing loans and utilities (HDMF, SHFC, NHA, and NHMFC; and utility companies)</li> <li>Support services for Human Resources for Health and frontline workers i.e., transportation (DOTr, OVP); billeting or dorms (OVP, LGUs)</li> <li>List of beneficiaries for programs (agency in charge)*</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>countering fake news, false, or misleading information and propaganda (DILG/PCOO)</li> </ul>	during ECQ (DILG/LGUs)

*\*Might be restricted data or for identified groups only.*

## Mitigation

Note that all data from the *Response* table will still be made available during this period. Below are additional data that may be included:

Platform	Health	Social	Economic	Security	Governance
<b>In the portal</b>	Information, update, or news article on the status of development of vaccine		Transportation guidelines and availability post-ECQ		
<b>Partner agency websites or social media pages</b>		School calendar adjustment for SY 2019-2020 and SY 2020-2021; promotion or moving up of students (DepEd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines on adopting flexible work arrangements (DOLE)</li> <li>Extension of deadlines on government transactions i.e., payment of taxes, etc. (BIR, BSP)</li> <li>Macro and business indicators* (NEDA/DOF/ BSP)</li> </ul>		

*\*Might be restricted data or for identified groups only.*



## Transition to the new normal

During this phase, additional data that will be included in the portal are definitions or guidelines on the “new normal” for all sectors; and tracking of national government and other development partner assistance, specifically an itemized breakdown of total funds disbursed by the national government and development partners to different agencies and LGUs vis-à-vis actual accomplishments (reports from line agencies and LGUs) for transparency.

With the identified information needs, the packaging or how these information will be presented, is crucial to ensure that the public understands and retains the information made available to them. Following are recommendations to effect the aforementioned:

**Laymanize the explanation contained in FAQs.** Information provided in the platform should be clear, short, and easy to understand by all. These explanations should also have translations in the main dialects (e.g., *Tagalog, Bisaya, Ilocano*) of the country.

**Make the portal interface simple, clear, and uncrowded.** While the DOH nCoV tracker provides a comprehensive and detailed snapshot of the available data or information that the Department has, it may overwhelm the public and does not capture the non-health information the people also need. The website should be simple and clean, and can direct users to the information they need. For instance, the designated platform may position the link for [staysafe.ph](https://staysafe.ph)<sup>2</sup> where it can be easily seen by the user and provide a short description of what it is. A good example of this is the COVID-19 dedicated website of India (<https://www.mygov.in/covid-19/?cbps=1>) which, apart from highlighting the current statistics, also gives prominence to hotlines and links to resources where users may get the right information they need.

**Use catchy phrases and taglines.** Following the #WeHealAsOne, the platform should contain catchy phrases to entice users to click and explore. Information should be presented creatively whilst ensuring the accuracy of information. Taglines to be used should be short and easy to retain. Creating taglines in Tagalog or major dialects should also be considered.

**Employ strategic messaging.** Strategic messaging and placement of these materials are needed to better engage the public. For instance, the messaging on wearing face masks can be: Face masks should be worn not just to avoid being infected, but to avoid infecting others as one could be a carrier of the virus even without exhibiting symptoms. This kind of messaging brings about a sense of responsibility towards their community. This can be presented as a short video aired in the website, major channels in the country (not limited to government channels) and can be made viral on social media platforms. Another way is to add humor to the information by way of using sound bites, catchy jingles, or images, which may facilitate more retention of the message since it is more pleasant to receive. Moreover, best practices and inspirational stories may also be highlighted to provide a sense of hope to the public.

## Proposed dashboard on COVID-19

The objective of the proposed dashboard is to bring the locus of control over the situation to the individual and the community. While the government must be seen as taking action comprehensively and as one, it must also be conveyed that, with the right information and resources, individuals can have significant control of the situation. The dashboard will serve as a platform to elicit support and cooperation from the rest of the society.

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<sup>2</sup> A platform that aims to help persons who had contacts with COVID-19 patients to be given health assistance. This was created by the National Task Force for COVID-19.

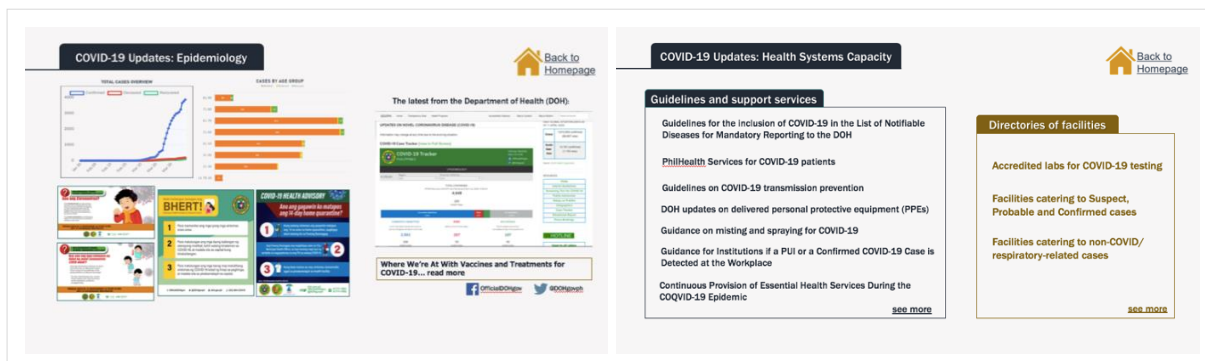


Below is how the homepage of the website could look like, with the tagline “We Heal as One.”



Each box in the homepage leads to relevant COVID-19 pages in the websites of concerned agencies or to other pages as follows:

**General Situationer and COVID-19 Situation Updates** links to the DOH COVID-19 tracker and other DOH bulletins, press releases, and directories.







**Be a volunteer** links to the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) website, which, in coordination with NEDA and Sub-TWG1, is currently exploring the establishment of a volunteer management system and webpage where interested volunteers can be linked to organizations or and deployed for various areas of concerns. Other volunteer work, even those that did not go through PNVSCA, may also be recognized by posting of newspaper articles that features these voluntary acts.

*Health innovations* links to the COVID-19 pages of the Department of Science and Technology.

**COVID-19 Updates: Health-related innovations**

**S&T Bulletin**





 <p><b>DOST seeks production of 26,000 COVID-19 test kits, 500,000 masks</b></p>	 <p><b>DOST now producing 5,000 face shields daily</b></p>
 <p><b>DOST unveils 6 technologies being developed against COVID-19</b></p>	 <p><b>Game-changing Philippine-made COVID-19 test kits finally get FDA approval</b></p>
 <p><b>Coronavirus can go from 1.5M to 15,000 cases with better testing - forecasting tool</b></p>	 <p><b>Frontliners get mobile phone 'rapid pass' at checkpoints: COVID-19 task force</b></p>
 <p><b>DOST open to COVID-19 vaccine development collaboration with other countries</b></p>	 <p><b>DOST to focus on researches that will help solve Covid-19 woes</b></p>

[see more](#)

*Social Services* links to the COVID-19 pages of Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

**Social Services**

**Features**

<p><b>DSWD makes timely emergency subsidy disbursement</b></p> <p><b>DSWD will lead relief distribution, grant of financial aid, says President Duterte</b></p> <p><b>TES stipends now available to grantees in SUCs and LUCs amid COVID-19 outbreak</b></p> <p><b>DepEd Commons now available for private school learners</b></p> <p><b>DepEd pursues more responsive financial measures for employees</b></p> <p><b>DepEd: Assistance for teachers, learners a priority amid COVID-19 situation</b></p> <p><b>Thousands enroll for free TESDA online courses</b></p> <p><b>TESDA adheres to the President's call, suspends classes in training centers</b></p>	 <p><b>Guidelines to DSWD's Social Amelioration Program</b> <a href="#">View here</a></p> <hr/> <p>For school calendar adjustments, announcements and guidelines, you may access the following links:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>DepED</b> DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION</b></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>TESDA</b></p> </div> </div> <p><b>Register to TESDA's online courses</b> <a href="#">here:</a></p>
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# Part III

## Mitigating the losses

With 92 percent (as of April 17) of the total COVID-19 cases in Luzon, all regions in Luzon have been under ECQ and have been effectively shut off from the rest of the country to stem the surge of infections. Luzon, which accounts for 56 percent of the country's population and contributes 73 percent to the GDP, is on a standstill in terms of economic activities. Other areas followed, either on a regional-, provincial-, or municipal-wide level, especially those that have substantial or rising number of COVID-19 cases.

## Key impacts of COVID-19 and the ECQ

Imposition of the ECQ resulted in the temporary closure of many establishments and a huge number of displaced workers. Based on the data from the Department of Labor and Employment, a total of 1.19 million workers (as of April 12) are affected by COVID-19. Most affected are those working in the education, manufacturing, and hotel, restaurant, and tourism-related sectors. The ban on main transport vehicles, coupled with the various checkpoints, rendered people immobile that even establishments like supermarkets, groceries, drugstores, and similar service-oriented centers that have been allowed to open could not fully operate. Overseas remittances have also been either delayed or discontinued because overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in countries affected by the pandemic have quit work and have come home.

Various interpretations about the quarantine imposition held up cargoes and hindered delivery trucks carrying food and other basic items needed by people in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon. This restrained movement of agricultural produce resulted in: (a) increased food waste due to spoilage of highly perishable commodities; (b) lower farmgate price of agricultural/fishery products; and (c) higher retail price of food commodities. The closure of restaurants and other food chain establishments created huge food surpluses such as vegetables, poultry, and dairy products.

Similarly, manufacturing firms have not been able to operate at full capacity because of problems in delivery of raw materials, late shipments, cancelled export or import orders, loss of buyers or suppliers, and increase in their logistics cost. Even medical items including personal protective equipment, ventilators, and test kits, were blocked and stocked in the Manila port because of Customs processes. Retail businesses have been affected by closure, reduced foot traffic (for non-essential establishments), and price freeze brought about by the ECQ. Many key products and essential supplies have gone out of stock in supermarkets and grocery retailers due to panic buying of consumers. Tourism and business travel have also ground to a halt.

In addition, public and private schools at all levels have been ordered closed. While some schools managed to complete the requirements for the school year, some students still lack some credentials to move on to the next level. Despite the closure, private schools continued paying for the salaries of their personnel even if some had to offer tuition fee refunds.

To assess the economic outcomes of the ECQ, NEDA, on behalf of the IATF-TWG for AFP, launched three separate surveys from April 5 to April 8. There are 389,859 respondents for the consumer survey; 6,863 respondents for the agriculture sector survey, and 44,097 respondents from the micro, small, and

medium enterprises (MSMEs) for the industry/services sector survey. There is also the expressed recognition that the surveys may not be representative of the entire country, given that these were conducted using an online platform. Nonetheless, the results provided a good indication of the pain points of consumers, businesses, and agricultural sector workers resulting from the COVID-19 threat and the ECQ.

The discussion following is based on the unweighted responses in the three surveys. The raw tables can be accessed at <http://www.neda.gov.ph/results-of-the-neda-ecq-surveys/>.

## Experiences of consumers during the ECQ

Of the almost 390,000 respondents, about 48 percent are from the National Capital Region (NCR), 37 percent are from the other Luzon regions, almost 7 percent are from Visayas, and almost 8 percent are from Mindanao. By income group, 17 percent are from income group 1 (less than PHP10,000 a month); 45 percent are from income group 2 (between PHP10,000-PHP30,000 per month); 38 percent from income group 3 (at least PHP30,000 per month).

Almost 40 percent of the respondents work in government and the other 35 percent work in private establishments. Others are self-employed (8%), unpaid family workers (4%), business owners (3%), farmers and fisherfolk (1%), and students (9%). The unit of analysis used is the family.

The table below summarizes the experiences of the respondents in the consumer survey during the ECQ.

Indicators	Remarks
Family income during ECQ	Almost 40% of respondents claimed that their income declined.
Reasons for decline in income	Of those whose incomes declined, 70% was due to the loss of source of livelihood.
Coping mechanism	Almost 60% reduced their food consumption; 13% borrowed from relatives and friends.
Difficulty in access to facilities	Respondents found it difficult to access groceries, wet markets, banks, and drugstores.
Assistance received	About 50% received some form of support, mostly in the form of relief goods.

If the results above are disaggregated by sector of employment, the significant changes would be reflected in the first two rows. More than 50 percent in the non-government sectors experienced a decline in income, and at least 80 percent of which was due to loss of their source of livelihood.

Difficulty in access to groceries, wet markets, banks, and drugstores was a bit surprising given that ECQ rules allowed these establishments to operate. There were, however, other factors: closure of a number of establishments, imposition of curfew, and lack of public transportation.

In addition, 45 percent of families with senior citizens (SCs), persons with disability (PWDs), and pregnant women experienced challenges in accessing basic necessities. Some SCs are the most vulnerable persons affected by COVID-19 virus. Some were initially not allowed to leave their houses to go to supermarkets and some local government units (LGUs) did not provide them with quarantine passes.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the lack of access to basic necessities became particularly challenging, especially for

<sup>3</sup>PCOO. (19 March 2020). *Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases Virtual Presser*. Accessed through <https://pcoo.gov.ph/press-briefing/inter-agency-task-force-for-the-management-of-emerging-infectious-diseases-virtual-presser-with-cabinet-secretary-karlo-alexei-nograla-department-of-agriculture-secretary-william-dar-department-of/>

those SCs living on their own. Moreover, the lack of public transportation also made going to the stores very difficult for households with PWDs, particularly those who cannot leave their PWDs without a companion.

While 50 percent claimed to have received assistance during ECQ, in some regions, the percentage can be as low as 37 percent (Cordillera Administrative Region or CAR<sup>4</sup>), 38 percent (Zamboanga Peninsula) to as high as 77 percent (Cagayan Valley).

Another group of special interest are the students. For basic education students in public schools, the beginning of the ECQ coincided with the last couple of weeks of classes, by which time, the Department of Education has determined that “the essential competencies as specified in the curriculum are expected to have been covered.”<sup>5</sup> In the survey, 46 percent of respondents had at least a family member who is a student. Of these, only 40 percent claimed that the student member is ready for digital learning. Those coming from the higher income groups have a slight advantage (41%) compared to those from the lowest income group (37%).

The table below summarizes the expectations of the respondents after the ECQ is lifted.

Indicators	Remarks
Expected change in income	40% expect their family income to be worse after the lifting of the ECQ.
Plans to purchase durables	More than 80% do not intend to buy durables after the ECQ is lifted.
Plans to travel	Only 23% said that their family will definitely travel within 12 months after ECQ is lifted, either across the country or abroad.
Assistance needed	The most cited type of assistance needed are more efficient health system (30%) and seamless and uninterrupted supply chain and logistics system.

Consumer confidence is expected to remain low even after the ECQ is lifted. Expectation of a worse family income situation is especially pronounced among the low-income group. Across regions, those in NCR appear to have the most pessimistic outlook, in contrast to those in Cagayan Valley and MMIMAROPA. It would also seem that the COVID-19 pandemic and the ECQ have amplified the inadequacies of the country’s health system and the inefficiency of the supply chain and logistics system. The key, therefore, to rebuilding consumer confidence is to address these two problems.

## Experiences of the agriculture sector

### Profile of respondents

There were 6,863 respondents to the Business Survey for Agriculture and Fisheries Sector.<sup>6</sup> Majority (66%) are male and about 39 percent are within the age range of 51 to 65 years old.

Around 20 percent of the total respondents are from Western Visayas, followed by Central Luzon (18%) and CALABARZON (12%). Respondents from other regions of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao made up 19 percent, 12 percent, and 19 percent of total, respectively. More than half (52%) of these

<sup>4</sup> There were some reports that some CAR residents did not want to receive government assistance so that these could be given to those who are most in need.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Education Memorandum Number 042, s. 2020

<sup>6</sup> On behalf of IATF-TWG for AFP, NEDA led the conduct of an online rapid assessment from April 3 to 7. The information about the rapid assessment was disseminated through the official websites of NEDA and other government agencies, social media pages, and text messages through the National Telecommunications Commission.

respondents were engaged in high value crops (HVC) farming, while the rest were into rice farming (26%), livestock and poultry raising (12%), corn farming (6%), and fisheries (5%).

The table below summarizes the experiences of the agriculture and fisheries sector during the ECQ.

Indicators	Remarks
Agricultural activity during ECQ	A large percentage of respondents (86%) were still able to continue their agricultural activities. The remaining 14% whose activities were disrupted during the ECQ is equivalent to 1,169 hectares that were not planted.
Losses incurred during the ECQ	Only 65% of respondents were able to sell their produce.

The disruption in agricultural and subsequent trading activities can be traced to additional ECQ rules being imposed by some LGUs which are, oftentimes, even more stringent than the rules set by the IATF-EID. In value terms, the highest income loss was recorded in HVC farming amounting to PHP36.82 million. Among the regions, CALABARZON recorded the highest income loss at PHP12.29 million, followed by CAR with a total of PHP5.64 million and Central Luzon with PHP2.67 million. The total loss in rice farming amounted to PHP18.63 million, with Central Luzon accounting for 56 percent (PHP10.38 million). Cagayan Valley and CALABARZON also recorded high losses with a total of PHP2.12 million and PHP1.21 million, respectively. Losses in corn farming reached a total of PHP5.6 million, with CALABARZON having the highest total income loss of PHP1.4 million.

Livestock and poultry raising recorded a total income loss of PHP24.48 million, with Central Luzon incurring the highest loss among the regions at PHP8.39 million. In addition, income loss in fisheries amounted to PHP8.78 million, with CALABARZON and Central Luzon reporting the highest income loss at PHP3.27 million and PHP2.15 million, respectively. Among the major island groups, Luzon had the highest losses with a total amount of PHP 7.07 million. On the other hand, losses recorded in Visayas and Mindanao amounted to PHP520,000 and PHP1.19 million, respectively.

The table below summarizes the expectation of the agriculture and fisheries sector after ECQ is lifted.

Indicators	Remarks
Planting intention	Almost all (96%) of respondents indicated that they intend to continue their agricultural activity in the next cropping season.
Assistance needed	Majority of the respondents requested for cash assistance, production support, and machinery and equipment.

The sector on agriculture and fisheries appears to be more upbeat than the rest of the economy, despite the difficulties experienced during the ECQ. Perhaps it is because the sector is used to confronting several challenges year in and year out. However, the loss they incurred from unsold produce, which could mean difficulty in making loan payments, could limit their ability to bounce back.

Apart from the requested cash assistance, almost a quarter of the respondents wanted production support (e.g., provision of seeds, planting materials, fingerlings, feeds, fertilizers) and about 9 percent said they need machinery and equipment (e.g., mini hand tractors and cultivators, solar water pumps, etc.).



## Experiences of MSMEs

The Business Sector survey was participated in by more than 44,000 enterprises, two thirds of which are from NCR (36%), CALABARZON (18.2%), and Central Luzon (12.1%). Outside Luzon, most enterprises were located in Central Visayas (5.4%), Western Visayas (4.3%), and Davao Region (3.9%) In terms of size, majority of those surveyed are micro<sup>7</sup> (71.2%), followed by small<sup>8</sup> (17.0%), medium<sup>9</sup> (7.2%), and large<sup>10</sup> (4.6%) enterprises.

The table below summaries the situation of their business operations during the ECQ.

Indicators	Remarks
Change in cost of raw materials	Almost two-thirds reported unchanged cost of production during the ECQ. About 26% reported an increase in their cost of production.
Change in sales	Almost two-thirds reported zero sales due to temporary closure, particularly of non-essential businesses. <sup>11</sup>
Change in working arrangements	More than 60% of the surveyed firms stopped operations. Others adopted reduced work hours (13.2%) or work from home scheme (12.4%).
Change in number of workers	Majority (74.4%) of the firms surveyed did not lay-off workers. Some firms (25.4%) temporarily laid off workers during ECQ.
Mechanism to manage cash flow	To stay afloat during the ECQ, most of the firms delayed payments on taxes and debt (22.8%) as well as to suppliers and borrowers (17.7%). Many also accessed loans from government institutions (12.5%), borrowed from friends (10.2%), and requested early payments from customers (9.5%).
Assistance received	Almost 77% did not avail of the existing government assistance programs. Among those who did avail, about 42% were satisfied with the program.

With the declaration of a State of Calamity on March 16, a price freeze is automatically imposed on all agricultural and manufactured basic goods, essential medicines, and medical supplies within 60 days from the declaration. This is probably the reason why cost of production inputs did not change during the ECQ.

While two-thirds of firms did not operate, almost 75 percent did not reduce their workforce. This means that firms have been absorbing the losses. Almost a quarter took advantage of the announced extension in the deadline of tax payments. Others resorted to borrowing.

Work-from-home arrangements was feasible for only 12.4 percent of establishments and 31 percent of the large firms. This probably reflects the low level of digitalization of the country's business sector, which needs to be enhanced to build the country's resiliency and ensure that the economy can still operate even with calamities such as these.

<sup>7</sup> Micro enterprises have less than PHP3million in asset.

<sup>8</sup> Small enterprises have an asset worth within PHP3million-PHP15million.

<sup>9</sup> Medium enterprises have an asset ranging PHP15million-PHP100million.

<sup>10</sup> Large enterprises have an asset more than PHP100million.

<sup>11</sup> This occurred as many establishments complied with the Department of the Interior and Local Government issuance of Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 2020-062: Supplementary Local Government Unit Guidelines on the Implementation of Enhanced Community Quarantine in Luzon, and State of Public Health Emergency in Other Parts of the Country Due to the COVID-19 Threat, dated March 21, 2020. All LGUs were ordered to ensure the closure of all public establishment, except those providing/manufacturing basic necessities such as food, medicine, water, banking and remittance centers, power, energy, telecommunication, and the like. All LGUs and establishments that will violate said directive will have to face appropriate charges (e.g., penalties and imprisonment). Manila lockdown cripple businesses big and small. Retrieved from <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Manila-lockdown-cripples-businesses-big-and-small>

The low availment rate of government assistance programs may be because of the lack of information or the perceived complex prerequisites for availment.

The table contains the summary of the expectations of the business sector.

Indicators	Remarks
Business outlook	With another month of extension, 80% of enterprises will be unable to operate. After lifting of the ECQ, 31% still do not see good prospects for their business.
Assistance needed	At least 30% of firms suggest the following forms of assistance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• payment deferment to government;</li> <li>• payment deferment to debtors (e.g., banks, utility companies);</li> <li>• tax discounts or tax credits;</li> <li>• low interest loans from government; and</li> <li>• lower interest loans from banks.</li> </ul>

The less optimistic business outlook is shared across firms of different sizes. By sector, the most pessimistic are in the education (36%), tourism (35%), and transport (34%), perhaps in recognition that certain restrictions on social distancing will continue even after ECQ is lifted.

The request for support for small businesses is understandable given that, in general, smaller firms have lower capacity to handle large shocks due to their limited asset holdings, lack of economies of scale, and structural weaknesses besetting them even prior to the current pandemic.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the types of assistance listed above, 27 percent of firms requested payroll subsidy for non-essential workers. The most requested assistance (55%) is payment deferment to government, e.g., on remittance of withholding tax, value added tax (VAT), and contributions to Social Security System (SSS) and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).

## Estimating the losses due to COVID-19/ECQ

The estimation of the impact of the ECQ to the gross domestic product (GDP), particularly in foregone revenues, assumes a 45-day lockdown period in Luzon. For Visayas and Mindanao, the number of days of ECQ varies per province, hence the lockdown period is based on the average number of ECQ days of component provinces in each region. It also assumes the following:

- For agriculture: Income losses from unsold produce based on rapid assessment survey.
- For industry: 100 percent of construction, mining, quarrying, and manufacturing firms, except for food-related manufacturing, are locked down.
- For services: 79.7 percent of retail and wholesale trade establishments are locked down (based on the rapid assessment survey of business); and revenue losses from the tourism and private schools. For tourism, there will be a 60-day interruption in service based on the assumption that a modified community quarantine will be implemented after April 30, where people are still hesitant to travel. For rental, it is assumed that no losses will be incurred since rental fees and charges are deferred rather than waived during the ECQ as clarified by the Department of Trade and Industry.

<sup>12</sup> Philippine Institute for Development Studies. (2018). *Barriers to internationalization of Philippine SMEs. Policy Notes. No. 2018-11.* Retrieved from: <https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/PUBLICATIONS/pidspn1811.pdf>



## Agriculture

Based on the business rapid assessment survey for agriculture and fisheries sector, PHP94.3 million was lost from unsold produce in the country, with the biggest chunk coming from CALABARZON at PHP26.33 million (27.9% share), followed by Central Luzon with PHP24.84 million (26.3% share) (refer to Table 3.1). High value crops account for 39 percent (PHP36.82 million) of the total losses, with CALABARZON posting 33 percent (PHP12.29 billion) of the losses. For cereals, the aggregated loss is PHP24.22 million or 25.7 percent of the losses, almost half (48%) of which came from Central Luzon.

**Table 3.1. Direct Losses from Unsold Produce in Luzon, in PHP**

Region	Cereals	Livestock	HVC	Fisheries	Total
NCR	-	40,000	320,000	85,500	445,500
CAR	1,281,550	619,000	5,637,901	25,000	7,563,451
Ilocos Region	1,463,330	804,450	753,975	664,000	3,685,755
Cagayan Valley	2,691,025	1,097,200	2,313,000	245,000	6,346,225
Central Luzon	11,635,076	8,393,270	2,666,665	2,145,500	24,840,511
CALABARZON	2,606,000	8,161,600	12,285,117	3,273,350	26,326,067
MIMAROPA	766,000	10,000	639,250	107,000	1,522,250
Bicol Region	805,700	376,040	613,333	525,002	2,320,075
Western Visayas	808,000	213,000	2,043,000	460,000	3,524,000
Central Visayas	214,000	1,306,000	388,000	56,000	1,964,000
Eastern Visayas	108,000	306,000	202,000	4,000	620,000
Zamboanga Peninsula	977,000	2,003,000	2,301,000	600,000	5,881,000
Northern Mindanao	473,000	482,000	1,312,000	290,000	2,557,000
Davao Region	88,000	86,000	434,000	300,000	908,000
SOCCSKSARGEN	20,000	127,000	1,376,000	-	1,523,000
BARMM	10,000	300,000	1,242,000	-	1,552,000
Caraga	274,000	158,000	2,293,000	-	2,725,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,220,681</b>	<b>24,482,560</b>	<b>36,820,241</b>	<b>8,780,352</b>	<b>94,303,834</b>

## Industry

The total foregone revenue in manufacturing, mining and quarrying, and construction are PHP486.97 billion, PHP12.81 billion, and PHP37.93 billion, respectively (refer to Table 3.2).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The 2017 Annual Survey of Philippine and Business Industry gives the value of output (i.e., production) by sector. Foregone revenue were derived by estimating the output per day multiplied by the number of days of work interruption (45 days for Luzon regions and average number of days of ECQ in the provinces of Visayas and Mindanao regions). From the Distribution of Establishments and Employment by Province, employment data was used to disaggregate the losses in manufacturing, mining and quarrying, and construction subsectors by region (loss multiplied by regional share to total employment).

For manufacturing, it is assumed that there is no work interruption in the food subsector. CALABARZON comprised almost half (49.4%) of the losses at PHP240.39 billion. On the other hand, Western Visayas had the highest losses in mining and quarrying with PHP2.26 billion or 17.6 percent share, while NCR had the highest losses in construction with PHP24.38 billion or 64.3 percent share.

**Table 3.2. Foregone Revenue of Manufacturing, Mining and Quarrying, and Construction, in PHP**

Region	Manufacturing	Mining and Quarrying	Construction
NCR	108,019,891,919	2,014,652,268	24,375,460,872
CAR	3,481,184,315	2,097,050,795	414,838,142
Ilocos Region	6,210,819,437	87,392,497	726,064,176
Cagayan Valley	8,129,370,121	791,897,703	130,223,632
Central Luzon	65,723,316,862	500,192,153	2,471,757,770
CALABARZON	240,390,788,945	447,590,912	3,641,932,108
MIMAROPA	3,422,397,678	824,482,455	330,333,593
Bicol Region	3,538,861,436	354,342,268	412,663,857
Western Visayas	4,869,349,114	2,258,583,184	678,975,596
Central Visayas	22,608,821,152	742,755,912	1,750,900,421
Eastern Visayas	4,989,761,786	53,894,173	532,416,095
Zamboanga Peninsula	1,450,001,292	31,625,252.67	329,914,696
Northern Mindanao	3,366,914,015	35,556,197.54	841,659,047
Davao Region	5,064,337,416	544,106,325.42	522,512,579
SOCCKSARGEN	3,125,385,722	114,831,691.56	361,843,017
BARMM	313,681,680	13,239,966.19	10,258,276
Caraga	2,269,313,530	1,901,876,427.25	400,422,352
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>486,974,196,421</b>	<b>12,814,070,181</b>	<b>37,932,176,228</b>

## Services

### Retail trade

Based on the firms' outlook in the business survey for industry and services, 79.7 percent of the respondents projected zero sales in April 2020. The estimated foregone revenue in trade amounts to PHP86.29 billion (refer to Table 3.3). The biggest proportion is accounted for by NCR (35.9% or PHP30.95 billion), followed by CALABARZON (13.9% or PHP 12.03 billion) and Central Luzon (11.4% or PHP9.81 billion).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Similar to industry, foregone revenue from retail trade was derived by estimating the output per day multiplied by the number of days of work interruption (45 days for Luzon regions and average number of days of ECQ in the provinces of Visayas and Mindanao regions). Employment data was used to disaggregate the losses in each retail subsector by region (loss multiplied by regional share to total employment).

**Table 3.3. Foregone Revenue of Motor Vehicles, Personal Household Goods, Wholesale and Retail Trade, in PHP**

Region	Foregone Revenue
NCR	30,953,367,553
CAR	1,147,406,353
Ilocos Region	3,929,624,376
Cagayan Valley	2,473,169,274
Central Luzon	9,810,263,435
CALABARZON	12,030,121,484
MIMAROPA	1,772,585,988
Bicol Region	3,364,652,263
Western Visayas	4,176,804,230
Central Visayas	3,410,382,429
Eastern Visayas	1,915,796,440
Zamboanga Peninsula	1,821,095,324
Northern Mindanao	2,365,203,716
Davao Region	2,901,002,767
SOCCSKSARGEN	2,746,471,751
BARMM	552,516,849
Caraga	921,173,929
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86,291,638,162</b>

### Transportation

The ECQ had a major impact on the transportation sector as all passenger land and sea transport services were suspended during the period. International and local flights were also cancelled but on a staggered basis. The losses in the sector, however, could not be estimated yet.

### Tourism

Foregone revenue was computed using estimated daily tourist arrivals from the 2018 annual tourist arrivals multiplied by 2017 daily tourist expenditure, multiplied by days of interrupted service, which is 60 days. The 60-day interruption is based on the assumption that a modified community quarantine will be implemented after April 30, and people are still hesitant to travel. Total losses estimated amount to PHP60.25 billion, 15.2 percent (PHP9.14 billion) of which is from Central Visayas, 14.3 percent (PHP8.59 billion) from CALABARZON, and 11.4 percent (PHP6.9 billion) from Bicol (*refer to Table 3.4*).

**Table 3.4. Foregone Revenue of Tourism, in PHP**

Region	Estimated Annual Tourist Arrivals, 2018	Estimated Daily Tourist Arrivals, 2018	Estimated Daily Tourist Expenditure, 2017	Days of interrupted service	Foregone Revenue
NCR	626,168	1,716	6,862	60	706,320,592
CAR	2,185,877	5,989	6,862	60	2,465,680,036
Ilocos Region	2,447,401	6,705	6,862	60	2,760,680,397
Cagayan Valley	1,174,721	3,218	6,862	60	1,325,091,081
Central Luzon	4,486,364	12,291	6,862	60	5,060,640,716
CALABARZON	7,619,074	20,874	6,862	60	8,594,353,046
MIMAROPA	2,490,597	6,824	6,862	60	2,809,405,698
Bicol Region	6,117,600	16,761	6,862	60	6,900,682,969
Western Visayas	4,995,898	13,687	6,862	60	5,635,397,581
Central Visayas	8,099,346	22,190	6,862	60	9,136,102,230
Eastern Visayas	1,777,656	4,870	6,862	60	2,005,204,735
Zamboanga Peninsula	1,129,182	3,094	6,862	60	1,273,722,865
Northern Mindanao	3,103,024	8,501	6,862	60	3,500,226,375
Davao Region	3,975,519	10,892	6,862	60	4,484,405,037
SOCCSKSARGEN	1,700,733	4,660	6,862	60	1,918,435,211
Caraga	1,484,417	4,067	6,862	60	1,674,429,696
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,413,577</b>	<b>146,339</b>			<b>60,250,778,265</b>

### Private Education

The revenues (i.e., tuition and additional fees) for the current COVID-affected school year are assumed to have already been collected at the start or during the middle of the school year (SY). For this variable, it is assumed that the impact of private school revenue loss will be reflected on the latter part of 2020. Below are two different scenarios from the 2019 Department of Education data:

- Scenario 1: If school opening for SY 2020-2021 is pushed to August, total losses is PHP55,150,473,886.
- Scenario 2: If school year SY 2020-2021 does not open in August, an entire semester lost, total losses is PHP142,124,571,539

With a high degree of caution and a very positive post-COVID outlook, we look at Scenario 1 as the event which will most likely occur in the next few months.

The data on private school revenue losses are not disaggregated by region, thereby limiting the results at the national scale. In the interest of generating results, data are reflected under NCR (*refer to Table 3.5*).

*Table 3.5. Foregone Revenue of Private Schools, in PHP*

Region	Foregone Revenue
NCR	55,150,473,886.00
CAR	-
Ilocos Region	-
Cagayan Valley	-
Central Luzon	-
CALABARZON	-
MIMAROPA	-
Bicol Region	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55,150,473,886.00</b>

## Other losses

### Banking Sector

Information was obtained from the country's top 10 banks which, as of end February 2020, accounted for roughly 76 percent of the banking system's assets and loan portfolio, and thus roughly represent the Philippine banking system. The estimated amount of incremental non-performing loans (NPL) resulting from the pandemic and related measures undertaken to combat the spread of the virus, as reported by 9 out of the top 10 banks, is PHP368 billion or 4.9 percent of the banks' collective loan balances as of March 31. The estimated incremental NPL is more than double the current level of NPL at 2.1 percent. Of this amount, PHP56.4 billion or 15.3 percent is estimated to be written off. The largest default is expected to come from loans to private corporations, both resident and non-resident counterparties. The anticipated losses, understandably, are expected to increase the longer the economic inactivity or slowdown. As it stands and over a reasonable time period, the banking sector is well-positioned to be able to absorb this loss.

The estimated loss for the banking sector is reflected under NCR given that data are not disaggregated by region.

The loss resulting from the ECQ (excluding losses in the transport sector) is estimated at roughly PHP1.1 trillion, representing 5.6 percent of the GDP. Just to reiterate that the estimate assumes only a 45-day lockdown period in Luzon; for Visayas and Mindanao, the number of days of ECQ varies per province. Moreover, the losses in the transport sector have not been included.

The breakdown of the estimated losses by region and sector is given in *Table 3.6*.

**Table 3.6. Initial Estimated Impact of ECQ on 2020 GDP/GRDP, by Region**

Regions	Losses in Agriculture (in PHP million)	Losses in Industry (in PHP billion)	Losses in Services (in PHP billion)	Total Losses (in PHP billion)	% of GDP/ GRDP*
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>94.30</b>	<b>537.72</b>	<b>589.72</b>	<b>1,107.54</b>	<b>5.56</b>
NCR	0.45	134.41	454.84	589.25	7.89
CAR	7.56	5.99	3.61	9.61	2.76
Ilocos Region	3.69	7.02	6.69	13.72	2.19
Cagayan Valley	6.35	9.05	3.80	12.86	3.71
Central Luzon	24.84	68.70	14.87	83.59	4.51
CALABARZON	26.33	244.48	20.62	265.13	9.02
MIMAROPA	1.52	4.58	4.58	9.16	2.92
Bicol Region	2.32	4.31	10.27	14.57	3.41
Western Visayas	3.52	7.81	9.81	17.62	2.09
Central Visayas	1.96	25.10	12.55	37.65	2.85
Eastern Visayas	0.62	5.58	3.92	9.50	2.34
Zamboanga Peninsula	5.88	1.81	3.09	4.91	1.26
Northern Mindanao	2.56	4.24	5.87	10.11	1.28
Davao Region	0.91	6.13	7.39	13.52	1.45
SOCCSKSARGEN	1.52	3.60	4.66	8.27	1.53
BARMM	1.55	0.34	0.55	0.89	0.61
Caraga	2.73	4.57	2.60	7.17	3.23

Source: NEDA-Regional Development Staff estimates.

\*2020 GRDP estimates were generated based on the regional growth targets on the 2017-2022 Philippine Development Plan.

## Programs/interventions to mitigate losses

During the ECQ, some families had to depend on the assistance provided by the national government and LGUs just to cope. Many had zero sales, but maintained their payroll. To cope, others had to resort to borrowing or to suing up their savings. The losses experienced will need to be mitigated to accelerate the resumption of economic activities.

## Emergency measures implemented during the ECQ

The national government, in coordination with LGUs and other stakeholders, have implemented various policies and assistance programs to reduce the adverse impact of COVID-19 and ECQ, particularly in terms of income and employment. Anchored on the emergency measures provided under the *Bayanihan* to Heal As One Act (Republic Act 11469), the national government has implemented social protection programs, projects, and services catering to the individuals affected, mostly from the vulnerable sectors. These include the following:

## Emergency assistance programs

**Cash assistance.** This is provided by various agencies to 4Ps beneficiaries, informal economy workers, drivers of public utility vehicles, farmers, fisherfolk, and affected workers for daily basic needs. Programs being implemented include Social Amelioration Program or SAP by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Rice Farmers Financial Assistance Program by the Department of Agriculture (DA), and COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program or CAMP by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). A new tranche of cash assistance is recommended only if the ECQ is not lifted and can consider geographical and self-targeting mechanisms.

**In-kind assistance.** Transportation, food, and accommodation are being provided by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. The DA is also distributing agricultural products to LGUs to help augment relief goods.

**Wage subsidy for small businesses.** The Department of Finance (DOF) is implementing the Small Business Wage Subsidy Program to help workers belonging to the low- to medium-middle class affected by the ECQ. Under this program, eligible employees in small businesses will receive a wage subsidy ranging from PHP5,000 to PHP8,000.

**Grants/loan assistance.** Loans and grants are being extended to affected agri-entrepreneurs, and individual farmers and fisherfolk to help their income loss and ensure the continuity of agricultural activities. The programs include the Expanded Survival and Recovery Assistance Program for Rice Farmers or SURE Aid Program (DA) and the Livelihood Seeding Program *Negosyo Serbisyo sa Barangay* Program (Department of Trade and Industry or DTI).

**Emergency employment program.** The DOLE is implementing the *Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD)-Barangay Ko, Bahay Ko* Project. This is an emergency work program that employs displaced workers for disinfection/sanitation in the vicinity of barangays for a wage equivalent to 100 percent of the prevailing highest minimum wage in the region.

**Emergency/calamity loan assistance.** The Social Security System (SSS) is also set to offer calamity loans of up to PHP20,000 (or equivalent to one month salary) to its affected members under the ECQ starting April 24. An amount of PHP20.4 billion was already allotted for the said loan facility, which will cater to SSS members who lost their jobs and/or other sources of income while under the ECQ. Qualified borrowers will have to pay the loan in 27 months, inclusive of a 3-month moratorium period, at 10 percent interest per annum computed on a diminishing principal balance. In addition, the SSS will also waive its 1 percent service fee and is planning to temporarily hold payments of housing and pension loans by its members.

## Suggested interventions/programs after lifting of the ECQ

Recommended programs and activities to be implemented after lifting of the ECQ aim to halt the persistence of losses and adverse impact experienced by the different sectors affected. These programs and activities are based on the identified needs and concerns gathered from the surveys conducted, taking into account how these are already being addressed by the ongoing initiatives and what additional measures should be in place to fill in the gaps.

Most of these programs can be implemented by the national government agencies. Similar programs may be implemented by the LGUs, for which the concerned national government agencies need to minimize, if not avoid, duplication of target beneficiaries.

## Social protection

### Provide social protection programs.

- *Re-operationalize the Supplemental Feeding Program (SFP) in Day Care Centers through provision of nutritious food packs.* To continuously improve the nutritional status of day care students, food supplementation through the SFP can be reintroduced. Instead of hot meals, day care students can be provided with nutritious food packs which may include vegetable noodles (malunggay/squash/carrots), rice, nutribun, among others. Said food packs will then be distributed by the DSWD, in close coordination with the day care centers in the barangays.
- *Continue cash-for-work programs* to provide temporary employment and income to severely affected workers due to COVID-19 (even after the ECQ is lifted).

The government should also consider providing conditional wage subsidy programs to sectors that will remain affected post-ECQ.

**Implement measures to improve access of vulnerable individuals and protect them from COVID-19.** There is a need for the government to adopt clear policy guidelines to ensure that high-risk individuals, i.e., older persons and those with serious underlying medical conditions, are protected and have access to necessities such as food and medicine while the risk of COVID-19 is still high. At the same time, there should be measures to help reduce possible exposure of these vulnerable individuals to the virus.

Whenever possible, younger members of households should be the ones to go out to purchase supplies, including needed medicines. For families without younger members, the following measures will be carried out:

- *Implement a “Pabili System”.* LGUs should use the Office of Senior Citizen Affairs registries in identifying households with older persons, and if possible, deliver their needed supplies, including food and medicine. Households with senior citizens and high-risk individuals should also be encouraged to contact their respective barangay officials to be registered for the assistance.
- *Implement special hours for the vulnerable.* Given that many LGUs have very limited resources and some households are only composed of senior citizens/older persons/high-risk individuals, they may be allowed to go and purchase their needs. To avoid exposures, the first two hours of operation of groceries and pharmacies must be dedicated to these individuals.

## Education

**Promote digital and alternative learning.** To avoid the further disruption of schooling, there is a need to improve the readiness of educational institutions (both public and private) and students in shifting to digital and alternative mechanisms. To this end, the following are the proposed measures:

- *Provide special reduced internet rates for students and faculty.* Request telecommunications companies to offer special reduced rates for internet services for students and faculty at least for the next six months to one year. This is to ensure their access to various online education platforms created by educational institutions as a response to ECQ and COVID-19.
- *Provide loans and subsidies for gadgets.* Loans and subsidies for students and faculty in the acquisition of computers, laptops, and other gadgets needed for online and blended education should be provided consistent with the provisions the Open Distance Learning Act (RA 10650).



## Food production and supply chain

**Link farmers to supply the government’s feeding programs and relief operations.** Support services should be provided to farmers to facilitate the marketing and transportation of their produce from the farm to the national and LGUs conducting feeding programs and relief operations. Fresh or processed food products can be supplied by farmers to school children or individuals and families affected by any disaster.

**Promote urban agriculture and community gardening.** This is to encourage urban households and communities to produce fresh and healthy food from their own backyards and spaces, and contribute to ensuring food security. The DA, in partnership with the LGUs, should intensify promotion of urban agriculture through the establishment of community gardens in barangays with vacant areas where they can plant, propagate, and produce their own vegetable requirements. The community gardens may also serve not only as source of food and livelihood, but also as additional income for those who will sell their surplus.

**Continue the strict enforcement of the government’s policy measures to ensure continuity of agriculture/food production and supply chain.** The current policies on ensuring unrestricted movement of agricultural and fishery products, including farm machineries and workers and addressing overpricing should continue to be strictly enforced. This covers simplified procedures for accreditation of “foodlanes” truckers/suppliers, listed of allowed food supplies, and exemption of all farming and fishery activities from planting to trading.

**Conduct frequent monitoring of the price of food and other essential commodities,** consistent with the Price Act. This should be done, especially in areas under ECQ.

**Utilize the Supply Chain Regulatory Impact Assessments and Supply Chain Analysis Dashboard** to monitor and address supply bottlenecks across the country. This should be coupled with close coordination among the implementing authorities, LGUs, and the private sector to avoid supply gaps and spoilage of highly-perishable goods such as fish, meat, fruits, and vegetables.

## Access to finance

**Provide access to business financing and financial services.** Grants or soft loans should continue to be extended to farmers, fisherfolk, and MSMEs to restore and sustain livelihood activities and businesses. Given that most of the losses are in terms of forgone incomes, a guarantee fund may be more adequate. The fund must be able to guarantee loans amounting to about PHP800 billion.

For MSMEs, there are currently 19 programs from which firms can choose from. Under the DTI, these are: (1) Livelihood Seeding Program - *Negosyo sa Barangay*; (2) Shared Service Facilities Project/Fabrication laboratories; (3) *Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso* Program; (4) Small business corporation financing programs; (5) *Go Lokal!*; (6) *Kapatid Mentor ME* Program; (7) SME Roving Academy; and (8) Regional Interactive Platform for Philippine Exporters. Under Land Bank of the Philippines, these are: (9) OFW Reintegration Program; (10) Go Green Inclusive Financing Program; (11) Farm Tourism Financing Program; and (12) Calamity Rehabilitation Support. The Development Bank of the Philippines, SSS, DSWD, DOLE, and DOST have one program each, namely, (13) the Small Business *Puhunan* Program; (14) Business Development Loan Facility and (15) Sustainable Livelihood Program; (16) Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program; and (17) Integrated Livelihood Program or *Kabuhayan*, respectively. Meanwhile, DA is running two programs: (18) Survival and Recovery Loan Assistance; and (19) Working Capital Loan Easy Access.

**Continue to provide zero interest, no collateral, and longer-term credit programs for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (AFF)-based enterprises and farmers/fisherfolk.** Affected AFF-based enterprises, farmer cooperatives and associations, and farmers and fisherfolk can be assisted through zero interest and longer-term payment credit with minimal documentary requirements. For instance, the expanded SURE Aid Recovery Project may be continued to ensure that eligible AFF-based MSMEs and individual farmers and fisherfolk can still access the loan even after ECQ.

**Provision of additional support programs for businesses and MSMEs,** specifically: (a) payment deferment to government (e.g., deferment of tax remittance such as withholding tax, VAT, SSS, PhilHealth); (b) payment deferment to debtors (e.g., banks, utility companies); (c) tax discounts or tax credits; (d) low interest loans from government; and (e) lower interest loans from bank.

There are other monetary policy instruments that can address the financing requirements of households and businesses. These policies give special attention to access to formal financing channels by retail clients, including micro-business owners and low-income households, who would be deeply affected by the community quarantine arrangements. These include policies that will increase the single borrower's limit; relax the requirement for customers to present valid identification cards for financial transactions, including electronic or online customer onboarding transactions, subject to certain conditions to facilitate distribution of government subsidies; and allow the grant of financial assistance, in the form of loans, advances, or other credit accommodations. Furthermore, the Monetary Board recently approved the reduction in risk weights of loans granted to MSMEs to free up capital in the balance sheets of banks and enable them to lend more to the MSMEs. In particular, the credit risk weight of loans granted to MSMEs that are in current status was reduced to 50 percent from 75 percent and 100 percent.

The *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* will also assign a zero-risk weight to loan exposures guaranteed by the Philguarantee to capacitate banks to increase their exposures to MSMEs. To further incentivize banks/quasi-banks to lend to MSMEs, the Monetary Board allowed the use of new loans granted to the said businesses as a form of compliance with the reserve requirements. This is envisioned to directly influence and increase appetite in lending to this sector.

# Part IV

## Defining the new normal and ways forward

In the days and months after the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) is lifted, the COVID-19 threat will likely remain. We will need to find ways to resume social and economic activities while sustaining efforts to limit the spread of the virus. In this regard, it is essential to characterize the new normal and identify the appropriate government interventions and policies that will facilitate transition into the new normal.

In defining the new normal, the Inter-Agency Technical Working Group (TWG) for Anticipatory and Forward Planning (AFP) consulted various government agencies and private organizations and undertook an online public consultation, which ran from April 4-7 and participated in by 5,583 respondents. The online survey, composed of open-ended questions, was designed to find out how stakeholders characterize the new normal and how they perceive challenges that it will entail. Results of the consultation indicate that the desired new normal is one that is more resilient and better prepared for emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants also provided inputs for the possible realignment of existing policies, programs, and projects, including possible legislative actions needed to help society adjust to the new normal.

World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in his opening remarks at a media briefing on April 13, outlined six criteria that need to be met before restrictions could be lifted:

1. Transmission is controlled;
2. Health system capacities are in place to detect, test, isolate, and treat every case and trace every contact;
3. Outbreak risks are minimized in special settings like health facilities and nursing homes;
4. Preventive measures are in place in workplaces, schools, and other places where it's essential for people to go;
5. Importation risks can be managed; and
6. **Communities are fully educated, engaged, and empowered to adjust to the “new norm.”**

In fact, even when restrictions have been lifted, “every country should be implementing a comprehensive set of measures to slow down transmission and save lives, with the aim of reaching a steady state of low-level or no transmission.” Such is the goal of the transition to the new normal.

## Characterizing the new normal

### General context

In general, the new normal will be characterized by the need to observe social distance and strict personal hygiene and other sanitation protocols. There may still be sporadic lockdowns, though over a smaller geographic unit. At the same time, the COVID-19 threat looms large in the minds of individuals – consumers and business alike.

This general context has far-reaching implications across the different dimensions: political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental.

## Political

The new normal is characterized by volatility and uncertainty. Thus, increased attention towards managing multi-dimensional risks arising from public health emergencies like COVID-19 is required. These risks are expected to increase in the coming months when the country becomes most vulnerable to natural hazards such as typhoons, flooding, and drought, among others.

As frontliners in their respective jurisdictions, the local government units (LGUs) are expected to take on a greater role in the COVID-19 pandemic. LGUs bear the responsibility of delivering public services, including nationally funded programs for health and social safety nets, enforcing the community quarantine directives, and maintaining the uninterrupted flow of essential personnel, goods, and services in their localities. Also, recent experience shows that LGUs have different types and amount of resources, institutional capacity, readiness, and leadership capabilities,<sup>15</sup> among others. It is likely that because of these, some have taken control measures to the extreme, even being more restrictive than the national government. This posturing may continue unless LGUs are assured that help from the national government will come promptly.

While it has been said that no one is spared from COVID-19, case fatality rate differs across sectors. At the same time, the imposition of the ECQ has affected families and businesses in different ways. For certain measures, there is a need for targeted delivery. National and local governments have come to realize the importance of having a registry containing information on residence, demographic characteristics, occupation, if in need of special attention, etc. There will then be increased demand for the acceleration of the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) implementation.

For purposes of planning, statistics on the socioeconomic characteristics of the population have to be made available for a barangay or municipality where a targeted lockdown is imposed. There will then be increased demand for a finer breakdown of official data.

## Economic

### Macroeconomy

The global economy is expected to be in recession in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread, significantly slowing down and even halting economic activities in certain areas in various countries. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that the current crisis will result in contraction in global economy with a -3.0 percent growth in 2020, assuming that the pandemic diminishes in the second half of the year and strict containment measures will be subsequently and gradually lifted.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> De La Salle University –Jesse Robredo Institute of Governance. (1 April 2020). "Setting Up a Community Response Strategy for LGUs: Practical Advice for Re-orienting Existing Systems to Deal with COVID-19" Policy Brief Volume 1 Issue 1. Sourced from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58ff0e1fa5790aa37e3fa35a/t/5e8d0d1d06d18f342171426e/1586302239716/JRIG+Policy+Brief+Volume+1+Issue+2.pdf>. 7 April 2020

<sup>16</sup> IMF. (14 April 2020). "World Economic Outlook, April 2020: Chapter 1." Accessed through <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/04/14/weo-april-2020>.

The unprecedented containment efforts taken by governments around the world to stem the spread of the virus are expected to have the most significant immediate economic impact<sup>17</sup> as these hamper both supply and demand.<sup>18</sup> In particular, shutdowns have disrupted supply chains, layoffs have lowered income, and uncertainty has reduced demand.<sup>19</sup>

These global disruptions, together with the travel restrictions imposed at the end of January, deterioration in business and consumer confidence, and the imposition of the ECQ in Luzon, are estimated to reduce domestic economic growth to -3.4 to -2.0 percent in 2020. Reduced revenues and higher spending due to the crisis are expected to raise the budget deficit to at least 5 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 with a gradual consolidation in the medium term.

The deterioration of balance sheets of firms and households may lead to tighter lending standards of banks. At the same time, rising risk aversion of investors may significantly drive out capital, which leads to tighter liquidity, limiting the amount of available cash and funds for investment. Foreign portfolio investments have already registered net outflows from the Philippines in the first two months of 2020, a reversal from net inflows in the same period last year.

Trade is seen to slow down, with traders relying more on online processing of trade documents to facilitate seamless movement of cargo. The World Trade Organization estimates that world merchandise trade would fall between 13 percent and 32 percent in 2020 alone.<sup>20</sup> Exports from North America and Asia are expected to be hardest hit, with trade from sectors with complex value chains, such as electronics and automotive products, expected to decline.

## **Production sectors**

### **Agriculture and Fishery**

The implementation of ECQ has brought to fore the primordial need for food security — that is, food is available, accessible, and affordable to all, and meets the nutritional requirements of all.

Agri-food supply chain disruptions are expected to persist, particularly in the transport and logistics system of inputs, machineries and equipment, and farm produce. Movement of people involved in the transport of such inputs and products, technicians, and extension workers will also be limited. Further, with the regulated operations of wet markets, supermarkets, and retail food establishments, the increased reliance on online/digital transactions for food commodities is expected to continue, even in the post-ECQ scenario.

On the production side, there will be an increased demand for modern agricultural machineries and equipment in lieu of manual labor, given the need to limit movement of people. Innovative technologies on processing and packaging need to keep up with the increased demand for processed food with longer shelf life. This also means that there will be higher demand for raw materials to be used for preserving food, e.g., salt, sugar, vinegar.

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<sup>17</sup> World Bank. (April 2020). "East Asia and Pacific Economic Update April 2020." Accessed through <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eap/publication/east-asia-pacific-economic-update>.

<sup>18</sup> Asian Development Bank. (April 2020). "Asian Development Outlook 2020: What Drives Innovation in Asia?" Accessed through <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/575626/ado2020.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> IMF. (14 April 2020). "World Economic Outlook, April 2020: Chapter 1." Accessed through <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/04/14/weo-april-2020>.

<sup>20</sup> WTO. (8 April 2020). "Trade set to plunge as COVID-19 pandemic upends global economy." Accessed through [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/pres20\\_e/pr855\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres20_e/pr855_e.htm)

The pandemic will also cause a shift in consumer preferences for healthier diets, which will increase demand for safe and nutritious food. Consumers are now more health-conscious and selective of the food they eat, preferring to eat fruits and vegetables to boost their immune system against diseases.

The expected reduction in tourism and dine-in services will result in reduced demand for agricultural food items from these establishments. The most affected commodities are expected to be the income-elastic food, like meat and high-value cash crops. On the other hand, there may be higher demand for agro-industrial products like rubber (for making gloves and personal protective equipment), fiber (for making masks, etc.), and raw materials for soap and disinfectants.

### ***Industry and Services***

The major economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is the temporary suspension of production activities for both goods and services. NEDA's initial estimates show that the economy may register a decline as many businesses have stopped operations and find it difficult to cope with the losses.

As the country navigates through the lingering effects of the pandemic, there is a heightened risk of financial insolvency for firms particularly those that have incurred mounting debt, those with large overhead costs, and those with limited or no insurance coverage against losses. In the near term, there will be increased demand among companies, especially from the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), for economic assistance such as tax breaks, access to credit subsidies, debt relief, and employment subsidy support, among others.

In the manufacturing sector, production of merchandise goods will favor essential goods particularly food, medicine, medical and pharmaceutical products, and other essential goods mostly related to efforts to contain the outbreak. Equally important is for the manufacture of intermediate inputs and raw materials for essential goods to remain unhampered (e.g., plastic and plastic products, rubber products, chemical products, etc.). Construction will have to focus on building quarantine and other health facilities, and rehabilitating existing ones to increase the capacity of the health care system. There may even be increased construction demand in the rural areas, as urban dwellers realize the advantages of less dense areas.

In many service-oriented organizations in the private and public sector, flexible-work arrangements (e.g., work from home) will have to be implemented in accordance with strict social distancing protocols. In many instances, part of the new normal means working and interacting virtually instead of face-to-face. Workspaces (e.g., factories and office spaces) will need to be re-configured to address the need for physical distancing.

Work protocols in the manufacturing sector will also need to be reconfigured to comply with social distancing. This will mean a mix of staggered work hours and greater dispersion of workspaces.

Sit-down eateries may need to shift to take-out menus. And those that anchor their business model on the ambience of their place will need to re-package their service. The same goes for tourism establishments.

Hygiene protocols will be expected in all establishments, such as the presence of disinfection areas and disinfectants within easy access of everyone. Health checks and temperature scanning will remain the norm. These will mean higher cost of doing business in the near term.

E-commerce will play a big role in the new normal scenario as businesses and consumers increase the use of online transactions, including the expanded use of cashless payment system and other financial

technology platforms. This bodes well for the retail and other business activities sectors, including information technology and business process management (IT-BPM).

In the transport sector, reduced load factor accompanied by stringent sanitary protocols in all modes of public transportation will be part of the new normal. Travel restrictions will likely continue for the time being, as demand for tourism and travels, in general, will be relatively low.

## Social

The reconfiguration of many establishments in the industry and services sectors will result in a number of displaced workers, including overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who have been repatriated or are expected to be repatriated in view of the lower global demand. As of April 12, the number of repatriated OFWs due to the pandemic stood at 11,892.

Social activities will remain limited by the need to practice physical distancing. Wearing of masks and bringing of hand sanitizers and alcohol will be the norm. Frequent washing of hands will continue to be promoted.

Mass gatherings will continue to be restricted or discouraged and areas that become easily crowded will be strictly monitored. Church services will have to be conducted online or broadcast through television, as before. The Meetings, Innovations, Convention, and Exhibition sector will bear the brunt of this norm. This will also be the case for most entertainment activities – cinemas, concerts, sports, etc. Note that some of these venues have already been converted into quarantine or treatment facilities.

Schools will likely remain closed, with the reopening date very uncertain. In any case, most students in elementary and high school are still on vacation. When school does reopen, class sizes will have to be dramatically reduced. The education sector will then need to reconfigure its mode of delivery or the curriculum itself so that less time will be spent in the physical classroom. There will also be clamor for more virtual classes.

Some families have been affected worse than others. There have been hundreds who lost their loved ones to COVID-19. Some of the deceased may have been the breadwinners in their families. Some families were not even able to observe usual funeral practices because patients who died are immediately cremated. The anxiety and feeling of uncertainty caused by the pandemic may also increase the demand for mental health care not just among those who lost their loved ones, but also among those who lost their jobs.

Most definitely, there will be increased demand for health services. Even after the COVID-19 is placed under control, health-seeking behavior of Filipinos is expected to improve. This increased demand also implies increased demand for health workers. However, global demand for health workers is also expected to increase, especially over the short term.

For COVID-19 response, the health system's definition covers facilities and/or capabilities to "detect, test, isolate, and treat every case and trace every contact." This pertains to health surveillance protocols, testing kits and facilities, quarantine and isolation facilities, hospital beds, and contact tracing protocols. All these require equipment, supplies and materials, and especially, trained personnel.



## Technology

There will be increased interest in using advances in medical science in the new normal. Just like the development of COVID-19 testing kits by local scientists, there will be greater efforts to find ways to manage pandemic situations (i.e., ways by which mass testing can be facilitated, design and manufacture of medical equipment that can aid in the treatment of patients such as ventilators, among others). Moreover, demand for health-related technologies (i.e., sanitation booths, contact-tracing applications, and other researches related to the treatment or response to the pandemic) will increase.

With companies, schools, and government agencies implementing work from home arrangements, the use of digital technology will increase significantly. In addition, business transactions such as online retail, online banking, online medical consultations, and digital payments, will increasingly become a necessity rather than for convenience. All these need to be supported by a reliable digital infrastructure system with strong cybersecurity protection.

For the production sector, there will be increased demand for automation to complement manual labor in the immediate term. Over the medium term, automated processes may substitute for labor.

## Environment

In the new normal, the interrelationship between public health and the environment will be given greater emphasis and importance. Some researches have found a correlation between exposure to air pollution and COVID-19 mortality.<sup>21</sup> While these findings will probably need to be validated across various settings, it does seem plausible that low air quality would be associated with a high rate of respiratory mortality; other studies show the channel to be via the higher incidence of chronic diseases (the so-called co-morbidities like hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, among others).

Meanwhile, the ECQ has decongested roads, which resulted in relatively better air quality particularly in cities, compared to before ECQ. However, air quality may deteriorate post-ECQ, as social distancing becomes the new normal, since people may opt to use their own vehicles to avoid the inevitable physical contact in public transport such as jeepneys, buses, and trains. Moreover, more jeepneys and buses may need to be deployed to ferry the passengers at reduced factor loading.

As more people will practice handwashing and sanitation in households, workplace, and public places, higher demand for water is inevitable. Another adverse environmental effect is the increase in volume of infectious waste materials (e.g., disposable masks) from households and in the number of health care facilities due to the rising number of COVID-19 patients. Solid wastes from packaging materials will also increase due to the surge in delivery of food and other essential supplies.

On the positive side, there will be greater interest in urban agriculture, given the importance of ensuring steady food supply. The use of idle urban spaces for urban agriculture, backyard/household gardening of edibles, and community farming will increase. Further, localizing the source of produce in urban areas will also help cut down fossil fuel consumption necessary to transport, package, and sell food. Considering the foregoing, the pandemic is expected to spark positive behavioral effects on people, especially on the need to conserve finite natural resources and safeguard the quality of environment and public health.

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<sup>21</sup> See, for example: “*Exposure to air pollution and COVID-19 mortality in the United States*”, Xiao Wu, Rachel C. Nethery, Benjamin M. Sabath, Danielle Braun, Francesca Dominici. medRxiv 2020.04.05.20054502; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.04.05.20054502> ; and “*Assessing nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels as a contributing factor to coronavirus (COVID-19) fatality*,” Yaron Ogen. *Science of the Total Environment* 726(2020) 38605: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138605>.

## Legal

The *Bayanihan* to Heal as One Act is a temporary measure and effective only for three months. Meanwhile, the following laws already exist: the Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Concern Act to address concerns on health, health care workers, and supplies (Republic Act No. 11332); the Price Act (RA 7581 as amended by RA 10623) and the Universally Accessible Cheaper and Quality Medicines Act (RA 9502) on availability of goods and services; the Government Procurement Reform Act (RA 9184) and Government Procurement Policy Board Resolution No. 03-2020 on government procurement during a state of public health emergency; and the Local Government Code (RA 7160) on coordination between national government and LGUs.<sup>22</sup> These will need to be reviewed as to whether they provide sufficient latitude for the President to implement the needed interventions.

The scale and severity of the pandemic has also justified the government's restriction of some of our fundamental freedoms, particularly of movement and of expression. Thus, in crafting and implementing government responses to this public health threat, careful attention must be given in ensuring that our fundamental human rights are continuously upheld.

As the new normal contemplates increased reliance on technology in people's everyday lives, it begs the question: "How much of our privacy are we willing to give up in the interest of public health?" The situation necessitates striking a balance between data privacy and public health. Furthermore, with the more widespread use of big data analytics, we will likewise see the rise of data security and data discrimination concerns.<sup>23</sup> The Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) needs to be assessed if it is enough to address these valid concerns. Equally important is an assessment on the government's ability to protect the people, businesses, and the government itself against cyber-attack and cybercrime.

The legal implications arising from the pandemic also include the treatment of supply contracts affected by supply chain disruption; insurance coverage of epidemic-related damage to business and property; and employment arrangements.

In addition, laws on stockpiling of critical materials, which include medicines and devices for life-saving care, will have to be revisited.

## Transition to the new normal and ways forward

The new normal, as described above, will also affect the public sector, including macroeconomic and fiscal indicators. It is then important to identify the crucial policies and strategies to address the new set of challenges and facilitate the transition to the new normal.

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<sup>22</sup> University of the Philippines. (2020). *Reflections on the Bayanihan Act or Republic Act No. 11469 ('the Act') with matrix of presentational powers under existing laws to meet emergencies, including the COVID-19 crisis*. Retrieved from: <https://law.upd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Reflections-on-the-Bayanihan-Act-30March2020.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Marr, Bernard. (15 June 2017). "3 massive big data problems everyone should know about." Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2017/06/15/3-massive-big-data-problems-everyone-should-know-about/#4e709eb86186>

## Economic development

### Macroeconomy

#### *Fiscal Sector*

**High deficit in 2020 and 2021.** The projected decline in government revenues amid muted economic activities, together with increased government spending on COVID-19 response and mitigating measures, is expected to put pressure on the country's fiscal position in 2020 and 2021.

#### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Realign expenditure priorities in 2020 and 2021.** National government agencies (NGAs) will have to realign expenditure priorities to facilitate the transition and adjustment to the “new normal.” For 2021, the list of Build Build Build projects can be revisited to give priority to crucial and shovel-ready projects, to provide more space for relevant health-related expenditures and to improve the digital infrastructure.

**Anticipate potential realization of contingent liabilities.** Given the persistence of uncertainty in global and domestic conditions, it is prudent to provide ample allowance for potential realization of contingent liabilities, or the potential loss that may be incurred in the future depending on the outcome of a specific event, in this case, the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Explore all multilateral and market financing options.** The national government will explore various options, including those from multilateral institutions (e.g., World Bank, Asian Development Bank). The Bureau of the Treasury also plans to tap the local market through local bonds issuance and the offshore commercial markets through issuance of dollar-denominated debt papers, “panda” bonds, and “samurai” bonds. Increased risk aversion of investors, however, can lead to an increase in borrowing costs.

**Communicate the recovery plan.** To manage market expectations and ensure stability, the national government needs to carefully and clearly communicate its recovery plan, as well as the temporary nature of the deviation from the medium-term fiscal program.

**Promote co-financing between the national government (NG) and local government units (LGUs) for development programs.** The government needs to explore cost-sharing schemes between the NG and LGUs for response measures that are local in nature but may benefit multiple LGUs (e.g., setting up of local biosafety laboratories, foodbanks, and trading centers). These can facilitate synergy in the implementation of national and local measures.

**Establish digital taxation framework.** With the expected shift of the private sector to online transactions, the government needs to establish a digital taxation framework. There is also a need to invest in digital taxation infrastructure.

#### *Monetary and Financial Sector*

**Tightening in domestic liquidity.** The deterioration of balance sheets of firms and households may lead to tighter lending standards of banks. At the same time, rising risk aversion of investors may cause an elevated outflow of capital, leading to tighter liquidity.

**Possibly higher non-performing loans in the banking sector.** Given the losses during the ECQ, as well as subdued demand even post-ECQ, some businesses may not be able to fulfill their loan obligations. Rising unemployment may likewise lead to defaults in consumer loans.

**Possibility of defaults on coupon payment and deterioration of capital for regulated entities.** Deterioration in the financial positions of bond-issuing firms may lead to defaults on coupon payments and principal. Decline in value of financial assets and real property, on top of operational losses may lead to the deterioration of capital of firms, including banks and insurance companies.

**Increased demand for doing online banking and other financial transactions.** As economic transactions shift to online platforms, the demand for online payment, savings, investment, and other financial services will rise as well.

**Increased demand for insurance products.** A surge in demand for insurance products and claims could be expected with the increase in infections and fatalities caused by the pandemic.

### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Adopt an accommodative monetary stance.** With the balance of inflation risks tilted to the downside, monetary authorities have room to further reduce policy rates and/or reserve requirements.

**Encourage banks to use capital and liquidity buffers.** The government needs to continue to grant regulatory relief measures to banks even after the pandemic. These include using capital and liquidity buffers to provide financial relief to distressed borrowers and providing reasonable time to restore buffers. It should also consider extending the validity of the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* Memorandum No. 2020-008, which allows banks to book allowance for credit losses on a staggered basis for a maximum of five years.

**Conduct stress-testing and improve the liquidity risk management practices of regulated entities.** Stress-testing of financial institutions will help identify those that are vulnerable to possible losses amid the COVID-19 outbreak. It is also important to continually improve liquidity risk management practices of regulated entities, particularly insurance companies, to keep abreast of the liquidity implications of the changing environment.

**Disclose possibility of delay in payments and contracts with cross-default provisions by issuers of corporate bonds.** Measures to increase transparency in the capital markets will help boost investor confidence. This includes the timely disclosure of delayed payments to bond holders and contracts with cross-default provisions.

**Strengthen infrastructure for and regulation of online financial services.** Given the increased demand for online financial services, the relevant infrastructure and regulatory oversight need to be strengthened, including closer monitoring of cybersecurity plans. Transaction costs and limits for electronic fund transfers need to be eased for a longer period. The EGov Pay Facility may be expanded to enable ordinary citizens to securely transact with government online. Government transfers can be facilitated through the use of e-money. The adoption of national quick response (QR) code this year is also expected to enhance interoperability of payment systems.<sup>24</sup>

**Strengthen financial inclusion by leveraging on financial technology.** Mobile banking and payment services of banks and emerging financial technology companies can be utilized to widen the reach of financial services in the country. The implementation of the National ID System can also help lessen

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<sup>24</sup>BSP. (17 October 2019). "The Bangko Sentral pursues adoption of a National QR Code Standard for Payments" Accessed from <http://www.bsp.gov.ph/publications/media.asp?id=5182>

the burden of tedious account opening requirements, allowing for the people's easier access to the financial system.

**Strengthen information and education campaign on insurance policies.** Improved insurance literacy will help protect consumers from loss and uncertainty. The Insurance Commission must closely monitor insurance premiums to guard against unreasonable increases. Passage of the Financial Consumer Protection Bill will provide the regulatory framework to protect the interest of financial consumers and reinforce confidence in financial markets.

### Proposed Legislative Actions

- Enact a law similar to the Special Purpose Vehicle [SPV] Act of 2002 (RA 9182), which grants tax exemptions and fee privileges to SPVs that acquire or invest in non-performing assets of banks.
- Enact a law addressing existing gaps vis-à-vis the “Key Attributes for Effective Resolution Regime” of the Financial Stability Board.<sup>25</sup>
- Revisit the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) to strengthen safeguards to avoid data privacy breaches.
- Revisit the Electronic Commerce Act of 2000 (RA 8792) to make the law more comprehensive in detailing transactions within its purview, specifying the rights of consumers, strengthening the penalties imposed on service providers, and imposing obligations on service provider to ensure that their data processing and money handling are transparent and safeguarded from possible breaches.
- Enact a Financial Consumer Protection Law.

### External Sector

**Overall contraction in global trade.** The pandemic, while largely a health issue, has also significantly disrupted world trade. The World Trade Organization estimated that world merchandise trade would fall between 13 percent and 32 percent in 2020 alone.<sup>26</sup> Exports from North America and Asia are expected to be hardest hit, with the trade from sectors with complex value chains, such as electronics and automotive products, expected to fall steeper.

**Increased volatility of capital flows.** Higher risk aversion against developing countries has led to capital flight in these economies as investors flock to safe havens. Foreign portfolio investments have registered net outflows from the Philippines in the first two months 2020, a reversal from net inflows in the same period last year. Moving forward, massive monetary stimuli, particularly in major advanced economies, could result in sudden capital inflows.

### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Fast-track the implementation of TradeNet.** TradeNet needs to be swiftly implemented to help reduce the cost of engaging in trade and facilitate movement of cargo through online processing and inter-agency certification that ensures the authenticity of digital documents. The system can also be linked to online payment systems to ease payment procedures for trade documents.

**Establish crisis communication management system among exporters, importers, and the government to ensure seamless movement of cargoes.** The initial confusion related to exemptions on movement of cargo during the ECQ highlighted the need for the establishment of a crisis

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<sup>25</sup> Financial Stability Board. (15 October 2014). *Report on Key Attributes of Effective Resolution Regimes for Financial Institutions*. Retrieved from [https://www.fsb.org/wp-content/uploads/r\\_141015.pdf](https://www.fsb.org/wp-content/uploads/r_141015.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> World Trade Organization. (8 April 2020). “Trade set to plunge as COVID-19 pandemic upends global economy.” Accessed through [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/pres20\\_e/pr855\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres20_e/pr855_e.htm)

communication management system that will specify the protocols and procedures in critical or emergency situations. A registry or database of importers and traders needs to be developed for the easy issuance of permits and passes. It will be useful for the national government, LGUs, and the private sector to have an integrated website that tracks real-time information on cargo release, availability of supply, production, and inventory.

**Revive discussions in regional forums on the possibility of developing regional stockpiling of essential goods.** Rather than working in harmful silos, countries will be more effective in crisis response through regional cooperation. This can start with developing regional stockpiling of essential goods. Likewise, formulating and operationalizing a logistics trade flow for the movement of essential items within the ASEAN region to reduce the country's vulnerability to supply constraint may be considered.

**Scale up and diversify products to minimize vulnerability and take advantage of opportunities for shift in business processes and consumer preferences.** While demand is likely to go down for major export products (due to changes in consumer preference in partner countries, reduction in production activities, or constraints in customs operations), the possible shift to or focus on electronic products and equipment provides an opportunity for the country to be part of the value chain for production of robots or installation of Artificial Intelligence in various systems. There is also a window of opportunity for exports of medical equipment, supplies, testing kits, and other medical related articles as the demand for these products is unlikely to go down until a vaccine is found and mass produced.

**Strictly enforce phytosanitary protocols to ensure that regulated and prohibited cargoes will not be able to enter the country.** To ensure that our territory remains safe against trade of wildlife species that may be host to various diseases, there may be a need to issue appropriate administrative orders that would reiterate strict compliance with established rules, and impose higher penalties for any violation. Relevant agencies need to invest in detection equipment and hiring of properly trained quarantine personnel to strengthen their capability to monitor prohibited and regulated articles. These measures will help expedite the processing of sanitary and phytosanitary certificates for faster release of goods at ports.

**Maintain adequate foreign exchange reserves and a market-determined exchange rate.** To cushion the impact of sharp peso movements, monetary authorities will maintain a healthy level of foreign exchange reserves as a buffer; review and adjust macro-prudential measures; and use liquidity enhancing and management tools such as the US dollar repo facility, exporter's dollar and yen rediscounting facilities, and the enhanced Currency Rate Risk Protection Program.

#### Proposed Legislative Actions

- Amendment of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority Act (RA 8748) and other related laws on the establishment of export zones.
- Possible amendment of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (RA 10863) to allow for expeditious process of tariff modification in times of crisis to augment local supply.

## Production sectors

### *Agriculture and Fishery Sector*

The new normal for the agriculture and fishery (A&F) sector calls for a heightened policy focus on food security. More efforts are required to ensure availability, accessibility, and affordability of safe and nutritious food. As it is, the capability of local producers to supply the needs of the market is already



limited by the low productivity of the A&F sector, the inefficient logistics systems, inadequate support services, and low levels of farm mechanization. Restrictions on sub-national, cross-border access, and trade are expected to cause frequent disruptions on agri-food supply chains. These restrictions hamper the movement of inputs, machineries and equipment, farm produce, and the people involved in the transport of such inputs and products, technicians and extension workers, farmworkers, and laborers. On the demand side, the challenges will dwell more on meeting the rising demand for safe and nutritious food caused by the shift in consumer preference for healthier diets.

### Priority Policies and Strategies

Policy actions and strategies for 2020 to 2021 must focus on addressing supply chain disruptions and improving the productivity of the sector to meet the demand of the populace.

**Ensure unhampered movement of A&F goods and services through efficient transport and logistics systems.** This would involve the construction of better road and transport infrastructure, as well as sufficient and strategically located facilities such as wholesale food terminals and trading centers, warehouses, cold storage and refrigeration facilities, mobile storage, mobile marketplaces, rolling stores, and foodbanks. To establish such facilities, various modalities will be adopted (e.g., government-led, public-private partnership [PPP], joint ventures, etc.) involving national government agencies, LGUs, and the private sector, consistent with the whole-of-society approach.

**Intensify provision of support services and farm machineries and equipment.** The government will have to increase its subsidy, assistance, and support services for farmers, fisherfolk, and enterprises in the form of inputs, credit and insurance, and capacity building. More farm machineries and equipment will need to be provided in lieu of manual labor, given the need to limit movement of people and sustained practice of social distancing even after the lifting of the enhanced community quarantine. Machine pooling and custom hiring will be encouraged to meet the increased demand for mechanized farm operations.

**Strengthen online marketing of agricultural produce.** Supermarkets and retail food establishments will have to be encouraged to establish online or digital channels for transactions and delivery services. In areas where food and groceries delivery are not available, an online service delivery system, where buyers send a list of items to buy to a *pabili* service provider, may be explored as an option. In parallel to this, a registry system of online sellers or deliveries may be established to monitor and regulate the movement of people engaged in such transactions. Investments in ICT infrastructure will also have to be boosted to meet the surge of online transactions and the consumers' expectations for reliable digital connectivity.

**Ensure safety of food and agricultural products supplied in the market.** Changes in consumer preferences such as the increased demand for safe and nutritious food would require strict enforcement of food safety laws, regulations, standards, and sanitation protocols. The DA, in coordination with LGUs, will take the lead in ensuring the regular sanitation of wet markets, slaughterhouses, dressing plants, warehouses, trading centers, fish ports or fish landing centers, and other related establishments. In support of such interventions, the processes of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on certification and roll out of developed technologies and products will be streamlined. Also, information, education, and communication (IEC) campaigns on food safety measures and healthy dietary habits must be intensified.

**Intensify research and development (R&D) for agriculture.** The government needs to intensify support for public research institutions and state universities and colleges on R&D programs that will make safe, nutritious, medicinal or therapeutic, and well-packaged agri-food products commercially



viable. DA, DOST, and DTI can explore partnerships and joint projects for the development of agri-food processed products with improved nutritional content and longer shelf life.

**Promote adoption of urban agriculture, backyard/household gardening of edibles, and community farming.** Vacant urban spaces can be utilized for gardening/farming. Households may be encouraged to establish backyard ‘edible’ gardens. Community farming may be promoted especially in schools. Inter-agency collaboration and streamlined processes will be needed for more efficient assistance to investors pursuing urban agriculture, particularly those utilizing hydroponics and aeroponics.

#### Proposed Legislative Actions

- Address regulatory issues to enable the national and local governments to purchase produce from local farmers or producers for relief and school feeding programs.
- Establish a legal framework to govern a consolidated management of land for agricultural purposes.
- Impose a progressive idle land tax to ensure that lands are put to use, even if temporary, but without prejudice to rights of owners to security of tenure.

#### *Industry*

Under the new normal scenario, the challenge for the manufacturing sector is redirecting production to increase supply of essential goods and intermediate inputs. This would include, for example, (a) wearing apparel for medical gowns and masks; (b) chemical products for drugs and medicines, disinfectants like alcohol, soaps, cleaning agents, as well as fertilizers; (c) metal fabrication and wood products for hospital beds, construction materials for quarantine facilities, and canning for food production; and (d) paper, rubber, and plastic products for gloves, medical paraphernalia, packaging for food, and materials for temporary quarantine or isolation facilities. There will also be an increasing need for non-essential but complementary goods such as electrical machinery (wires and wirings, batteries, and lighting fixtures) for health-related facilities and other equipment. Non-electrical machinery will also be needed to support farm mechanization.

In the power and energy sector, part of the challenge under the new normal will be the delays in the ongoing infrastructure projects due to restricted movement of people and availability of imported parts and equipment. While current power infrastructure projects are additions to future energy capacity and hence, will have limited impact on current energy supply, possible power interruption may happen if maintenance work and rehabilitation are also affected. The Department of Energy (DOE) needs to ensure the steady and continuous supply of power. Uninterrupted power supply is necessary to ensure continuous production of essential goods and efficient operation of hospitals, laboratories, and other medical facilities. Meanwhile, the current trend of declining petroleum prices is a positive development at this time as cost of energy production is low.

Construction and rehabilitation of health-related facilities such as hospitals, testing laboratories, and quarantine facilities in LGUs will also pose a challenge. Moving forward, the new normal will prompt the redesign of public construction projects like school buildings, public markets, office buildings, and socialized housing projects.

#### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Establish a registry of firms** that are or will be engaged in the manufacture of essential goods.

**Adopt and implement, in coordination with industry groups, guidelines for businesses that will be allowed to operate,** taking into consideration the DOH’s minimum public health standards for COVID-19 mitigation.

**Include activities in the Investment Priorities Plan that are critical for the supply of essential goods and construction and rehabilitation of health facilities, and explore the possible granting of incentives** such as tax breaks, as necessary.

**Consider the temporary suspension of the export percentage requirements of export processing zones locators** to allow export-oriented firms to sell “strategic” products to the domestic market to augment local demand.

**Conduct an inventory, for possible scale-up, of the existing DOST-approved manufacturing technologies for prolonging food shelf-life.** These include ongoing applied science researches on possible alternative materials for personal protective equipment (PPEs). Shared service facilities and Regional Inclusive Innovation Centers may also be utilized by MSME manufacturers.

**Adopt digital technologies in the construction sector, particularly modular designs and structural specifications** that can be replicated across the country.

**Provide incentives to construction companies** that will prioritize building isolation or temporary hospitals for suspected and probable cases of COVID-19. Tax breaks may be provided to compliant companies.

**Allow movement of essential “energy personnel”** to facilitate the maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and the resumption of any interrupted construction, installation, or commissioning of infrastructure relative to the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity; as necessary, following strict social distancing protocols.

**Strictly enforce existing policies on the processing of permits** relative to the development of energy projects (e.g., Executive Order [EO] No. 30, Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop Act) to minimize and mitigate further delays in the completion of said activities.

**Encourage the importation of petroleum products** to ensure ample supply, against the backdrop of declining world oil prices.

#### Proposed Legislative Actions

- Amend the General Policies of the Investment Priorities Plan to support registered projects (Article 1174 of the Civil Code of the Philippines) to include activities critical for the supply of essential goods, construction, and/or rehabilitation of health-related facilities.
- Amend the Foreign Investments Act (RA 7042) to attract investments in manufacturing of essential goods.

#### *Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)*

MSMEs, which comprise the majority of businesses operating in the country, are also among the most affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Cash flow constraints resulting in increased debt, difficulty in covering overhead cost, as well as supply chain interruptions are the major problems experienced by MSMEs.

Under the new normal environment, there will be an increasing need for MSMEs to undertake business continuity planning and capacity building (e.g., digital skills, digitalizing operations, knowledge transfer and information sharing, and mentoring) to strengthen resiliency to disruptions.

#### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Encourage banks to provide financial relief** to companies affected by national emergencies by relaxing certain requirements and suspending the imposition of non-interest fees and charges on loans they incurred to help reestablish cash flow.

**Encourage debt relief programs** for MSME borrowers and partner financial institutions.

**Develop mechanisms for real estate lessors and financial institutions** to extend grace periods on payment commitments of MSMEs.

**Build MSMEs' resilience through capacity building** on formulating and implementing business continuity plans.

#### Services

As the main growth driver of the Philippine economy and backbone of domestic and global industries in the country, the services sector will continue to take a big hit from the COVID-19 pandemic. From the travel bans imposed by countries to arrest the spread of the virus and the subsequent slowdown of the global economy, to the imposition of the ECQ across Luzon to restrict movement of people, goods, and services, these occurrences brought the country's economic activity almost to a halt. Coming out of this pandemic requires establishment of new protocols and better programs for the country to adapt to the "new normal" way of life.

#### Retail and e-commerce: Delivering alternative modes for retail transactions, stable supply of basic necessities, and prime commodities

With continuing policies and measures for physical distancing and the call to "stay at home," the increased preference for online transactions for both consumers and merchants will be a challenge. More supermarkets and restaurants will now engage in online shopping platforms or integrate delivery services into their operations. Further, an increase in demand for alternative modes to facilitate shopping through personal assistance such as *pabili*, *pasa-BUY*, or *MyKuya* services will be seen. On the supply of goods, there should be assurance of stable access to basic necessities and prime commodities to avoid panic-buying among the general public.

#### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Hasten growth of e-commerce (internet transactions) by focusing on speed, security, and structure** to increase sales. Establish necessary policies, advocacy, awareness campaigns, payment system, and infrastructure to support its growth.

**Develop protocols in the transport and sale of agricultural products to satellite markets** in communities (e.g., *pamilihan pangbarangay o talipapa*) to avoid congestion in public markets.

**Promote collaboration of retail and restaurant owners with delivery service providers** to help establishment owners who cannot afford to integrate delivery services in their operations, and support entry of new players in the delivery services sector.

**Promote and regulate alternative modes to facilitate shopping through personal assistance services.** This will be done by DTI and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board. Protection of both buyers and those delivering the service must be ensured.

**Ensure collaboration between relevant implementing agencies and LGUs to organize and promptly dispatch or mobilize “rolling stores”** that sell basic necessities and prime commodities. Though this, LGUs can set up public markets within strategic cluster areas to disperse consumer traffic. Post-pandemic, this new type of store can be turned over and operated by the private sector and regulated by LGUs to make it permanent and sustainable. Sources of food supply disruption must be quickly resolved, including blockages along transport routes and quarantine measures that could impede access to markets. An online public market system may be explored, while warehouses and cold chain facilities for stockpiling of basic necessities must be put up in strategic areas in regions.

### **Financial services: Cashless society**

With the rising number of online transactions in purchasing basic commodities carried out during the quarantine, a major challenge seen is the readiness of the country’s financial system to adopt digital currency, manage influx of cashless payment systems, and possible deregulation of financial transactions.

#### **Priority Policies and Strategies**

**Encourage financial institutions to invest in digital infrastructure and implement better cybersecurity measures and regulations** for consumers and merchants/establishments.

**Revisit the proposed implementation of the Philippine ID System** to consider tie-ups with digital payment systems such as PayMaya and GCash, among others.

### **Transport and Logistics Sector: Ensuring seamless and safe transport of people and goods**

The resumption of public transportation – whether by land, air, or sea, will remain a challenge. Implementing stringent sanitary protocols and physical distancing through reduced load factor, while ensuring the efficient transport of goods and people, will lead to increased demand for vehicles on the road. For international travel, immigration controls will be stricter and health checks will be carried out frequently. Regarding logistics, consumers and businesses will expect increased use of paperless transactions, as well as a seamless, uninterrupted supply chain that is efficient and reliable.

#### **Priority Policies and Strategies**

**Require arriving passengers to electronically fill out a Health Declaration Form in airports and seaports.** Establish stricter protocols in airports and seaports to include handling of persons suspected of having infectious diseases.

**Strictly enforce temperature checks in terminals, queue markings for physical distancing, mandatory wearing of masks, and allowed passenger capacities of public transportation,** especially of buses and jeeps, must be carried out.

**Reduce passenger load factor** by shifting to a service contract-based provision of public transport services. Subsidies may be needed to support financial viability of the program. Firms should be encouraged to provide shuttle service to their workers. The Department of Transportation (DOTr) may have to require public vehicle manufacturers to design modern vehicles that conform to the new physical distancing norm.

**Accelerate streamlining of customs procedures** in terms of speed, simplicity, and predictability to avoid congestion in ports. An efficient system of tracking and tracing shipments must be in place, using the latest available technology. Investments in warehouses, cold storage facilities, as well as paperless transaction systems need to be increased.

### **Tourism sector: Promoting great destinations with the highest sanitary standards**

While the country is expected to heavily rely on tourism to revive the economy, it is more important that the Philippines remains virus-free when travel bans are lifted across the globe. Thus, there is a heightened need for regular sanitation or disinfection of accommodation, tourism-related establishments, tourist transport services, as well as a stable provision of sanitation or disinfecting devices in these establishments.

#### **Priority Policies and Strategies**

**Amend the National Accreditation Standards for all tourism enterprises** (primary and secondary tourism enterprises) to include additional measures related to sanitation, disinfection, promotion of proper hygiene, and responsible information sharing. The current Tourism Industry Training Plan needs to be reviewed in view of health risks. Implementation of health and safety plans for employees of all tourism enterprises must be made mandatory.

### **IT-BPM sector: Continuing excellent clientele service worldwide**

The IT-BPM sector faces challenges in providing continuous services to its global clients with the current ECQ situation, such as increasing the service capacity of its employees to at least 50 percent with the work-from-home (WFH) scheme. Additionally, there is a need to allow up to 40 percent of its workforce to deliver work onsite, on a shifting basis, for IT-BPM services that cannot be delivered from home.

#### **Priority Policies and Strategies**

**Adopt a last mile connectivity for WFH**, and/or possible alternative working arrangements in expanded areas of operations.

**Issue a resolution or joint memorandum circular between DTI, Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) and Board of Investments**, which will allow PEZA locators and registered companies to pull out equipment without imposing tax or duty during times of national emergencies, where WFH schemes are being enforced or for purposes of donation and providing assistance. *(Note: This may also apply to locators or companies that are not in the IT-BPM sector).*

**Continue the promotion of the Philippines as a destination for IT-BPM services** through inbound and outbound missions once travel is allowed, in coordination with the DTI and the DOT.

### **Funeral services: Meeting the increased demand for cremation services**

With the deaths caused by the pandemic, the increased demand for crematoriums will be prevalent, as cremation is the safest way to manage the remains of deceased persons who have died from infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

## Priority Policies and Strategies

**Ensure proper interment of pandemic victims while carrying out the required health and sanitary protocols**, and provide training programs for owners and workers of funeral parlors/homes on these protocols.

## Proposed Legislative Actions

- Support the passage of the Internet Transactions Bill (House Bill 6122), which seeks to strengthen the protection of personal data and consumers in online payments and transactions.
- Push for a law on stockpiling of critical materials e.g., Senate Bill 1347, which seeks to amend the Philippine International Trading Corporation charter to establish stockpile program.
- Expedite components of the PUV Modernization Program on Regulatory Reform and Industry Consolidation, particularly on changing the business model for public transport regulation, along with industry consolidation.
- Push for House Bill 135 filed during the 17th Congress, which provides for the establishment of crematoriums and subsidized cremation costs for indigents.

## Governance and crosscutting concerns

As increased attention and demand for health care and sanitation becomes the “new normal,” there is growing expectation that LGUs are better able to deliver these devolved public services. Increased reliance on technology in all aspects of life in turn heightens the demand for accessible, efficient, and affordable internet services. Having access to Wi-Fi is no longer considered a luxury and has now become a necessity. Telecommuting and digital transactions have likewise become viable options for the public and private sectors.

With physical distancing measures adopted everywhere, the work place will have to be reconfigured. As citizen engagement continues online and the use of big data and analytics becomes even more critical, challenges in strengthening social cohesion will persist given the rise of fake news and misinformation, incidences of cybercrimes, and violations of human rights. All these changes impact on societal behavior, level of social trust, and standards of professionalism and integrity expected of public leaders and civil servants.

## Priority Policies and Strategies

**Empower LGUs, starting at the barangay level, and strengthen their capacities as first responders and frontline service delivery units.** The government needs to craft the transition plan for implementing the Supreme Court ruling in the Mandanas case, which, upon its rollout, will provide LGUs greater access to funds for devolved services. Guidelines on the use of the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) for development projects will also have to be revisited to facilitate investments in community health programs and facilities. In light of disruptions to local economies, LGUs must also update their Local Investments and Incentives Codes and be empowered to shift towards new income opportunities and revive local industries as early as 2021. For better pandemic preparedness and response, local disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) plans must also be amended to include public health emergencies. Implementation of the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 (EODB-EGSD or RA 11032) must be expedited to cover the extension of the validity of permits and other authorizations expiring within the period of State of National Emergency, the reduction in the number of signatories and requirements, and the facilitation of online processing and payments, among others.



**Enhance coordination and cooperation between and among the national government, regional interagency bodies, LGUs, private sector, and civil society to enable whole-of-society response.**

For better interoperability, various levels of government must address coordination gaps. Measures to allow continuous flow of food, health services, and other essential goods and services should be established, mindful of cross-border logistics as well as rules and regulations issued at the national level and the varying capacity levels across LGUs. As registries of beneficiaries of programs and projects become crucial in this new normal, the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) must be fast-tracked by increasing registration kits. The conduct of the community-based monitoring system (CBMS), as provided for by the CBMS Act (RA 11315), may need to be advanced. This will help ensure that LGUs have regularly updated community lists.

**Initiate the formulation of a national preparedness and response framework for disease outbreaks and pandemics.**

There is a need to harmonize existing DRRM and Crisis Management Frameworks. This entails revisions to the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Philippine DRRM Act of 2010 (RA 10121) to explicitly identify public health emergencies such as pandemics in the definition of disaster events. To enhance forward and anticipatory planning, the government must also conduct ex-post evaluation of the various interventions under ECQ and GCQ to mine lessons learned, share best practices across different agencies and LGUs, and influence future policies.

**Fast-track the implementation of programs for ICT-enabled government to ensure greater public reach and safer, protected, and reliable ICT.**

NGAs, GOCCs, and LGUs need to shift to electronic and paperless systems, zero-contact policies, online transactions, and new channels for service delivery. To facilitate this shift, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) needs to fast-track the entry of new players and quickly pursue programs such as Digital Government, Digital Work Force, Digital Classrooms, Digital Medicine, among others. The national government will invest in ICT to enable remote government operations, strengthen existing online platforms, and allow access to justice while practicing physical distancing (e.g., tele-hearings, e-filing systems). To support physical distancing measures, rules, regulations, and requirements of DBM, GPPB, COA and the Civil Service Commission (CSC) must be reviewed, and where applicable, revised to allow electronic transactions, alternative work arrangements, and procurement of off-the-shelf software<sup>27</sup> in the government. Safeguards against cybercrimes and data privacy breach must also be enhanced.

**Build the public's trust and confidence to enable a whole-of-society response and recovery to the pandemic.**

With increased uncertainties as part of the new normal, the government needs to properly communicate risks and guarantee transparency to citizens, including the possible resurgences of the disease (*see Part II of this report*). A whole-of-government and whole-of-society National Values Formation Program initiated by the government must be implemented to address the anticipated changes in behavior and level of social trust. Trust in institutions must be cultivated by ensuring that our public officials exemplify the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and professionalism; strictly enforcing existing laws that exact their accountability to the people they serve; and protecting citizens from discrimination and cybercrimes. Discipline and sense of responsibility must also be inculcated in our citizenry to ensure that they abide by the country's laws and regulations.

**Proposed Legislative Actions**

- Institutionalize a national preparedness and response framework for pandemics and all-hazards, including the creation of Medical Reserve Corps, Stockpiling of Strategic and Critical Materials, and Emergency Medical Services System.

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<sup>27</sup> After the effectivity of the Bayanihan Act, agencies will be subject to regular procurement rules, which may limit the purchase of off-the-shelf software by NGAs, GOCCs, and LGUs.



- Amend the Labor Code and the Telecommuting Act of 2018 (RA 11165) to formally establish alternative work schemes such as compressed workweek or flexi-schedule, and to extend telecommuting options to employees in the public sector.
- Review the Voter's Registration Act of 1996 (RA 8189) and other election-related laws to allow for online registration and facilitate risk mitigation procedures for the 2022 National and Local Elections.

## Social development

### *Health and nutrition: Continuing threat of COVID-19*

**COVID-19 will remain a threat as we enter the new normal.** Other highly infectious disease might also emerge in the future; thus, adjusting to the new normal requires an integrated health data management system that tracks and links patient referrals and laboratory testing as well as monitors the supply of available equipment, medicines, and blood, among others. Aside from upgrading the curative aspect of health and its related support mechanisms, ramping up the promotion of preventive healthcare will also be necessary in the new normal to reduce the chances of people getting sick and incurring costs, as well as straining of the health system.

#### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Improve health care facilities.** Health care facilities need to be upgraded, with emphasis on increasing the number of fully equipped isolation rooms and critical care beds in hospitals. Quarantine facilities in major ports and airports also need to be improved to enable the Bureau of Quarantine to better perform its mandate to ensure health security.

**Improve epidemiological and surveillance capacities** for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases at the national, regional, provincial, and municipal levels, focusing on areas on or near major points of entry and strategic LGUs in a region. Specifically, an operational Level 2 Biosafety laboratory must be present in every region, stocked with adequate number of testing kits. Local Centers for Disease Control (CDC) may also be established under the supervision of a national CDC or the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine.

**Improve the status and supply of Human Resources for Health (HRH).** Immediate measures need to be undertaken to efficiently mobilize health personnel. These include mechanisms that will enable the efficient deployment of personnel from different health facilities during emergencies. Pools of medical and allied health professionals can be established and mobilized per level of care nationwide. Provisions in the Universal Health Care (UHC) Law that cover incentives, benefits, and scholarships for HRH must be implemented.

**Ensure full Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) benefit coverage for emerging and reemerging diseases.** PhilHealth should guarantee case rate packages for emerging and reemerging diseases. It also has to monitor and fast-track the processing of hospital claims, and to properly and strictly implement the No Co-payment Policy under the UHC Law.

**Intensify public health education campaign, including effective risk communication** to encourage aggressive social distancing, better hygiene, self-isolation, and health-seeking behavior at the first sign of symptoms.

**Institute a fully integrated health information system and database** down to the provincial level with seamless navigation and referral mechanisms between public and private providers. There is a need to come up with an inventory of available equipment and services and to make these accessible.

Artificial intelligence and data analytics may be utilized to understand the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases, improve treatment methods and streamline medical care, as well as determine the effectiveness of government response.

**Strengthen and expand telehealth system** for primary care consultations to reduce the number of persons going to hospitals during times of emergencies.

**Ensure the supply of medical commodities.** An emergency supply management and logistics system must be instituted, with a maintained national stockpile of medicines, supplies, PPEs, ventilators, and related resources for use during a public health emergency. In the short term, procurement of these necessary equipment needs to be expedited.

**Ensure that proper nutrition is provided during emergencies,** especially among children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and senior citizens, who are more vulnerable during emergency situations, consistent with the National Policy on Nutrition Management in Emergencies and Disasters. Nutrition guidelines for relief food packs may be provided to LGUs and other agencies. The National Nutrition Council (NNC) and Department of Science and Technology- Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) will also continue advocating for recipes that would help transform relief goods (i.e., canned goods, instant noodles) into more nutritious meals.

#### Proposed Legislative Actions

- Strengthen the national response and preparedness for health emergencies and pandemics (similar to Senate Bill No. 1573 filed by the late Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago).
- Revisit salient provisions of the NDRRM Act (RA 10121) on increasing contingency budget for the management of health-related emergencies.
- Review the Magna Carta of Health Workers toward increasing benefits and ensuring that these benefits are received.

#### *Social protection: Increasing vulnerable groups' access to social services*

Increasing the access to and expediting the delivery of social services to the most vulnerable groups — poor, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, children, indigenous peoples, among others are the biggest challenges in implementing social protection programs under the new normal. Specifically, there is a need for more emergency-responsive policies and social insurance systems. Enhanced and immediate assistance must be provided to older persons. Food, cash, and other forms of assistance may be expanded to include middle-class earners in periods of prolonged lockdowns, which affect their earning ability. Increased cases of violence against women and children, both reported and unreported, also need to be addressed.

#### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Fast-track implementation of and registration to the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys)** and explore linking the ID cards to a digital payment system that will allow for more efficient transfer of government assistance in times of crisis, pandemics, or disasters.

**Develop a registry of vulnerable persons and groups** using data from the PhilSys, *Listahanan* or National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction, Community-Based Monitoring System, Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture, registry of creative and cultural workers, gig economy workers platforms (Grab, *Angkas*, Food Panda, etc), and the government's registry for the Social Amelioration Program that will expedite the delivery of social services and aid. Likewise, programs during crises and pandemics must be institutionalized through inclusion in the Social Protection Floor.

**Explore the possibility of automatic and universal release of aid** to the members (active and updated) and contributors of the national government's social insurance programs such as the Social Security System (SSS) and Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) in times of national emergencies without the need for applications. This will enable the contributors to access resources to augment their savings, which is essential in preventing them from falling into poverty.

**Promote savings mobilization** as a critical component of all social protection programs, like the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program.

#### Proposed Legislative Action

- Pass the Universal Basic Income during Pandemics or Social Amelioration Act.

#### *Education: Adopting flexible and blended learning*

To lessen physical contact, schools need to adopt blended and/or online learning. The changing learning and employment landscape will not only necessitate the adoption of new technology-based learning for current cohorts of students; but also, for workers who will require retooling and upskilling, especially those whose livelihoods have been affected by COVID-19. As online learning will be adopted, issues of expensive, slow, and unreliable internet access; as well as the added expense for devices needed to access online learning resources and tools are major risks that will have to be addressed.

#### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Expand and institutionalize flexible learning options** such as open high school, alternative delivery modes, and satellites for off-grid areas. In response to the lack of universal internet access necessary for online classes, modules designed for printing must be prepared and be delivered via electronic mail, or distributed in hard copy in the meantime. The conduct of classes via radio and television (TV) might also be a temporary solution in conjunction with physical hand-outs. Partnerships between the public and private sector can be leveraged to expand access to flexible learning modalities (i.e., free data access for e-learning portals, discounted internet rates for teachers and students). The Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GATSPE) may also be expanded to cover elementary students and teachers.

**Expedite the formulation of a multi-modal, multi-strategy Learning Continuity Plan** by the Department of Education (DepEd), together with different stakeholders. Forging partnership with DICT in creating and maintaining a learning management platform is also important in attaining flexible learning for teachers and students.

**Pursue adult learning through online and/or blended learning** such as the promotion of massive open online courses (MOOCs) and flexible training arrangements through blended programs that will reduce face-to-face contact. Education agencies also need to collaborate with the private sector and professional organizations to increase the number of online courses accredited for Continuing Professional Development.

**Prioritize investments in online platforms** to improve existing ones such as the DepEd Commons or to develop a new national e-learning platform. The development of learning materials and modules specific for students, teachers, and parents implementing e-learning, flexible learning options, and radio or TV classes will require budget allocations. Increased funding will be needed to provide for the communications costs for teachers and Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) beneficiaries. Teacher training funds will also need to be realigned to capacitate them to teach blended or flexible learning classes.

## Proposed Legislative Actions

- Enact the Alternative Learning System Bill (Senate Bill [SB] No. 740).
- Enact the ICT in Education Bill (SB No. 594) to strengthen the use of ICT in elementary and high school.
- Enact a legislation that would allow funding to support blended learning systems in public and private schools, as well as in higher education institutions (HEIs).
- Amend the proposed Reserve Officer Training Corps and/or tap the Civic Welfare Training Service Program in HEIs to provide disaster-response and medic training option.

## Labor and employment

**Higher rates of unemployment and underemployment.** As the global and domestic economic activities continue to weaken, unemployment and underemployment are likely to increase. As of April 25, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has already recorded 2.2 million displaced workers.

**Increased telecommuting or other alternative work arrangements.** With the practice of social distancing likely persisting in the near term, the preference for telecommuting and other alternative work arrangements is seen to increase in both the government and private sectors.

**Increased demand for workers willing to take on precarious tasks.** With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, novel occupational hazards emerged and the demand for workers willing to take on precarious tasks increased.

## Priority Policies and Strategies

**Improve social protection programs and income support systems.** Apart from wage subsidy programs, the unemployment benefits of the SSS need to be expanded to make aid available to temporarily laid off workers. Those in sectors that will continue to be affected post-ECQ, including freelancers in the gig economy and cultural and creative industries, will need continuing income support. DOLE's PhilJobsNet need to be expanded to highlight online and home-based job openings.

**Retool the labor force.** Skills retooling, through TESDA's Massive Open Online Courses, Mobile Training Laboratories, and other flexible or blended training arrangements, needs to be promoted to improve the employability of displaced workers. This will enable workers who have been displaced, whether temporarily or permanently, to take courses for employability elsewhere. Subsidies may be shouldered by the government, or in partnership with the private sector through institution-based, enterprise-based, or online modalities similar to the model of Skills Future Singapore. Procedures for availing TESDA scholarship programs must also be made easier. The Mobile Training Laboratory (MTL) Program may be expanded to better serve far-flung areas. Tapping the *Tulong Trabaho* Fund will help in funding programs for these interventions. Meanwhile, the PRC will need to strengthen Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs through online-based platforms.

**Issue standard guidelines on alternative work arrangements.** The IRR of the Telecommuting Act (RA 11165) needs to be modified to take into consideration the current situation and occurrence of similar crisis in the future. Moreover, telecommuting and other alternative work arrangements will also have to be extended to the public sector, following guidelines from CSC that will also support ICT-enabled government. On May 7, 2020, CSC issued Memorandum Circular No. 10, s. 2020 which makes

available multiple alternative work arrangements that government agencies can adopt while the entire country is placed under a State of Public Health Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>28</sup>

**Formulate and revisit guidelines on the provision of hazard pay for workers in the private and public sectors.** Guidelines on the provision on hazard pay for workers in the private sector can also be issued by DOLE. In this regard, expanding the coverage and awareness of companies and employees of the Employees Compensation Program may ease the burden of additional costs on private sector employers providing hazard pay. Likewise, provision of hazard pay among workers in the public sector needs to be institutionalized by virtue of an issuance from CSC. The current hazard pay scale for public health workers indicated in DBM-DOH Joint Circular No. 2016-01 needs to be revisited and refined towards more equitable rates across salary grades.<sup>29</sup>

### Proposed Legislative Actions

- The five-day work week prescribed by the Labor Code would need to be amended, accompanied by more specific guidelines on the implementation of alternative work arrangements for both private and public sector.<sup>30</sup> Alongside this, the creation of a legal framework on part-time work to increase flexibility for employers while integrating workers' protection needs to be established under the law.
- The official definition and classification of “hazardous work” and “occupational hazards” in the Labor Code need to be revised relative to the current and emerging occupational hazards and in accordance with international labor standards.
- Equitable hazard allowance of public health workers across salary grades needs to be pursued.
- The guidelines and benefits of the Employees Compensation Program need to be amended to compensate incidents occurring in alternative work arrangements.

### Housing and urban development: Integrating public health goals

Moving forward, public health must be a foremost consideration in land use and local shelter planning. Housing designs may need to be changed to integrate washing areas before entry into the main structure. Low-cost and socialized housing developments should ensure ample public and green spaces.

### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Incorporate hazard and health standards** in the updated Comprehensive Land Use Plans and zoning ordinances. More open and green spaces and better walkability that allow for social distancing will need to be prioritized in these plans.

**Explore the inclusion of an open or public space**, which may be used for isolation and/or quarantine or other similar purposes, in the design of socialized housing and resettlement packages.

**Review procedures to streamline the issuance of housing-related licenses, clearances, and permits** in light of COVID-19.

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<sup>28</sup> Prior to this, CSC allowed only two types of flexible working arrangements in government: (a) compressed four-day work week (Memorandum Circular [MC] No. 22, s. 2014); and (b) flexible working hours through MC No. 25, s. 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Currently, public health workers with a salary grade (SG) 19 and below, receive a hazard pay of 25 percent of their monthly basic salary, while those with SGs 20 and 21 receive 15 percent and 13 percent of their monthly basic salary, respectively. This means that a SG 19 health worker with a monthly salary of PHP45,269 receives a hazard pay of PHP11,317, while a SG 20 health worker with a monthly salary of PHP51,155 receives a lower rate of PHP7,673 despite facing the same level of risk.

<sup>30</sup> Existing policies on flexible working arrangements by DOLE include Department Order (DO) 21, s. 1990 and Department Advisory (DA) No. 02, s. 2004 for guidelines on implementing compressed work week scheme; DA No. 02, s. 2009 for guidelines on adopting various flexible working arrangements; and DO No. 202-19 for the IRR of the Telecommuting Act.

**Prioritize the implementation of the Housing Rental Subsidy Program for low-income informal settler families (ISFs)** and shoulder additional costs for moving ISFs into better housing conditions.

#### Proposed Legislative Action

- Appropriation for alternative modes of provision of housing with adequate space (e.g., housing voucher, rental subsidy) for low-income ISFs.

### Migration

**Repatriation of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).** As of April 13, the number of displaced OFWs due to the pandemic reached 32,335, while the number of repatriated OFWs stood at 11,624. These figures are expected to increase as COVID-19 spreads to more countries, with more governments using economic tools to suppress the spread of the virus and as the global economy enters into recession.

**Increased vulnerability of OFWs in countries of destination.** There are 736 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 88 deaths among OFWs, as of April 13. Given the possible recurrence and emergence of new outbreaks in the near term, OFWs are exposed to greater risks and heightened vulnerability due to inadequate social protection.

#### Priority Policies and Strategies

**Facilitate the employment of repatriated OFWs.** This can be done through the proactive job matching and competency assessment and certification, along with online skills upgrading and re-tooling programs, especially for telecommuting and e-commerce-friendly jobs. Programs of DOST such as the *Balik-Scientist* Program and the Research and Development Lead, should facilitate the utilization of returnees' expertise in their home region or province. While there may be limited local employment opportunities in the private sector given slower economic activity, the government through the PSA, will need additional personnel to fast-track the implementation of PhilSys and to conduct the CBMS.

**Enhance government financial support and legal assistance for repatriated OFWs.** The government needs to extend financial and livelihood assistance, especially for online enterprises, e-commerce, and agriculture-related livelihood programs. Soft loans can be offered to assist OFWs in starting their own businesses. The budget of the OFW-Enterprise Development and Loan Program needs to be increased. Financial literacy programs will enable OFWs to better manage their finances. The absorptive capacity of OFW-serving agencies needs to be expanded given the substantial volume of returnees.

**Enhance health insurance and social security for OFWs.** The government needs to ensure the effective implementation of mandatory PhilHealth<sup>31</sup> and SSS coverage among OFWs. As such, PhilHealth and SSS need to enhance electronic payment services to facilitate the payment of premium contributions. In addition, there is a need to allow for an installment payment schemes, pursue bilateral labor agreements (BLAs) with stringent welfare and protection provisions, social security agreements, and emergency responses with more host countries, especially in countries where labor laws do not cover domestic workers. The possible inclusion of health insurance in BLAs and in the Standard Employment Contract may be explored. Increased operating funds will also have to be provided to

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<sup>31</sup> PhilHealth benefits for OFWs include inpatient (i.e., hospital confinement); outpatient (services that include elective surgical procedures ranging from minor to major operations where patients are sent home within the same day for post-operative care; benefit packages for TB, HIV/AIDS, animal bite, malaria, vasectomy and tubal ligation, radiotherapy, and hemodialysis; and Z benefits (for severe and catastrophic cases such as cancers and heart defects).



implement programs or activities for the welfare, health-related (including mental health), and emergency programs/activities response at posts.

#### Proposed Legislative Action

- Revisit bills on health hazards and preparedness and on situating safeguards for Filipino migrants.

## Environment and natural resources

The COVID-19 pandemic is a manifestation of the chronic effects of human activity on wildlife resources and habitats at an unprecedented rate, resurfacing in more damaging impacts on environmental and public health. In the new normal state, managing pollution and sustainable use of natural resources vis-a-vis addressing the threat of future pandemics under a changing climate become even more challenging. There will be a potential high demand for (a) indigenous plants and animals for pharmaceutical use; (b) water supply for disinfection/sanitation purposes; and (c) wood and non-wood products for the construction of quarantine and shelter facilities. Existing waste management facilities may also be overwhelmed by huge volume of wastes from health care facilities and households, while urban air quality may deteriorate post-ECQ, due to increased number of trips of public utility vehicles and volume of private vehicles attributed to social distancing.

#### Priority Policies and Strategies

The new normal state requires a combination of strengthened, scaled up, and innovative actions and solutions to curb the elevated environmental, climate, and health risks posed by COVID-19.

**Streamline the management of health care and infectious wastes, especially at the community and household levels.** This will be done through:

- ***Ensuring compliance of health care facilities<sup>32</sup> and treatment technologies<sup>33</sup> with the standards for hazardous waste management.*** This includes strict enforcement and monitoring of existing treatment technologies employed in the treatment, storage, and disposal (TSD) facilities to handle new pathogens or viruses, in compliance with the applicable environmental standards.
- ***Modernizing and increasing the number of TSD facilities for hazardous healthcare wastes.*** Registration process will be streamlined and incentives will be provided to encourage private sector investments in the establishment of more TSD facilities.
- ***Improving disposal of healthcare wastes at the household or barangay level.*** Protocols for handling, treatment, and disposal of health care wastes, especially those generated by households, will need to be defined such as to guarantee: (a) proper segregation at source; (b) partnerships between and among LGUs and TSD accredited facilities to ensure that untreated healthcare wastes do not reach materials recovery facilities (MRFs) and sanitary landfills (SLFs); and (c) expanded coverage of hazardous waste tracking system to cover household wastes.
- ***Supporting ancillary remedial actions to improve environmental health and mitigate climate change.*** This puts emphasis on pursuing policies on: (a) permanent adoption of telecommuting work arrangement both for private and public sectors, as applicable; (b) more open and green urban spaces to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions and to improve human health and well-being; (c) more jobs in the waste management sector; and (d) mass media campaign to promote environmental and public health awareness and positive behavioral change.

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<sup>32</sup> Based on the DOH Health Care Waste Management Manual and DENR AO 2013-22, Revised Procedures and Standards for the Management of Hazardous Wastes.

<sup>33</sup> New and existing technologies should undergo Environmental Technology Verification of the DOST-Industrial Technology Development Institute and comply with the applicable environmental standards and the DOH-required level of microbial destruction or inactivation as provided in the Health-Care Waste Management Manual (effectively ensure 100% elimination of bacteria/virus)



**Prioritize the protection and conservation of natural resources, especially in degradation hotspots and critical ecosystems, through:**

- ***Intensifying surveillance and enforcement activities to protect wildlife and their habitats.*** This is to combat habitat encroachment and illegal trade of wild animals to prevent the emergence and spread of zoonotic infectious diseases. Capacity building, environmental education campaign, and coordination across law enforcement chain will be reinforced to improve governance and abate proliferation of poachers and the wildlife black market.
- ***Undertaking R&D on the utilization of natural resources for disease prevention and cure.*** Priority will be given to studies on zoonosis in selected wildlife reservoir and natural resources with potential antibacterial/antiviral properties and treatments and vaccines for pharmaceutical applications.
- ***Intensifying agroforestry development.*** Promotion of agroforestry and establishment of commercial forest plantations need to be prioritized to support demand for food and wood and non-wood forest products (e.g., bamboo and other grasses, rattan, and fiber) for the construction of temporary isolation facilities and production of eco-friendly PPEs (e.g., face masks), and the provision of food supply in case of lockdown. Investment support package for communities (e.g., bank financing and technical assistance) will be identified to support the establishment of commercial forest plantations in tenured forest lands.
- ***Strengthening implementation of forest protection, reforestation, and watershed management activities, especially in critical watersheds.*** Monitoring and enforcement activities through sustainable forest management and integrated watershed management will be strengthened in cooperation with LGUs and communities to sustain water provisioning and regulating services of forests and prevent unlawful activities (e.g., illegal logging and poaching resulting in loss of biodiversity).

**Ensure water security, especially in COVID-19 pandemic affected areas by:**

- ***Accelerating the provision of water supply and sanitation services to improve access to safe and adequate water.*** The development and expansion of water supply system including sewerage development and wastewater treatment facilities will be sustained. This will prioritize areas of operation of water service providers (WSP) to meet the daily water needs of the people for the precautionary or mitigating measures for COVID 19, while ensuring water quality is within environmental standards.
- ***Enhancing water conservation and efficiency measures to avert water shortages.*** This includes establishment of rainwater harvesting facilities and water recycling technologies, and conduct of information campaigns on water conservation in traditional and social media platforms. This will be complemented with the ongoing comprehensive water resource assessment in groundwater critical areas and major river basins to analyze current available and potential groundwater sources to ensure sustainability of the country's water supply.
- ***Development and implementation of the National Roadmap for Water Security.*** The ongoing preparation of the roadmap should be able to incorporate the possible impacts of future epidemic/pandemic and climate change/variability to address the impending water crisis.

**Proposed Legislative Actions**

- Amend the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RA 9003) to bridge the policy gap between municipal waste management and health care waste management by streamlining protocols on the management of hazardous wastes, particularly infectious wastes, at the community and household levels.

- Amend environment-related laws such as RA Nos. 9003, 9275, 8749, and 6969 to provide higher penalties and stringent administrative measures to facilitate adjustment to inflation and maintain vigilance against future environmental offenses or non-compliance committed by small to large industries.
- Amend the Wildlife Act (RA 9147) to strengthen mandatory quarantine protocols for confiscated animals and institute greater penalties for poaching, trade, and consumption of wild animals to prevent spread of zoonotic pathogens (e.g., bacteria and viruses).
- Enact a law to define and implement sanitary and phytosanitary measures to address possible entry of zoonotic infectious disease into the country (e.g., standards and protocols for crops, livestock, fisheries, and wildlife).
- Enact the creation of an apex body (i.e., Department of Water Resources) that will act as the single lead agency to oversee/coordinate overall policy and project/program implementation on water resources.
- Enact the creation of an Independent Economic or Financial Regulator for Water Supply and Sanitation to harmonize the regulatory practices, processes, fees, and standards on water supply and sanitation while addressing the overlapping functions or jurisdictions of existing regulatory entities.

# Part V

## Next steps

The COVID-19 pandemic is probably the most significant shock of the century. Worse, the only solution, at the moment, is to slow down economic activity. For this solution to be effective, government needs the utmost cooperation of the public and the business sector, as the solution generally concerns them. At the same time, there must be the perception that there is an end to resorting to the temporary solution. There must be a time frame, guided by evidence, to be communicated well to the general public, wherein the country transitions to applying the more robust solution.

In the meantime, there is a need for an honest, yet strategic communication. This report suggests a theme, “We Recover as One” to convey the message of solidarity, and more importantly, to bring the locus of control back to us – individuals, community, and society. The next step is to organize the whole of government around this message. The report also outlines other steps that need to be in place.

Understandably, the double whammy of the pandemic and the economic slowdown has affected everyone. Some had to rely solely on government assistance just to meet basic needs. Still others incurred losses. These losses need to be reduced to facilitate the resumption of business. This report recommends programs that can be implemented, based on the expressed needs of the survey respondents and the quantitative estimation of the losses incurred. The next step is to assess the current set of assistance measures to determine if these are already adequate.

There is, however, the distinct acknowledgment that things will not go back to normal, even when the ECQ is lifted. Some forms of social distancing will still need to be implemented, along with very religious hygiene and sanitation protocols. Just these two conditions already define a new normal. This report goes into more specifics. In addition, it suggests priority policies, programs, and projects for the government to undertake in order to facilitate the transition of the country to the new normal. The next step is for each and every agency of the government to validate the recommended list of policies and programs, activities, and projects (PAPs), and to formulate the action plan pertaining to each. Budget reprioritization may be needed to fund the PAPs that are recommended to be implemented in 2020. PAPs that are to be implemented in 2021 will need to be included in the 2021 National Expenditure Program.

Given the many interventions of government that have been enumeration in this report, one should not lose sight that foremost of these should be on improving health systems capacity. As implied by the Director-General of the World Health Organization, health system capacities pertain to the different facilities, personnel, equipment, and protocols to “detect, test, isolate, and treat every case and trace every contact”; “minimize outbreak risks in settings like health facilities and nursing homes”; and measures to prevent disease transmission in places where it is essential for people to go. A critical next step, therefore, is to draw up a detailed action plan on these health measures.

# Annex

## Transition to the new normal and ways forward: Suggested programs and projects

### Economic development

#### Macroeconomy

##### *Fiscal Sector*

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
Secure supplementary budget for 2020 to fund crucial projects outside the <i>Bayanihan</i> to Heal as One Act	Implementing agencies of identified crucial programs and projects, Department of Budget and Management (DBM)
<b>For 2021</b>	
Set budget priority on health sector and disaster risks resiliency/preparedness	Department of Health (DOH), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Office of Civil Defense (OCD)
Information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure for collecting agencies toward digital taxation	Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Bureau of Customs (BOC)

##### *External Sector*

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
Budget support for engaging in regional and multilateral fora to pursue the concern on regional stockpiling of essential goods or establishment of regional foodbanks	Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
<b>For 2021</b>	
Fast-track the completion of the TradeNet Project	DTI, DA, and other trade regulatory agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a communication management system between NG, LGUs, and private sector</li> <li>Put up an integrated website that tracks real time information on cargo release, availability of supply, production and inventory</li> <li>Formulate manual of operations for traders, NG regulators, and LGUs during time of crisis</li> </ul>	DTI, DA, Bureau of Customs (BOC), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)
Budget support for engaging in regional and multilateral fora to pursue the concern on regional stockpiling of essential goods or establishment of regional foodbanks	DFA, DA, DTI
Investments in technical equipment for detection and increase in quarantine personnel	DA, Bureau of Quarantine

## Production sectors

### Agriculture and Fishery Sector

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure funding for the implementation of the following programs and projects under the DA's <i>Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat (ALPAS) sa COVID-19 Program</i>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expanded Agriculture Insurance Project</li> <li>○ Rice Resiliency Project</li> <li>○ Integrated Livestock and Corn Resiliency Project</li> <li>○ Expanded Small Ruminants and Poultry Project</li> <li>○ Coconut-based Enhanced Diversification Project</li> <li>○ Upscaling and expansion of geographic coverage of <i>Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita</i> and implementation of other modes or channels (e.g., <i>Kadiwa</i> express/on wheels/online/retail selling)</li> <li>○ Urban Agriculture Project</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other than <i>ALPAS sa COVID-19 Program</i>, DA (subject to DBM rules and regulations) may realign its budget for non-food banner programs (e.g., tobacco, etc.) into:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Subsidy or distribution of farm machinery</li> <li>○ Piloting or expanding other e-commerce and marketing platforms (e.g., online <i>palengke</i>)</li> <li>○ Research, development, and extension; and commercialization of safe, nutritious, medicinal or therapeutic, and well-packaged agri-food products</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>DA in partnership with DTI, DOST, LGUs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For programs of other agencies not covered by <i>Bayanihan Act</i>, realignment of the following may be considered to contribute to the funds to be pooled by DBM for funding social amelioration programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reprogram the unobligated 2019 continuing and 2020 current budget under the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development Sustainability Program</li> <li>○ Defer the procurement of vehicles under the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project (Note: This should be made available in 2021 given that mobility support is critical in field operation). SPLIT's field validation surveys may proceed in 2020, with an additional task of identifying agrarian reform beneficiaries who could be eligible for the social amelioration package.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on funding the operation and maintenance, rehabilitation, and/or restoration of existing irrigation systems, instead of new construction of small and/or multi-year big irrigation systems.</li> <li>○ Intensify the Cash-for-Work program (e.g., desilting of canals, etc.) as part of the social amelioration program for members of Irrigators Associations.</li> </ul>	<p>National Irrigation Administration (NIA)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and promote mobile marketplaces, rolling stores, and foodbanks</li> </ul>	<p>DA, DTI, LGUs</p>

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For 2021</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure funding for the construction and enhancement of logistics and road infrastructures such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Road and transport projects under Build, Build, Build Program</li> <li>○ Wholesale food terminals and trading centers</li> <li>○ Warehouses, cold storage, mobile storage, cold chain, and refrigeration facilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	DA, LGUs, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish more class AAA slaughterhouses</li> </ul>	DA, DTI, LGUs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support services or assistance to farmers and agriculture-based enterprises in the form of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Credit and insurance with concessional terms</li> <li>○ Livelihood opportunities</li> <li>○ Support programs for cooperatives</li> <li>○ Fast-tracked implementation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund Mechanization component</li> <li>○ Social amelioration programs for displaced fisherfolk, farmworkers, and laborers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	DA, DTI, DSWD, LGUs, Cooperative Development Authority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure funding for the improvement or enhancement of online transactions and deliveries, as well as the improvement of digital connectivity and internet services</li> <li>• Create digital <i>palengke</i> or supermarkets in partnership with transportation network vehicle service and delivery companies</li> </ul>	DA, DTI, DICT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake capacity building and IEC projects on food safety awareness</li> <li>• Review and develop regulatory measures and standards</li> <li>• Streamline FDA processes for certification and roll out of developed technologies and products</li> </ul>	DA, DOST, FDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct online lectures and provision of start-up kits for urban gardening</li> <li>• Undertake community gardening projects in collaboration with LGUs and cooperatives</li> </ul>	DA, LGUs

## Industry

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
<p><b>Manufacturing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct stimulus package as well as existing incentives towards the production of essential goods and services</li> <li>• Scale up programs for the roll out of existing DOST-approved ongoing applied science researches on alternative materials for PPEs</li> </ul> <p><b>Construction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct comprehensive vulnerability and risk assessment of critical infrastructure, particularly in areas considered as COVID-19 hot spots (including public buildings that may be used as isolation or treatment facilities)</li> </ul> <p><b>Electricity/Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a financial assistance program for Electric Cooperatives whose operations and maintenance requirements are compromised by the delayed payment of electricity bills</li> </ul>	<p>DTI, DOF, DBM</p> <p>DOST</p> <p>DOH, DPWH</p> <p>National Electrification Administration</p>
<b>For 2021</b>	
<p><b>Manufacturing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map out entire value chains across primary, secondary, and tertiary industries in these sectors to determine where critical and alternative resources are sourced and identification of possible production bottlenecks.</li> <li>• Scale up programs for the roll out of DOST-approved technologies for food processing to prolong the shelf-life of food products</li> <li>• Expansion of Shared Service Facilities and Regional Inclusive Innovation Centers</li> </ul> <p><b>Construction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct and/or rehabilitate hospitals or designated quarantine holding facilities in LGUs, airports, and major sea ports</li> <li>• Under the Universal Health Care Law, strengthen the health system through the establishment of facilities and laboratories and acquisition of necessary hospital equipment to address COVID-19 and possible recurrence of virus contagion, among others</li> </ul>	<p>DTI</p> <p>DTI, DOST</p> <p>DTI</p> <p>DOH, DBM, DILG</p> <p>DOH</p>



## MSMEs

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop targeted financial support program packages for MSMEs affected by national emergencies (e.g., operating loss carry-over, access to credit, employment subsidy support, loan repayment extension, waiver of penalties and fees, among others)</li> <li>• Develop digital skills for those in MSMEs; Support digitization of MSME operations; Enable knowledge transfer and information-sharing between MSMEs, through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Up-skilling/Re-tooling</li> <li>○ Digital solutions for MSME operations (e.g., e-payment, chatbot, customer management, etc.)</li> <li>○ Webinars or trainings on business continuity, supply chain management, and intellectual property</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>DOF, DTI, DBM, Government finance institutions</p> <p>DTI</p>
<b>For 2021</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the scope of the National Wages and Productivity Commission’s Productivity Toolbox and promote productivity-based incentive schemes to sharpen the productivity perspective of BCPs (i.e., one of the goals of the BCPs, beyond mitigation of business disruption, should be to enable/unlock workplace productivity and to encourage sharing of productivity gains to generate profits for businesses and augment workers’ incomes.)</li> <li>• Deploy Productivity Toolbox and technical assistance in developing productivity-based incentives schemes using various modes (i.e., face-to-face, virtual/electronic modes) appropriate to various work arrangements including telecommuting/work from home.</li> <li>• Continue the MSME Resiliency Program, including capacity-building activities and mentoring (online and offline modules)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Project officers to be assigned to assist selected MSMEs on new leadership paradigms and business models</li> <li>○ Business experts on digitization, business resiliency, and sustainability to network with MSMEs through Shared Service Facilities, Fabrication Labs, One Town, One Product Hubs, and <i>Go Lokal!</i></li> <li>○ Programs in Transition Design, Design to Improve Life, and Fab City</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>DOLE-NWPC DTI, DBM</p>

## Services

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
<p><b>Retail and E-commerce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish warehouses, including cold chain facilities, for stockpiling of basic necessities in strategic areas per region</li> </ul> <p><b>Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review DOTr's remaining budget for the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) in 2020 and allocate funds to allow for regulatory shift towards industry consolidation and service contract-based provision of public transport services</li> </ul> <p><b>Tourism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide training funds for Department of Tourism-Office of Tourism Standards and Regulation (DOT-OSTR) personnel, Regional Accreditation Officers, and tourism frontliners on sanitation standards and incident command protocol, including protocols and coordination with appropriate government agencies</li> <li>Procure PPEs for DOT-OSTR and Regional Accreditation Officers</li> </ul>	<p>DTI, DA, LGUs</p> <p>DOTr</p> <p>DOT, DOH, LGUs</p> <p>DOT</p>
<b>For 2021</b>	
<p><b>Retail and E-commerce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure funding for e-commerce programs initiatives</li> <li>Increase LGU allocation for warehouse and/or cold chain facility</li> <li>Increase advocacy on better sanitation/hygiene measures in retail establishments</li> </ul> <p><b>Financial Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure funding for increased training among related institutions on digital transactions and services as well as cybersecurity measures</li> </ul> <p><b>Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase high-end temperature scanners and disinfectants to be placed in major international airports and domestic ports across the country for mandatory inbound and outbound temperature screening of passengers; Allocate or propose budget for medical clinics and personnel equipped to handle sick passengers; disinfection materials must be also purchased for all public transportation</li> <li>Implement the Metro Manila Route Rationalization Study under the PUVMP in priority areas</li> <li>Allot funds for procurement of relevant IEC materials and supplies for distribution to accredited establishments, such as medical/hygienic kits, disinfectant kits for tourism transport vehicles, among others.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tourism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate bouncing-back fund for the Re-Start Up Program for MSMEs and community-based organizations from the Tourism Development Fund or Trust Liability Account /Special Projects Review Committee</li> </ul>	<p>DTI, DICT DTI, DA, LGUs DTI, LGU</p> <p>DTI, DICT, BSP</p> <p>DOTr, DOH</p> <p>DOTr</p> <p>DOT, DOTr, DOH</p> <p>DOT</p>

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<p><b>IT-BPM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate budget for re-skilling and up-skilling of workforce in the IT-BPM industry</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership with TESDA on possible employment measures that will provide skills and livelihood opportunities for workers to minimize impact of COVID-19, ensure fast recovery from income and job losses, and build long-term resilience against future crises.</li> </ul>	<p>DTI, DOLE</p> <p>DOLE, TESDA, and other relevant agencies</p>

## Governance and crosscutting concerns

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
Strategic stockpiling of personal protective equipment (PPEs), medical equipment, medicines, and other medical supplies	DTI, DILG, LGUs, Department of Health (DOH), Office of Civil Defense OCD)
Strategic and adequate logistic facilities (e.g., post-harvest facilities, market satellites, market on wheels, cargo movement)	DTI, DA, DILG, LGUs, Department of Transportation (DOTr)
<p>Conduct of the following activities through the National/Local DRRM Fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity assessment of health facilities and personnel for emergency preparedness and response</li> <li>Geo-mapping of critical facilities with corresponding attributes and correct geotagged location (e.g., DRRM operation centers nationwide, evacuation centers, hospitals, schools, ICT towers, churches, etc.)</li> <li>Provide incentives to encourage private sector to augment facilities and equipment for COVID-19 response, as well as for disaster preparedness (e.g., accommodation for health workers, quarantine facility for suspected COVID-19 cases, or evacuation site or temporary shelter in case of disaster)</li> </ul>	<p>DOH, OCD, DILG, LGUs</p> <p>OCD, DILG, LGUs</p> <p>DILG, LGUs, OCD, DOH</p>
Support to and capacity building of LGUs to conduct epidemiology and health surveillance, including information dissemination	DOH
Measures to ensure continuous supply and flow of food and other essential goods and services; and provision of health services	DA, DTI, DOH, DOTr, DILG, LGUs, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
Fast-track the implementation of the following programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital classrooms (distance learning systems and tablets or laptops)</li> <li>• Digital work force (reskilling and upskilling of vulnerable sectors)</li> <li>• Digital medicine (telemedicine kits for distance meetings and telemedicine platforms)</li> <li>• Digital government</li> <li>• Digital social assistance</li> <li>• National Broadband Program</li> <li>• Free internet Wi-Fi in public places and state universities and colleges</li> <li>• Emergency communication</li> <li>• Defense of critical information infrastructure</li> <li>• Strengthening the National Computer Emergency Response Team</li> </ul>	DICT
Measures to improve risk and crisis communication	DOH, OCD with all agencies
<b>For 2021</b>	
Increase budget for the fast-tracked implementation of PhilSys	Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)- PhilSys Registry Office
Conduct of a CAPI-based CBMS	PSA
Strategic stockpiling and pandemic or hazards preparedness	DTI, DOH, OCD, DILG, LGUs
Strategic and adequate logistic facilities (e.g., post-harvest facilities, market satellites, market on wheels, cargo movement)	DTI, DA, DOTr, DILG, LGUs
Upgrading of existing data infrastructure in the NDRRM Operations Center such as geographic information system, monitoring instruments, forecasting and early warning, geolocation technologies, reporting systems, etc.	OCD, Department of Science and Technology (DOST) - Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology and Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) - Mines and Geoscience Bureau and National Mapping and Resource Information Authority
Development of a capacity-building program for NGAs to formulate and implement public service continuity plans	CSC, Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP)
Procurement and maintenance of mobile and field hospitals with at least level 2 capability to be prepositioned in different strategic regions	DOH, LGUs
Replenishment of allocation for the People's Survival Fund pursuant to the Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 10174)	Climate Change Commission or Department of Finance to ensure optimal utilization; DBM to ensure prioritization
Increase LGU funding for health programs from increased IRA allocation pursuant to the Mandanas Case ruling	DBM, in coordination with its Technical Working Group <sup>34</sup>
Conduct of capacity building and continuous learning programs, including the use of e-learning platforms and digital upskilling	CSC, DAP, Local Government Academy
Investment of ICT resources and capability for online and remote government operations (e.g., laptops, internet connectivity, etc.)	DBM to provide guidance; All agencies to execute
Continued support to DICT programs	DBM to provide budget; All agencies to coordinate with DICT

<sup>34</sup> There is no official name yet for this TWG. The members are: DBM (as lead), DILG, NEDA, DAP, PCOO, and CSC.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
Conduct of capacity building and awareness projects on cyber risks in everyday life of Filipinos	DICT, National Privacy Commission, Department of Justice
Expansion of the National Effort for Harmonization of Efficiency Measures of Inter-related Agencies Project to cover other sectors	Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA), in coordination with the Project's lead builders <sup>35</sup> and the ARTA-EODB Advisory Council <sup>36</sup>
Conduct of the National Values Formation Program	National Commission for Culture and the Arts, CSC, with inputs from other government agencies and the private sector
Enhanced risk mitigation in preparation for the 2022 National and Local Elections	COMELEC

## Social development

### Health and nutrition

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
Operational budgets of government hospitals, especially those involved in COVID-19 treatment, prevention, and control of other infectious diseases; emergency preparedness and response; and Quick Response Fund	DOH
Increase the operational budget of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH)	University of the Philippines-PGH
<b>For 2021</b>	
Expand spending on medical infrastructure: new hospitals, health, and critical care facilities, laboratories, as well as acquisition of medical equipment, medevac and ambulance vehicles, and stockpiling of PPEs, test kits, medicines, vaccines, etc.	DOH, LGUs
Sustain budget for regular health programs (e.g., Immunization Program, Maternal, Newborn and Child health, Tuberculosis, HIV-AIDS, Family Planning, etc.)	DOH, LGUs
Incentivize, subsidize, and support researchers and research institutions who will engage in research and development related to development of test kits, medical equipment, vaccines (e.g., COVID-19 vaccine), medicine, and others.	DOST-Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, DOH, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), higher education institutions
Increase budget to improve health data systems (Unified Health Data Dashboard for disease surveillance and monitoring; and Health Information Exchange)	DOH, LGU
Sustain budget for indigents under PhilHealth to cover emerging or re-emerging diseases	PhilHealth
Draft the National HRH Masterplan, the long-term strategic plan for the management and development of HRH to include contingency plans for national public health emergencies (i.e., recruitment for medical reservists), and the National Health Workforce Registry	DOH
Ensure budget for the implementation of the UHC Law and First 1000 Days	DOH, PhilHealth, National Nutrition Council

<sup>35</sup> Office of the Executive Secretary, ARTA, Office of the Cabinet Secretariat, DBM, NEDA, DICT, DILG, and DAP.

<sup>36</sup> Composed of the DTI Secretary (Chair), ARTA Director General (Vice-Chair), DOF, DICT, and DILG Secretaries, and two representatives from the private sector as members.

## Social protection

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
Various programs: Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations, distribution of food and non-food items, livelihood assistance grants, and supplemental feeding for daycare children	DSWD, LGUs
Quick Response Funds	DSWD
Integration of savings mobilization as a component of all social protection programs	DSWD
<b>For 2021</b>	
Provision of automated teller machine cards to senior citizens	DSWD, LGUs

## Education

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
School-based feeding program	DepEd
Improve existing online platforms	DepEd, CHED, TESDA
Tap the ICT for the Alternative Learning System (ICT4ALS) Project of DepEd and UNICEF	DepEd
Realign funds for teacher training to enable them to teach flexible learning options and blended learning	DepEd, CHED, TESDA
<b>For 2021</b>	
Develop learning and teaching modules for flexible learning options, and radio or TV classes, including e-learning materials (modularized for students, teachers, and parents)	DepEd, CHED, TESDA
Provide communication/internet allowance for teachers and StuFAP beneficiaries	DepEd, CHED, TESDA
Expand the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GATSPE) coverage to elementary	DepEd
Expand DepEd's Computerization Program	DepEd
Develop a national e-learning platform (web-based and app-based)	DepEd, CHED, TESDA, PRC, DICT
Increase budget for the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education and Technical-Vocational and Education and Training	CHED, TESDA
Realign funds for the improvement of information technology (IT) infrastructure (both hardware and software) for the TESDA Online Program courses	TESDA
Develop a Learning Management System to easily track learner progress and performance	TESDA
Procure courses from other online institutions and develop future-ready courses in TESDA Online Program and MOOCs of higher education institutions (HEIs)	TESDA, CHED

## Labor and employment

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
Conduct skills retooling programs through flexible and blended training arrangements to improve employability of displaced workers	TESDA, DOLE
Tap and fast-track the implementation of the <i>Tulong Trabaho</i> Fund	TESDA
Expand unemployment benefits to include temporarily laid off workers	SSS, DOLE
Expand awareness and coverage of the Employees' Compensation Program	Employees' Compensation Commission, DOLE
Institutionalize the provision of PPEs by employers to prevent spread of COVID-19 and other viruses.	DOLE
<b>For 2021</b>	
Improve social protection programs and income support systems through unemployment insurance, emergency employment, and wage subsidies	SSS, DOLE
Intensify financial literacy programs for the vulnerable sector	DOLE, PESOs
Issue training vouchers to individuals, which can be availed through institution-based, enterprise-based, or online modalities for the upskilling or retooling of learners and workers (similar to the Skills Future Singapore model)	TESDA
Establish additional MTLs and equip all these laboratories with computers and internet connectivity	TESDA

### *Housing and urban development*

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES
<b>For 2021</b>	
Housing Rental Subsidy Program for low-income ISFs	Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, National Housing Authority



## Migration

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
Retrofitting of skills or upskilling for repatriates	TESDA, National Reintegration Center for OFWs
Increased fund allocation for reintegration programs	
<b>For 2021</b>	
Increased budget of OFW-Enterprise Development and Loan Program	OWWA, DOH
Budget for the deployment of more overseas officers to improve the ratio of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) officers vis-à-vis OFWs	
Additional funding for repatriation assistance	
Funding for migrant health programs, including mental health	
Increased operating funds for welfare-related and emergency assistance programs/activities at posts	

## Environment and natural resources

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<b>For the rest of 2020</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide training on health and safety measures (e.g., proper use of PPEs) for wildlife caretakers and waste collectors/handlers</li> <li>Improve management of infectious wastes during COVID-19 outbreak (i.e., handling and treatment protocols or strategies to manage wastes during virus outbreaks)</li> <li>Establish temporary containment, quarantine, or isolation facilities for infected hospitals wastes</li> <li>Conduct mass media campaign on proper disposal and management of health care wastes, especially masks and gloves</li> <li>Implement proper wildlife handling protocols during wildlife turnover to minimize the risk of transmission of diseases or viruses from wildlife to humans</li> </ul>	DENR and DOH
<b>For 2021</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct and accredit additional TSD facilities for handling pathogenic or infectious wastes, especially in areas where such facilities are very limited</li> <li>Conduct regular sanitation of public places such as wet markets, parks, and informal settlements</li> <li>Provide technical assistance to LGUs in establishing clustered MRFs and SLFs with proper health and safety protocols to ensure that no untreated healthcare wastes are processed in these facilities</li> </ul>	DENR, LGUs, and private sector.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish additional wildlife sanctuaries for rescued wildlife with trained wildlife caretakers on proper handling protocols</li> <li>Carry out communication, education, and public awareness campaign against encroachment and illegal wildlife trafficking</li> <li>Create an integrated knowledge management system for more transparent and better access to information on healthcare wastes (e.g., use of geo-informatics)</li> </ul>	DENR

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND UNITS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a comprehensive bioprospecting and biotechnology program to facilitate discovery and development of novel compounds and derivatives for pharmaceutical purposes</li> <li>• Conduct R&amp;D programs on: (a) capacity and needs assessment of health care facilities, especially government hospitals to manage health care wastes; (b) assessment of existing technologies or processes on waste storage and treatment to manage new viruses; and (c) early detection and rapid response to manage new viruses and other organisms, and its relationship to the environment</li> </ul>	DENR, DOH, DOST, DA, and the academe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agroforestry development programs in COVID-19 affected rural communities to support food production and watershed protection</li> <li>• Biodiversity-friendly and sustainable alternative livelihood programs for local communities to avoid over-extraction of natural resources</li> <li>• Forest protection, reforestation, watershed rehabilitation and management activities especially in critical watersheds (e.g., Enhanced-National Greening program, enforcement activities through sustainable forest management and integrated watershed management; and pollution control programs of water bodies such as rivers, and lakes, including wastewater treatment to sustain availability of freshwater resources)</li> <li>• Provide additional budget support for digital technologies or computer applications for forest management (surveying, mapping, and planning), including its knowledge management systems</li> </ul>	DENR, DA, and DTI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement water conservation and efficiency measures (e.g. establishment of rainwater harvesting, water reuse and recycling, upgrading/retrofitting of water supply system, excess floodwater storage, among others)</li> <li>• Implement Water Demand Management Program through: (a) conduct of intensive public education campaign on water demand management; (b) formulation of policies and strategies for efficient water supply system; and (c) conduct researches on water storage and collection system, including efficient irrigation</li> <li>• Conduct information campaigns on water conservation in traditional and social media platforms</li> </ul>	National Water Resources Board